

# **RIC OMB ICR - Appendix D-7 Cluster Administrator Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

## **Cluster Administrator Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

### **The main focus is on:**

- Lessons learned and best practices for promoting business and regional outcomes within the local contexts,
- Program implementation challenges encountered and how challenges were resolved,
- Suggestions for the program improvement.

The bolded sections below represent topics covered in the Cluster Administrator Interview with example questions included for each topic. Exact questions are subject to change based on cluster-specific context.

### **Cluster Governance and Operations**

- Have there been any major changes in how your cluster is governed during the past year?
  - Any changes in cluster configuration, goals, performance targets, business model, strategies, or operations?
- Have there been any changes in the cluster's outreach and recruitment of participants during the past year?

### **Cluster Activities and Interactions with Small Businesses**

- What are the best practices and challenges your cluster had in conducting outreach and recruitment of participants?
  - How have you advertised that an event/activity is connected to [cluster name], part of the RIC initiative, or sponsored by the government?
- What are the best practices and challenges your cluster had in promoting collaboration and exchange of information between large organizations or other regional stakeholders and small business cluster participants?
  - What were the best practices and challenges encountered by your cluster in connecting small businesses and supporting organizations into the business ecosystems of resources in your region, such as business networks, suppliers, clients etc.?

### **Innovation**

- What are the best practices and challenges your cluster had in promoting innovation among large organizations/other regional stakeholders and small business cluster participants?

### **Regional Cluster Growth**

- How did your cluster promote the business ecosystems of resources in your region?
- What are the best practices and challenges your cluster had in promoting small business growth?

### **Lessons Learned**

- What were the best practices in administering the cluster over the past year?
- What were your most important learning experiences in administering the cluster over the past year?
- What were the most effective ways of addressing the challenges your cluster faced?

### **Sources of Funding:**

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- How does your cluster plans to sustain itself financially once the SBA funding ends?

### **Additional questions for the [Cluster Name] based on the Q4 report of [year]**

- Has the cluster been able to achieve the goals set for [year]?
  - o What has SBA funding been able to help you achieve over and above what you could've achieved otherwise?
- What goals have you NOT been able to achieve and how are you planning to remedy this? Is there anything the SBA can do to help achieve them?