**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**U.S. Department of Commerce**

**National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration**

**Analysis of and Participation in Ocean Exploration Video Products**

**OMB Control No. 0648-0748**

# Abstract

This request is for a revision to an existing information collection. This revision addresses minor updates to four existing forms and the addition of a fifth form that relate to the analysis of and participation in ocean exploration video products and expeditions. NOAA Ocean Exploration (OER) uses voluntary surveys to identify the needs of users of data, best approaches to leverage the expertise of shore-based participants, feedback on expeditions, and for meaningful public engagement with ocean exploration products. The one required form in the collection is for the limited number of scientists who sail aboard NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* to collect information pertaining to health and safety while at sea. Revisions to this collection include updated informational attachments (e.g., links to updated COVID guidance, medical clearance, underwater cultural heritage protocols) and updated expedition names and dates for a given calendar year. The *Okeanos Explorer* Participation Assessment form contains revisions to include optional feedback questions that relate to communication, leadership, and workplace climate during OER’s ocean exploration expeditions. This request also includes a new voluntary form to solicit interest within the scientific community to sail aboard the *Okeanos Explorer* as a Science Lead. The existing collection has a current expiration date of December 31, 2023. Revisions are requested at this time to improve the form collection for 2024.

**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.**

NOAA Ocean Exploration (OER) is the only federal organization dedicated to ocean exploration. By using unique capabilities in terms of personnel, technology, infrastructure, and exploration missions, OER is reducing unknowns in deep-ocean areas and providing high-value environmental intelligence needed by NOAA and the nation to address both current and emerging science and management needs. Since the inception of NOAA's exploration program in 2001, OER data management has been guided by the 2000 President's Panel Report recommendations which prioritized rapid and unrestricted data sharing as one of five critical exploration program components. More recently, [Public law 111-11 [Section XII Ocean Exploration]](https://oeab.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/Documents/public-law-111-11-ocean-exploration.pdf) reinforced and expanded OER data management objectives, continuing to stress the importance of sharing unique exploration data and information to improve public understanding of the oceans, and for research and management purposes.

OER uses the telepresence model to connect shore-based participants to expeditions at sea. Telepresence is the concept of providing individuals with the data and information necessary for participation in an event live when those individuals are not physically present for the event. In recent years, this technology has been adapted for oceanographic work to connect scientists, teachers, and students on shore to live images and real-time data from ships at sea. Telepresence is providing a portal into the excitement of oceanographic discovery and demonstrating to a broad audience the importance of exploring and protecting our largely unknown ocean. The information collection in this request is critical to foster engagement with ocean exploration missions via telepresence and ensure that data and discoveries are as accessible as possible to the public and scientific community in accordance with [Public law 111-11 [Section XII Ocean Exploration]](https://oeab.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/Documents/public-law-111-11-ocean-exploration.pdf).

# 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 information requested will have a practical utility with the analysis and participation of ocean exploration video products and expeditions. Voluntary participants will include the general public and members of the scientific community. The five forms used to collect information are as follows:

1) Sailing Contact Information. This required form is sent to the few scientists that directly sail on NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*. The ship’s operational officer needs certain information such as: if a sailing individual has securely submitted their proper medical documents to NOAA’s Office of Marine and Aviation Operations; if the person is up to date with required security documents (such as a passport) if the ship is traveling to a foreign port; any dietary restrictions so that the person will be served food that is safe. 2) *Okeanos Explorer* Participation Assessment. This voluntary form is sent to the scientists that sailed on or participated remotely in any *Okeanos Explorer* cruise funded by OER to record feedback they wish to provide to the office about their experience. OER uses their feedback to improve the utility of data collected during expeditions and the experience of the participants. 3) EX Collaboration Tools Feedback. This voluntary form is sent to members of the scientific community at the beginning of a fiscal year to ask if members would like to participate in any of the upcoming expeditions. OER uses this information to determine the degree to which participants want to be involved (e.g. included in email updates, given a direct line to the ship for remotely operated vehicle dive operations). 4) Citizen Scientist. This voluntary form is available to general members of the public and is used for members to improve the annotation efforts when watching short video clips of 30 seconds to 5 minutes. 5) Science Lead Solicitation. This voluntary form will be used to solicit interest from the scientific community to sail aboard the *Okeanos Explorer* in the role of a Science Lead. Information in this form will be used by OER to engage the scientific community in at-sea participation in ocean exploration expeditions.

