

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
OMB No. 0524-0049
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase III Commercialization Survey

SUBJECT: Supporting Statement B. Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program to Reinststate a Phase III Commercialization Survey

B. Statistical Methods

1. RESPONDENT UNIVERSE AND SAMPLING METHODS

SBIR Phase II Survey. The universe of participants includes small business owners who received Phase III SBIR grant awards from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) between 2012-2020. Surveys will be sent to all participants so sampling will not be involved. Results will not be used to make statements representative of all SBIR Phase II awardees and are not intended to be generalizable beyond the respondent group.

| Number in Universe | Entity |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| n=121 | Small business owners |

We estimate that we can achieve at least a 30% response rate based on previous relationships with our past SBIR Phase III awardees and experience with the previous data collection.

2. INFORMATION COLLECTION PROCEDURES

No estimation or stratification is used because we will survey 100% of the SBIR participant population. Participant information will be pulled from an internal database at the agency. Specifically, we began with a universe of approximately 700 businesses. The agency conducted an analysis to determine which businesses were still viable (via Internet searches), resulting in a list of 121 businesses estimated as potential respondents.

Upon OMB approval, NIFA will contract with an organization (via competitive procurement) to:

- (1) announce and solicit survey responses via mass e-mail announcements;
- (2) collect and store the data in a secure database; and
- (3) analyze the data and report it to the NIFA Project Officer

Additionally, because the survey contains proprietary information, NIFA will add terms and conditions to the contract to ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout each data collection point.

Data collection will occur as follows:

| | T₁. Baseline | T₂. First Follow-up |
|-----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Begins... | Upon OMB clearance and contractor award. | 3 years after baseline |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Sent to... | n=121 small business owners | n=121 small business owners |
| Via... | E-mail containing a link to the survey | E-mail containing a link to the survey |
| First E-mail Reminder Sent... | 2 weeks after the initial e-mail | 2 weeks after the initial e-mail |
| Second E-mail Reminder Sent... | 2 weeks after the first reminder | 2 weeks after the first reminder |
| Final Reminder | 2 weeks after the second reminder as direct contact via phone call | 2 weeks after the second reminder as direct contact via phone call |

We estimate that a 30% response rate (of the 121 eligible businesses) at each data collection point should provide a reasonable number of business owners to assess the success of commercialization funded by NIFA.

3. METHODS TO MAXIMIZE RESPONSE RATES

As stated above, the contractor will employ mass e-mail marketing techniques to highlight the importance of participation in the survey. Further, many of the past awardees have prior working relationships with NIFA staff who will promote participation in the survey at SBIR conferences and meetings.

4. TESTS OF PROCEDURES

The survey was developed by Larta, Inc., who used data elements from the Small Business Administration (SBA) commercialization matrix. This is important to note because the matrix was vetted and tested by several industry leaders and valid and representative.

Further, Larta pretested the proposed instrument with several companies for timing, clarity, and feasibility. Feedback was used to craft the attached survey. No companies were pre-tested by NIFA.

This survey was tested by the researchers at UNL for time to complete, clarity, etc. The expected response rate is typically around 30%.

5. STATISTICAL CONSULTANTS

NIFA did not consult with any outside individual on the statistical aspects of the design of its survey. NIFA employees who will collect and/or analyze the information are:

Melinda Coffman at NIFA will be the Project Officer of the contract responsible for the data collection and analysis.