

## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Institute of Standards and Technology

### Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science Membership Application

OMB Control No. 0693-0070

## SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

### Abstract

The success of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science's efforts to facilitate the development and promote the use of technically sound standards depends on the collaboration and dedication of volunteers. NIST seeks a balanced and broad participation from forensic science practitioners, researchers, metrologists, statisticians, accreditation bodies, defense, and prosecution who have expertise in a broad array of forensic science disciplines. NIST solicits self-nominations from these communities on a continuous basis, using the OSAC Membership Application, to identify individuals interested and qualified to contribute to the efforts of developing standards for forensic science.

### 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.**

NIST has established an Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science to enable a coordinated U.S. approach to the development of forensic science standards that includes broad participation from forensic science practitioners, researchers, metrologists, quality assurance experts, defense, and prosecution. NIST works with professional forensic science societies and science societies to inform their members of the OSAC application (self-nomination) in order to identify those interested and qualified to contribute.

The information will inform NIST about who wants to serve on the OSAC, which of the over thirty organizational components of the OSAC they are interested in working on, and the experience that they bring to the OSAC so those selected for the OSAC will reflect a balance of perspectives. NIST works with the Forensic Science Standards Board (the Executive Board of OSAC) to place appropriate participants into the different roles within the leadership positions of the multiple tiers of OSAC (structure chart included with this request).

It is important to note that the OSAC addresses key aspects of a Forensic Science Standards Program that have not previously existed in the United States, including:

- Seven Scientific Area Committees (SACs) with an underlying structure of twenty-two

discipline-specific Subcommittees that develop and identify appropriate standards, provide common web access to standards and best practices, and monitor for duplication and inactivity within the organization;

- Five Resource Task Groups that provide advice and intellectual resources to the SACs and Subcommittees, composed of Legal Resources, Quality Infrastructure, Human Factors, Statistics, and Terminology, and
- A Forensic Science Standards Board to resolve overarching issues and to address expectations that span all SACs.

For NIST to continue in the role of administering OSAC, it must be able to identify new OSAC participants to fill new positions created within OSAC and to replace positions vacated by resignation or rotation of more than 500 current members.

**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.**

Self-nominations will be open continuously throughout the year and provide the OSAC with the information needed to identify interested and qualified respondents with the ability to participate. The collection information will enable OSAC to fill vacancies through directed requests to meet specific balance requirements caused by resignation or rotation of appointees. NIST does not intend to disseminate the information that is collected.

**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 collection will rely on a web-based application for interested participants to include multiple choice response options and one brief narrative. The application process also requires the applicant to upload a current CV or Resume, to accompany the application form.

The application process is described on the existing NIST website: <https://www.nist.gov/osac>.

The electronic OSAC membership application form can be found at the website:

<https://www.nist.gov/osac-application-form>.

The electronic tool used to receive CV/Resumes is a NIST provisioned tool, *BOX*, and the files are received at the website: <https://nist.app.box.com/f/90f983cc962b4097b24e2cd8143addf2>.

**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 Item 2 above.**

There is no other information collection of this type as the OSAC is the only organization soliciting applications for membership to support the coordinated U.S. approach for developing scientifically sound forensic science standards.

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

While this collection is not focused on small entities, we expect individuals who are part of small entities to respond. By conducting the collection via a web-based tools, focusing the questions on specific interests in order to fill the positions available on the OSAC, and by limiting the length of any narrative response request, we have minimized burden on the respondents.

**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.**

Without this collection, NIST will not be able to fill vacancies with appropriate qualified applicants and assure the public that a balanced composition has been maintained in OSAC. The need for balance in an organization such as OSAC was a major conclusion of the National Academy of Science (NAS) inquiry into forensic science in the United States. Without assurance that the OSAC has maintained balance, the Federal government will not be able to make a credible response to these concerns. Furthermore, qualified applicants who are interested in membership will be denied access without the collection being conducted.

Since OSAC's inception, NIST has worked with the Department of Justice to advance the state of forensic science in the U.S. OSAC is the key component to ensuring scientifically sound forensic science standards are developed and adopted in support of the criminal justice system.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner: requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly; requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract; grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years; in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

The 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 publication 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. Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years - even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.**

A 60 Day Federal Register Notice (FRN) soliciting public comments was published on December 22, 2023, Vol 88, No. 245, pages 88584-88585. No comments were received.

A 30 Day Federal Register Notice (FRN) soliciting public comments was published on May 21, 2024, Vol. 89, No. 99, pages 44638-44639.

NIST regularly consults with representatives of those from whom information is obtained. Applicants are encouraged to complete a new application every three (3) years, to maintain accurate information.

Additionally, current members or affiliates are also encouraged to complete a new application, if any information requires updates or modifications.

Applicants who must withdraw their application for consideration, are encouraged to contact NIST with this request. The requests will be completed in a timely manner.

The guidance stated above is also posted on the NIST website:

<https://www.nist.gov/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/apply-join-osac>

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

There will be no payments or gifts associated with this questionnaire.

**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.**

PII such as name is collected in this IC. Data is retrieved by a personal identifier; therefore, this is a Privacy Act System of Records. A Privacy Act Statement is provided on the instrument and an appropriate SORN is uploaded as a supplementary document. There is no PIA currently for this collection. The system collects, stores, and processes low impact, scientific and technical research and innovation information that supports the NIST Special Program's Office

management of high-profile program, OSAC, that spans the mission and expertise of multiple NIST laboratories to address national needs, such as those in forensic science, greenhouse gas measurements, and open data.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and 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.**

Gender and race information will be collected in accordance with OMB's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity. Under Executive Orders 13041 and 13985 outline the importance of federal agencies to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for underserved communities and populations

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

NIST is estimating that 500 respondents may participate per year. The application takes approximately 5 minutes per response for an estimated total of 42 annual burden hours.

500 Respondents x 5 minutes per response = **42 Burden Hours.**

**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 costs to the respondents.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized costs 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. Agencies may also aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.**

The OSAC Application does not require manual manipulation by a federal employee for an application to be accepted into the data collection system. OSAC applications are downloaded monthly from the application system by a NIST employee (ZA-II) and provided to the OSAC units to determine if any applications fill open OSAC positions. This activity requires approximately 30 minutes of labor per month for a total of 6 hours annually. The approximate cost for this download and sharing activity by a ZA-II is \$41.00 per hour totaling \$246.00 annually.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported on the burden worksheet.**

Two demographic questions have been added to the collection instrument. These new questions are to meet Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility goals.

This demographic information will be collected on the application and will be marked as voluntary. The responses will be used to monitor the program's inclusion of diverse perspectives among the applicants and organizational membership.

This information will not be used to evaluate any applicant and choosing not to provide this information will not affect the application process for any individual applying to the program.

**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.**

Results 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.**

The expiration date for the OMB approval will be displayed.

**18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification or Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.