

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
NTIA/FCC WEB-BASED FREQUENCY COORDINATION SYSTEM
OMB CONTROL NO. 0660-0018**

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

This is a request to extend approval of a currently approved information collection. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) developed an Internet web-based system that collects specific identification information from applicants seeking to operate in the 71–76 GHz, 81–86 GHz, and 92–95 GHz (70-80-90 GHz) radio frequency (RF) bands that are shared on a co-primary basis by federal and non-federal users. Before this system was put in place, non-federal entities were required to submit an application for RF spectrum support to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which would then coordinate with NTIA regarding whether the proposed use would cause harmful interference to existing or planned U.S. Government operations in the identified band. Under that system, non-federal users only had access to FCC licensing databases that contained the physical parameters of radio stations held by private sector licensees. Consequently, in shared bands, non-federal applicants would have to propose frequencies without any knowledge of existing federal assignments in those bands. Under that system, the manual RF assignment process used by the FCC and NTIA was very time-consuming and, in extreme cases, took up to a year to complete.

The web-based system provides a means for non-federal applicants to rapidly determine the availability of RF spectrum in a specific location, or the need for detailed frequency coordination with the U.S. Government of a specific newly proposed assignment within the shared portions of the RF spectrum. The website allows the non-federal applicant's proposed radio site information to be analyzed, and a real-time determination to be made as to whether there is a potential for interference to, or from, existing federal government radio operations in the vicinity of the proposed site. The system also helps expedite the coordination process for non-federal applicants while assuring protection of government data relating to national security. The information provided by non-federal applicants also ensures the protection of the applicant's station from RF interference from future government operations.

Non-federal entities are required to submit information regarding the physical characteristics of the proposed radio station and the proposed location of the operation. This information is necessary to make a determination regarding electromagnetic compatibility among radio stations in the frequency band. The name and address of the proposed licensee of the station is also required. Once the proposed station has been registered in the Government Master File (GMF), it will then be protected from interference as a result of future federal installations.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If NTIA's Information Quality Guidelines apply, state this and confirm that the collection complies with the Guidelines.

The information submitted to the website (<http://freqcoord.ntia.doc.gov/terms.aspx>) is used by NTIA to ensure the mutual compatibility of proposed non-federal radio stations with existing federal radio stations and planned future use. The data is used for analysis on a continuous basis by the federal agencies to assure mutual compatibility of future government operations. If information were disseminated by NTIA in connection with operation of this website, such dissemination will comply with NTIA's Information Quality Guidelines.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

NTIA collects the data by means of an Internet web-based system. The website provides real-time responses: (1) a validation of the coordination of a single frequency, or (2) a notification of the unavailability of a frequency at the site and that further coordination will be required by the FCC and NTIA.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The web-based system is a novel approach to spectrum management, providing a means for non-federal applicants to determine rapidly the availability of RF spectrum in a specific location, or the need for detailed frequency coordination of a specific newly proposed assignment within the shared portions of the RF spectrum. The type of information requested from non-federal applicants is not only unique to this system, but also specific to the applicant, and therefore, unlikely to be available from any other source. Moreover, no other federal agency collects identical information because no other agency provides the same service. Thus, the information collection does not raise duplication concerns.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

The data requested through the website is the minimum data set required to perform an analysis of the potential interference to and from a proposed radio station.

6. Describe the consequences of the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

As stated above, this website was developed to streamline the spectrum management process. The website allows a non-federal applicant's proposed radio site information to be analyzed, and a real-time determination to be made as to whether there is a potential for interference to, or from, existing federal government radio operations in the vicinity of the potential site. The web-based system helps expedite the coordination process for non-federal applicants while assuring protection of sensitive data about government operations. The information provided by non-federal applicants also ensures the protection of the applicant's station from RF interference from future government operations. Without it, NTIA would have to analyze the non-federal applicant's proposed radio site information

manually to determine whether a potential existed for interference to, or from, federal government radio operations in the vicinity of the proposed site. Such a manual check is extraordinarily labor-intensive requiring an extremely long response time.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

The data collection is consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide the information of the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency or to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on March 20, 2020 (Vol. 85, No. 34, page 9745). No comments were received.

The FCC and NTIA had discussions over several years to identify a mechanism that would provide non-federal users with an additional level of information that would expedite the frequency assignment process without compromising information contained within the GMF that is either classified or currently not releasable under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In response, NTIA developed this website to assist non-federal users in their efforts to identify available spectrum for use, and also to help expedite the coordination process for federal agencies. The website became operational in 2005.

9. Explain the decision to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Not Applicable.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No assurance of confidentiality will be provided to respondents. NTIA will treat the information as business confidential.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

The survey does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

The web-based frequency coordination system began operating in late 2005, and data has been collected from the nearly fifteen years of operation. The number of frequency coordination approvals is presented in the table below. NTIA experience indicates that approximately 1 percent of the requests fail the automated coordination process, necessitating the initiation of a second frequency application and coordination process. The estimated time per coordination is 15 minutes, and the total number of burden hours was calculated for each year.

Year	Number of Frequency Coordination Approvals	Estimated Burden Hours
2005	2	1
2006	23	6
2007	245	61
2008	241	60
2009	386	97
2010	2,224	556
2011	682	171
2012	2,080	520
2013	2,271	568
2014	4,076	1019
2015	3,021	755
2016	3,212	803
2017	6,446	1612
2018	4,822	1206
2019	7,171	1793

The tabulated data varies from year-to-year, declining in some years, and increasing in others, and without a clearly defined trend. Approximately 99.8 percent of the non-federal frequency requests in the 70-80-90 GHz bands are approved by the web-based coordination system. Based on the last four years, a conservative estimate for future years is approximately 5,500 coordination approvals and 1375 burden hours per year.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondent or recordkeepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

Not Applicable.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

The major expenses for the frequency coordination system occurred in 2004 and 2005 when NTIA developed the software and website. There is a recurring cost of approximately \$5,000 per year that NTIA's Information Technology Division charges to manage the website. The only additional costs are for the staff review of each frequency that achieved successful coordination. Each review is estimated to take no more than five minutes by an NTIA staff person at the GS-12/1 level, who has an hourly salary of \$41, using the 2020 salary level for the Washington, DC area of \$85,335. The number of annual reviews average around 5,500 taking into account anticipated future growth,

resulting in approximately 460 labor hours or \$18,860, while accounting for 20 percent for overhead costs results in \$3,772; rounding off, the estimated annual cost is \$22,632.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

The annual number of respondents/responses increased by 1,500 and 375 burden hours due to an adjustment in Agency estimates.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

NTIA will not publish the data collected.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

Not Applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

No exceptions are requested.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection of information will not employ statistical methods.