**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.**

The collections for each of the forms uses an online process. The participation as well as the contact information use Google Forms to ask simple questions that can be answered quickly such as by clicking a radial button or filling a short text box. No paper versions of these forms exist and all records are linked to their corresponding Google Sheets automatically without input from a record keeper or similar position.

**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.**

Survey requests will pertain to specific NOAA OER video products and expeditions. These surveys will not be duplicated by other information collections.

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

This information collection will not affect small businesses or other small entities.

**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.**

Not Conducting Collection

1) Sailing Contact Information: not collecting information from the few visiting scientists that will be embarking on an at-sea expedition risks their health and safety. It is critical to obtain information such as emergency contacts, confirmation of completing NOAA’s Office of Marine and Aviation Operations pre health screening, and any food allergies. Without collecting this information from sailing participants, OER would not be able to safely facilitate at-sea science participation and leverage the experience of the scientific community.

2) Participation Assessment: by not collecting voluntary feedback from participants, OER would be limited in improving ocean exploration operations. Feedback is used to improve onboard science operations, the dissemination of data, engagement of shoreside participants, and the experience of those sailing aboard the *Okeanos Explorer.* Without this feedback, OER would not be able to effectively improve scientific operations and expand upon existing research capabilities.

3) Collaboration Tools: by not collecting information used to engage scientists around the country via telepresence, ship and shore-based scientists would not be able to effectively participate in ocean exploration expeditions. This would negatively impact the scientific community and public as ocean exploration relies on a broad range of expertise, and not every individual can physically sail on a ship. Not collecting information for collaboration tools would prevent OER from leveraging scientific expertise around the country.

4) Citizen Science: the Citizen Scientist project saves NOAA scientists hundreds of hours of time by allowing the public to watch and organize short video clips into digital bookmarks that scientists can then use to navigate areas of interest. Not having this voluntary information collection would impede public engagement with ocean exploration video data and slow down the process of NOAA scientists identifying useful video for further analysis.

5) Science Lead Interest: by not collecting the science lead interest form, the onboard positions would be filled by a smaller pool of scientists who are already engaged with OER expeditions. Creating the interest form enhances outreach efforts to expand access that all scientists will have to the opportunity to sail aboard the *Okeanos Explorer* in the role of Science Lead.

Less Frequent Collection

All forms pertain to an individual’s voluntary participation in an expedition (whether at-sea or on shore). Implementing the forms less frequently would mean entire expeditions (or a year’s worth of expeditions) would lack the engagement and expertise of the scientific community.

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

This 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 June 21, 2023 (Federal Register Vol. 88, No 40220) solicited public comments. We received one comment on June 21, 2023, from Jean Public. Due to lack of relevance, no action was taken in response to the comment. A copy of the comment received is included in this submission.

*“no matter what the environmental cost because they will make money from them.*

*ugly ugly ugly*

*public comment on federal register*

*noaa is allowing free rein to profiteers who do harmful things to the ocean and hurt its living creatures. mgt purpose and activities may allow catastrophic destruction of the ocean. mgt purposes do not reflect public desires on the ocean. The idea of this agency making money from these activities may bring about slanted, biased decisions. our govt should reflect the people's desires on the resources as to govt of the people by the people for the people. Do you think these allowances by noaa reflect that? I don't. This video product is achieved for your pal scientists. Why is the US public brought along on these scientific research activities via virtual. we have virtual meetings, why not accompany scientific research in our oceans. It's time to bring the public in instead of shutting them out. the public needs to watch what our agencies are up to much more than at present. some agencies take advantage. This comment is for the public record.please receipt. jean public jeanpublic1@gmail.com”*

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

No payments or gifts will be made 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.**

Respondent scientists will be asked to volunteer feedback via a Google form for the Participation Assessment. The voluntary Google form includes a statement that the form does not collect email addresses and the form responses are only accessible by the NOAA Ocean Exploration Operations Chief.

