

## ADVANCE NOTIFICATION EMAIL FOR INTERVIEWS

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) requests your participation in an interview to understand how stakeholders receive, use, and contribute to BOEM-funded environmental studies and assessments. These interviews are part of an ongoing BOEM-sponsored project on “*Evaluating Connections: BOEM’s Environmental Studies and Assessments.*” This important project aims to understand how BOEM’s scientific research contributes to BOEM’s environmental assessments and vice versa, as well as their influence on the external (i.e., non-BOEM) community.

During the internal portion of this project, BOEM identified you as a key contact at an agency, institution, or other organization that BOEM collaborates with on environmental studies and/or assessment work (e.g., NEPA, Section 106, etc.). The interviews will focus on how external stakeholders like you use BOEM studies and assessment information; how this information informs external environmental analyses, assessments, or policy decisions; and how external stakeholders contribute to BOEM’s studies. We understand that you may have also received an invitation to complete an online survey for this study, and we encourage you to do so. A subset of survey participants was selected for a more in-depth interview.

Interview questions will be tailored to your organization. The interview questions will ask for your insights on topics such as linkages between BOEM and your organization, how you use BOEM’s environmental studies in your work, how you contribute to BOEM studies and/or assessments, and your recommendations on ways to strengthen information sharing moving forward. Each interview session will be approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted using Microsoft Teams or another virtual or telephone platform.

BOEM has contracted with Industrial Economics, Incorporated (IEc), an independent contractor, to conduct the interviews. No BOEM personnel will participate in your interview session. The BOEM study team and/or IEc will contact you directly to schedule your interview. Please keep an eye out for follow-up information.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. Your full and candid responses will help ensure that the study results are accurate and helpful. Individual names of interviewees **will not be disclosed** in the presentation of findings or analysis; responses will be aggregated and presented by type of respondent (e.g., state agencies, research institutions, academics/universities, etc.).

### **BOEM’s Environmental Studies Program and Environmental Assessment Program**

BOEM’s mission is to manage the development of U.S. Outer Continental Shelf energy and mineral resources in an environmentally and economically responsible way. In fulfilling its mission, BOEM must comply with a range of environmental requirements, including but not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act, Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. BOEM develops environmental assessments, including NEPA documents, consultation documents, and other analyses that use the best available information to comply with relevant statutes and policies. Environmental studies funded by BOEM’s Environmental Studies Program (ESP) provide scientific information (including the biological, physical, and social sciences as broadly defined) to inform BOEM’s environmental assessments.

For purposes of the current project, the term “environmental assessment” encompasses the diversity of analyses that BOEM’s Environmental Assessment Program undertakes and is not restricted to NEPA environmental assessments. For example, the following types of documents are considered within BOEM’s environmental assessments: NEPA environmental impact statements; NEPA environmental assessments; National Historic Preservation Act documents (including section 106 evaluations of effects on historic properties and programmatic agreements); essential fish habitat assessments for Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act consultations; Endangered Species Act section 7 biological evaluations or biological assessments; analyses and assessments prepared to comply with the Clean Air Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act; and analyses and assessments such as engineering analyses, regulatory impact analyses, resource evaluations, additional NEPA-related analyses, site assessments, and cost-benefit analyses prepared for the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and other regulatory requirements.

### **Privacy Notice**

We invite you to review the attached Privacy Notice, which provides information about the authority for the data collection, purpose of the collection, method of the collection, who will have access to the collected information, and how the BOEM Evaluation Team and contractor will maintain and use the collected information.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) Statement**

BOEM is collecting this information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) to gather feedback to better understand how stakeholders receive, use, and contribute to BOEM-funded environmental studies and assessments.

Responses are voluntary, and BOEM will not share the results publicly. BOEM estimates the interview will take you 60 minutes to complete either by using Microsoft Teams or another virtual or telephone platform.

BOEM may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. OMB has reviewed and approved this interview letter and assigned OMB Control Number 1010-xxxx. Comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this form may be submitted to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, 45600 Woodland Road, Sterling, VA 20166.

### **Information Collection Request**

{Placeholder for OMB Control Number and expiration date}

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the project, please contact Megan Davidson at: [Megan.Davidson@boem.gov](mailto:Megan.Davidson@boem.gov).

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

*Note for Reviewers: This is a consolidated interview guide. Questions that are specific to different types of stakeholders are designated in parentheses. After the questions have been finalized, IEc will create separate (customized) guides for each type of stakeholder.*

### Background

1. Please briefly describe (1-2 minutes) your current position/role in your organization.

### Use of BOEM-funded environmental studies

2. Have you used information from BOEM-funded environmental studies in your work? “Your work” refers to tasks and responsibilities that you personally carry out for your agency, institution, or organization.

*[If yes, proceed; if no, move to next section]*

3. How have you used the information from BOEM-funded environmental studies in your work?
4. Are there specific BOEM environmental studies that have been, or currently are, of particular importance to your work? If yes, please explain.
5. In the years ahead, BOEM’s scientific work will focus more than in the past on considerations around renewable energy development. Do you expect this shift in focus to change the importance of BOEM’s environmental studies to your work?
  - a. If yes, please explain.

