

Review of OMB Part A and B: Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-0243 for renewal of the Forest Service Generic Information Collection for Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups on Non-Timber Forest Products

Conclusion:

The paper addresses and explains adequately the purpose, justification, process, cost and statistical methods used for the renewal of the Forest Service Generic Information Collection for Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups on Non-Timber Forest Products (NFTP). All topics are well defined and supported by detailed explanations and examples such as from who, for whom the data are collected, how, and why any other previous survey or research cannot be used etc. The statistical methods used for the study are well detailed and justified.

The purpose of the study is clearly described with detailed introduction and background. The data collection process is thoroughly presented with three different procedures, sampling methods, cost and timeline. There are various methods proposed to increase the response rate such as following up and reminding the respondents, using bilingual interviewers when needed, providing non-monetary incentives to participate in the survey etc. However, it does seem that responding to the entire questionnaire could be burdensome on the respondent considering the expected time to complete them varies from 25 minutes for survey to as high as 90 minutes for focus groups.

The estimation procedure proposes many well established statistical methods such are multivariate and regression analysis. It is also mentioned that adjustments will be made for non-response, over/under sampling etc. However, it is not clear what exact method and how they will be implemented.

Summary:

Part A: JUSTIFICATION

A1 Circumstances, Legal and Administrative Requirements that necessitate the information collection

- i) Introduction:
Thoroughly provides and outlines the information to follow in the paper.
- ii) Program Background:
Well defined and emphasizes why collecting data on NFTP is necessary or even critical.

A2 Usefulness of Information

- i) What information will be collected:
Questions on who, where, what and how people harvest NTFP. There are two sets of respondents: foragers and people who make decisions for lands where foraging may occur
- ii) From whom the information will be collected:
There are two sets of respondents: foragers and people who make decisions for land where foraging may occur.
- iii) What the information will be used for:

It comprehensively lists all the uses of information such as Land managers seeking to comply with legal mandates etc.

iv) How the information will be collected

It lists variety of methods including the three primary ones: Surveys, Interviews and Focus groups.

v) Frequency of information collected:

One-time data collection

vi) Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside USDA or the government:

The information will be publicly available with few exceptions.

vii) If this is an ongoing collection, how have the collection requirements changed over time:

Collection requirements have not changed over time.

A3 Use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

The survey will be available online in addition to the paper form.

A4 Efforts to identify duplication

Claims to have every effort made to avoid duplication of previous study. Clearly explains how there have been very limited amount of research done related to NTFP harvesting.

A5 Methods used to minimize burden on small businesses or entities

The information collection does not target small businesses or entities.

A6 The consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequent

Defines why the impact if the study were not to be conducted.

A7 Any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

There are no special circumstances.

A8 Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice

The 60-day notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on July 8, 2020, 85 FR 40962, Page 40962.

Document Number: 2020-14703

A9 Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents

A modest non-monetary incentive, such as local museum passes or a book, may be offered

A10 Assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents

Confidentiality and/or anonymity of participants and places will be assured.

A11 Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature

Participants will be clearly told that they need not answer any questions on subjects they consider sensitive.

A12 Estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information

- i. The number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden
Provided in a table - 1560 respondents, 828 hours over three years.
- ii. Estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens
Provides the total cost to respondents to be \$22,522 over three years.

A13 Estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents resulting from the collection of information

There are no capital operation or maintenance costs.

A14 Estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government

The total cost to the Federal Government is \$43,642 per year for three years.

A15 Reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported

There are no program changes or adjustments.

A16 Plans for tabulation and publication

May be shared or published.

A17 The reasons that display the expiration date for OMB approval would be inappropriate

The valid OMB control number and expiration date will be displayed on all Information Collection instruments.

A18 Exception to the certification statement

The agency is able to certify compliance with 5 CFR 1320.

PART B: COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

B1 Describe the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used

Well described and targeted at specific population:

B2 Describe the procedures for the collection of information

- i. Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection
Described in details why the three methods (survey, interview and focus groups) are chosen.

- ii. Estimation procedure
Under advice from statistician/data analyst, plan to use well-established estimation methods and adjustments as needed. However, the details of those methods are not well described.
- iii. Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification
Large sample size selected in each methods to achieve the desired precision.
- iv. Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures
Not Applicable
- v. Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden
Not Applicable

B3 Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of nonresponse

Lists various techniques to maximize the response rate such as follow up and reminders.

B4 Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken

There are plans to conduct pilot tests and the lessons will be identified and incorporated.

B5 Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design

Provided.

Reviewer:

Prakash Adhikari, Mathematical Statistician
Summary, Estimation, and Disclosure Methodology Branch
National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture
T: (202) 720 5467
Email: Prakash.Adhikari@nass.usda.gov