**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 an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Information Collection** | **Type of Respondent (Occupational Title)** | **# of Respondents****(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)** | **Mean Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent)****(f)** | **Total Annual Wage Burden Costs****(g) = (e) x (f)** |
| Sailing Contact Information | Scientist | 1000  | 1 | 1000 | 0.166 Hr | 167 | $40.21 | $6,674.86 |
| *Okeanos Explorer* Participation Assessment | Scientist | 10001 | 1 | 1000 | 0.166 Hr | 167 | $40.21 | $6,674.86 |
| EX Collaboration Tools Feedback | Scientist | 1000 | 1 | 1000 | 0.166 Hr | 167 | $40.21 | $6,674.86 |
| Citizen Science  | Individual | 1000 | 1 | 1000 | 0.166 Hr | 167 | $29.76 | $4,940.16 |
| Science Lead Interest (NEW) | Scientist | 100 | 1 | 100 | 0.5 Hr | 50 | $40.21 | $2,010.50 |
| **Totals** |  |  |  | **4100** |  | **718**  |  | **$26,975.24** |

1 3,100 unique respondents: Respondents completing the Sailing Contact Information are the same respondents who will complete the *Okeanos Explorer* Participation Assessments.

**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).**

Respondents will not incur any costs associated with this collection of information.

**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.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cost Descriptions** | **Grade/Step** | **Loaded Salary /Cost** | **% of Effort** | **Fringe (if Applicable)** | **Total Cost to Government** |
| **Federal Oversight** | GS 10 | $102,000 | 6 hrs |  | $294 |
| Other Federal Positions | GS 11  | $104,000 | 12 hrs |   |  $605 |
| **Contractor Cost** |   |  |  |   |  |
| **Other Costs:**  |   |   |   |   |   |
| **TOTAL** |   |   |   |  | **899** |

Please note the federal employees referenced in this form are under the DOC CAPS pay system and a uniformed NOAA Corps officer which do not directly convert to the GS scale with steps. We have included the closest equivalency in order to best represent the lump total of the efforts of 6 people who provide minimal support (~12 hours over the course of a year to the support and maintenance of these forms) and the one NOAA Corps officer who provides oversight (6 hours/year).

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

The following tables show the changes and in the number of respondents, responses, time estimates, labor costs, and miscellaneous costs; and explains the reasons for these changes.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Information Collection** | **Respondents** | **Responses** | **Burden Hours** | **Reason for change or adjustment** |
| Current Renewal / Revision | Previous Renewal / Revision | Current Renewal / Revision | Previous Renewal / Revision | Current Renewal / Revision | Previous Renewal / Revision |
| Sailing Contact Information | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 166 | 166 |  |
| *Okeanos Explorer* Participation Assessment | 10001 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 166 | 166 |  |
| EX Collaboration Tools Feedback | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 166 | 166 | New Req  |
| Citizen Science Bookmarking | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 166 | 166 |  |
| Science Lead Interest Form (NEW) | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 50 | 0 | New Requirement |
| **Total for Collection** | **4100** | **4000** | **4100** | **4000** | **714** | **664** |  |
| **Difference** | **100** | **100** | **50** |  |

1 3,000 unique respondents: Respondents completing the Sailing Contact Information are the same respondents who will complete the *Okeanos Explorer* Participation Assessments.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Information Collection** | **Labor Costs** | **Miscellaneous Costs** | **Reason for change or adjustment** |
| Current | Previous | Current | Previous |
| Sailing Contact Information | $6,674.86 | $6,078.92 | 0 | 0 | Labor costs calculated using BLS Occupational Employment Data increased from 2020 - 2023. |
| *Okeanos Explorer* Participation Assessment | $6,674.86 | $6,078.92 | 0 | 0 | Labor costs calculated using BLS Occupational Employment Data increased from 2020 - 2023. |
| EX Collaboration Tools Feedback | $6,674.86 | $6,078.92 | 0 | 0 | Labor costs calculated using BLS Occupational Employment Data increased from 2020 - 2023. |
| Citizen Science Bookmarking | $4,940.16 | $4,146.68 | 0 | 0 | Labor costs calculated using BLS Occupational Employment Data increased from 2020 - 2023. |
| Science Lead Interest Form (NEW) | $2,010.50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | New Requirement |
| **Total for Collection** | **$26,975.2** | **$22,383.44** | **0** | **0** |  |
| **Difference** | **$4,591.80** | **0** |  |

**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.**

Collections will not be published.

**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.**

Approval is not sought to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.

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

There are no exceptions for compliance with provisions in the certification statement.

**Part B**

This collection does not employ the use of statistical methods.