

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
The Ocean Enterprise: A study of US business activity in ocean measurement, observation and forecasting
OMB Control No. 0648-0712

Abstract

This is a request for extension of an approved information collection. The purpose of this data collection is to investigate the scale and scope of commercial activity in the for-profit and not-for-profit business sectors that support ocean measurement, observation, and forecasting (AKA the “Ocean Enterprise”). This survey was first conducted in 2015, and again in 2020, and data from these surveys were compiled into “Ocean Enterprise Study” reports that are used to raise visibility and awareness of this important business cluster, to understand how its scale and scope changes over time, and to understand its linkages with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®) Program. Conducting another five-year analysis (2020-2025) will produce valuable insights into how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Ocean Enterprise businesses.

Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

This request is for extension of an information collection supported by Section 12302 (3) of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act (ICOOS Act), part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 ([Pub. L. 111-11](#)) and reauthorized under the Coordinated Ocean Observations and Research Act of 2020 (Public Law No: 116-271). The Ocean Enterprise Study investigates the scale and scope of commercial activity in the for-profit and not-for-profit business sectors which support ocean measurement, observation, and forecasting. The objective of this study is to raise visibility and awareness of this important business cluster, to understand how its scale and scope changes over time, and to understand its linkages with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®) Program.

The first Ocean Enterprise Study was published in 2015. It was the first of its kind and estimated this industry cluster generates revenue of seven billion dollars annually. In 2020, the second Ocean Enterprise Study was published, assessing the change in the 2015-2020 time period. It found that during this five-year period, the U.S. Ocean Enterprise real dollar value increased by 7% and number of businesses increased by almost 60%.

In order to better understand and interact with this important industry cluster it is vital to continue examining how this landscape changes over time. This collection seeks to update the data previously gathered and better understand the changes and developments in this sector since the first two surveys

were conducted. This is especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A renewal of this study will allow us to assess the impact that the pandemic had on the Ocean Enterprise business cluster.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The project is funded by NOAA and is being conducted on its behalf by the contractor, ERISS Corporation. A one-time web survey will be utilized as the primary survey instrument. Each voluntary respondent will only be asked to complete the survey once.

The web survey is necessary in order to collect demographic, financial, and functional information for each organization with regard to their involvement with IOOS. The final deliverable of this project is an analytic report detailing the findings of the web survey and analyzing the trends since the previous survey.

The information collected is used to support publicly disseminated information. NOAA/NOS/IOOS retains control over the information and safeguards it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

This is a web-based survey; however, respondents may answer survey questions over the telephone if they prefer.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2.

This project is being coordinated with NOAA's Chief Economist Office to ensure it is not duplicative with other economic valuation studies being conducted by NOAA. We are also working with this group to ensure that data collection is consistent with NOAA practices. This data will be available to other valuation efforts in NOAA helping to reduce duplication of requests for information from the public.

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

It is recognized that the burden of responding to a survey can take a special toll on small businesses where resources can often be scarce. To minimize this burden for businesses of all sizes, extra care was taken to design a survey that in most cases will take 25-30 minutes to complete. Through the use of survey logic and other advanced web-survey techniques, the web-survey was designed to ensure respondents are only asked the minimum number of questions possible. Additionally, businesses will be able to save their progress on the survey and come back to it at a later time. The majority of businesses will have under 100 employees, but the percentage is unknown. Finally, the web survey format enables survey respondents to complete the survey at a time of their choosing. Most significantly, the survey asks for information that should be readily at hand and take no special research.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The marine technology industry is an important partner and stakeholder within IOOS. In 2015, the Ocean Enterprise Study estimated this business sector generated revenue of close to seven billion dollars, and by 2020, revenue grew to eight billion dollars. It is critical for IOOS to understand the continued changes to this industry over time in order to better support and articulate IOOS's contribution to it. This survey seeks to update the 2015 and 2015-2020 data collections in order to analyze the composition and revenue changes in this important business sector, especially in light of COVID-19 impacts. Failure to conduct this survey or delay it will affect IOOS's ability to identify critical trends and better understand the value of this industry to IOOS and the nation.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

There are no special circumstances. This information collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A Federal Register Notice published on September 23, 2022 (87 FR 58071) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

NOAA reached out to 3 stakeholders 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. No comments were received.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gifts will be provided to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

Survey respondents will be informed of the uses of the data and also informed the level of confidentiality the data will be treated with: all raw survey data will be accessible only by NOAA and designated entities who will be analyzing the data and providing summary reporting. Results of the survey data will only be published at the aggregate, summary level. Therefore, no individual responses will be provided, and nothing attributable to any single company will be reported. The raw survey database is the property of NOAA, and will not be shared with any external organizations.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No questions of a sensitive nature will be asked.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Ocean Enterprise Survey	Business & Financial Operations Specialists	315	1	315	0.5	157.5	\$39.72	\$6,255.90
Totals				315		157.5		\$6,255.90

The mean hourly wage for Business & Financial Operations Specialists (13-0000) from the BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics was used.

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

There are no recordkeeping/reporting costs.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The total estimated cost for this project is \$630,000. Annualized estimate is \$210,000 per year over a three-year period. The increase since last submission of this information collection is due to the increased contract costs estimated over 2-3 years for the information collection. Additionally, employee labor and materials for analyzing (excluding regulatory analyses), evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information are anticipated to be higher in order to analyze comparisons and trend data.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight per year	13/14	150,000	33		55,000
Other Federal Positions per year	11/12	110,000	50		55,000
Contractor Cost per year		200,000	50	N/A	100,000
Travel					0
Other Costs:					0
TOTAL Per year					210,000
TOTAL over 3 years					630,000

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

There are no changes to this information collection.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

No complex hypothesis testing or statistical tests are planned. Our analysis will be descriptive, describing proportions of respondents who chose each specific answer. Data collection will take place over a five-month period and is anticipated to occur in April-September of 2025.

Data analysis and creation of the descriptive report is projected to take place October – December 2025. Delivery of the final report is anticipated for February 2026. The final report will be available on the IOOS website at <https://ioos.noaa.gov/>.

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

The expiration date will be displayed on the collection instrument.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).