

SECTION B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS (3145-0174)

B1. Respondent universe, sampling, or other selection procedures

The information gathered will be used mainly for questionnaire development and other research. The studies will cover a broad range of topics designed to improve SRS' data collections. Limited samples of respondents/participants will be recruited to participate in the projects. Depending on the nature of the project, the samples may be purposive or may be selected to be generally representative of the survey's population. For some studies the participants will be actual respondents to a particular SRS survey; in others they will be individuals knowledgeable about the topics being explored, and for some, participants will be chosen who have similar characteristics or knowledge to respondents to a given SRS survey. The sampling strategy will be described in the clearance request for each specific data collection. The recruiting procedures will be specified in the clearance request. In general, recruiting is done by phone and/or email, and respondents/participants are notified about the purpose of the methodological study.

B2. Procedures for collection of the information

The techniques that SRS envisions using are the following widely accepted standard industry methods of developing, testing, and evaluating surveys: focus groups, cognitive and usability laboratory and field techniques, exploratory interviews, behavior coding, respondent debriefing, and split panel tests. Descriptions of these methods were given at the beginning of this request. The particular technique (or techniques) chosen will depend on the objectives of the study under investigation and will be described in the clearance request for each specific data collection.

B3. Methods to maximize response rates and to minimize nonresponse rate

In order to maximize response rates to SRS surveys, some generic clearance projects may be used to test alternative combinations of contact materials or alternative designs of such materials to determine what seems to produce higher response rates. Testing of these contacting materials may utilize personal visits, emails, or telephone conversations.

B4. Tests or procedures

This submission covers testing of survey instruments and survey procedures. SRS will analyze the results of these projects from a variety of perspectives, depending on the focus of each project. Among facets examined will be unit and item non-response rates, error patterns, consistency of responses within an instrument, incidence of choice of “other” in items with categorical responses, and total response time. In general, new items/procedures will not be substituted for existing ones unless they result in improvements over the old ones. The purpose of all activities conducted under this clearance will be to develop and implement questionnaires and/or procedures that will increase data quality and/or reduce respondent burden.

B5. Name and telephone number of individual

SRS program officers will have primary responsibility for the information gathering efforts, with assistance from the SRS Chief Statistician. Questions as to the person in charge of each project should be directed to Lynda Carlson, SRS Division Director, at 703-292-7766.