*[The next question is only for public agencies]*

6. To what extent do study results inform any of the following at your agency?
  - Research studies conducted by your agency
  - Products derived from research studies (e.g., integrated datasets, modeling inputs or modeling runs, etc.)
  - Environmental assessments developed by your agency
  - Planning or policy decisions taken by your agency
  - a. If possible, please answer each item above on a scale from 1-5, where 1 means “not at all,” 3 means “to some extent,” and 5 means “very much.”
  - b. Can you think of one or more examples? If yes, please describe.
7. Where do you get information on BOEM-funded environmental studies? *[probe: grey literature vs. primary literature in the sourcing of information on BOEM-funded environmental studies]*
8. Are there information-sharing opportunities that BOEM could take advantage of to expand distribution and use of BOEM-funded environmental studies?
9. What, if anything, could increase the usefulness of BOEM-funded environmental studies in your work?

**Contribution to BOEM-funded environmental studies**

10. Have you contributed to BOEM-funded environmental studies? We are interested in intellectual contributions, which include but are not limited to: ideas for a new study, principal investigator, participation on a research team, etc.

*[If yes, proceed; if no, move to next section]*

11. How do you or have you contributed to BOEM-funded environmental studies?

a. *[Ask Academics and Consultants Only]* Do you conduct BOEM-funded environmental studies (e.g., as a principal investigator or as part of a team of researchers)? If yes:

i. Does any of the funding you receive from BOEM support student research?

1. If yes, does this include undergraduate, Masters, and/or PhD-level work?

- Approximately how many students does this include? (Please break out by undergraduate, Masters, and PhD level, as applicable.)
- Over approximately how many years has funding that you receive from BOEM supported student research?
- Has the number of students included in this research increased, decreased, or stayed about the same over time? Please explain.

2. Based on your direct observation and experience, how does participating in BOEM-funded research affect the students' academic careers? (examples: influences the student's focus of study; supports completion of the student's dissertation; etc.)

3. Based on your direct observation and experience, how does participating in BOEM-funded research affect the students' post-academic careers? (examples: influences the type of work they do after graduating; influences the type of organization to which they apply for a job; etc.)

4. Are there other ways that BOEM research supports the careers of young scientists? If yes, please explain.

b. Have you contributed an idea for a BOEM-funded environmental study? If yes:

i. What was the forum or format in which you contributed your idea?

ii. As far as you know, did BOEM subsequently fund any studies that addressed your idea? Note that BOEM studies may address all or part of an idea, or a combination of ideas submitted by different people.

1. If yes, did you participate in implementing the study? Please explain.

c. How else, if at all, do you interact with BOEM on implementing or conducting BOEM-funded environmental studies?

12. Do you share the results of BOEM-funded environmental studies to which you contributed with other stakeholders inside and/or outside your organization?

- a. If yes, with whom, and how? (e.g., final report, other publications, conferences, presentations, informal communications with colleagues)?
13. What are some uses of the findings or information of the BOEM-funded environmental studies in which you have taken part?
14. What types of information needs do these studies fulfill (e.g., in environmental assessments or for planning, policy, and resource management decisions)?

#### **Contribution to science-informed analyses and environmental assessments**

15. Have you contributed to environmental assessments or analyses in cooperation with BOEM (e.g., for which BOEM is a co-lead agency, cooperator, or key stakeholder)? If yes:
  - a. What types of assessments or analyses are they (e.g., NEPA, Endangered Species Act consultations)?
  - b. Is your agency/organization the lead on the assessments/analyses?
  - c. What is BOEM's role in these assessments/analyses?

*[If yes, proceed; if no, move to next section]*

16. Do these assessments/analyses rely on information from BOEM studies? If yes:
  - a. What types of information do they rely on from BOEM studies?
  - b. Can you provide specific examples of BOEM studies fulfilling important information needs?
17. How else, if at all, do you interact with BOEM on environmental assessments or analyses?
18. How are these assessments used to inform resource planning, policy, and/or management?
  - a. Do you have specific examples?

#### **Use of BOEM environmental assessments or analyses**

19. Have you used information from BOEM environmental assessments or analyses in your work?
 

*[If yes, proceed; if no, move to next section]*
20. How have you used the information from BOEM environmental assessments/analyses?
21. Are there specific BOEM environmental assessments/analyses that have been, or currently are, of particular importance to your work? If yes, please explain.
22. In the years ahead, BOEM's scientific work will focus more than in the past on considerations around renewable energy development. Do you expect this shift in focus to change the importance of BOEM's environmental assessments/analyses to your work?
  - a. If yes, please explain.

*[The next two questions are only for public agencies]*

23. To what extent does information in BOEM-led environmental assessments/analyses inform any of the following at your agency?
  - Research studies conducted by your agency

- Environmental assessments developed by your agency
  - Policy decisions taken by your agency
- a. If possible, please answer each item above on a scale from 1-5, where 1 means “not at all,” 3 means “to some extent,” and 5 means “very much.”
  - b. Can you think of one or more examples? If yes, please describe.
24. Where do you get information on BOEM environmental assessments/analyses?
25. (*If not previously asked*) Do you share BOEM-led environmental assessments/analyses with other stakeholders inside and/or outside of your organization? If yes, with whom, and how?
- a. If yes, with whom, and how? (e.g., written reports, conferences, presentations, informal communications with colleagues)?

**Wrap-up**

26. Other than what we have already discussed, can you think of any other updates or changes that BOEM could make to share study and assessment results with you and your organization in a more useful way? If yes, please explain.