

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Surface Transportation Board**

[STB Ex Parte No. 558 (Sub-No. 2)]

Railroad Cost of Capital—1998**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board, Transportation.**ACTION:** Notice of decision.

SUMMARY: On May 17, 1999, the Board served a decision to update its computation of the railroad industry's cost of capital for 1998. The composite after-tax cost of capital rate for 1998 is found to be 10.7%, based on a current cost of debt of 6.64%; a cost of common equity capital of 13.11%; a cost of preferred equity capital of 6.19%; and a capital structure mix comprised of 36.01% debt, 62.64% common equity, and 1.35% preferred equity. The cost of capital finding made in this proceeding will be used in a variety of Board proceedings.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This action is effective May 17, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leonard J. Blistein, (202) 565-1529. [TDD for the hearing impaired: (202) 565-1695.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The cost of capital finding in this decision shall be used for a variety of regulatory purposes. To obtain a copy of the full decision, write to, call, or pick up in person from: DC NEWS & DATA, INC., Room 210, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423. Telephone: (202) 289-4357. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through TDD services (202) 565-1695.] The decision is also available on the Board's internet site at www.stb.dot.gov.

Environmental and Energy Considerations

This action will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), we conclude that our action in this proceeding will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The purpose and effect of this action are to update the annual railroad industry cost of capital finding by the Board. No new reporting or other regulatory requirements are imposed, directly or indirectly, on small entities.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 10704(a).
Decided: May 6, 1999.

By the Board, Chairman Morgan, Vice Chairman Clyburn, and Commissioner Burkes.

Vernon A. Williams,*Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 99-12468 Filed 5-17-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY**Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request****AGENCY:** United States Information Agency.**ACTION:** Submission for OMB Review and Comment Request of Proposed New Collection.

SUMMARY: Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 [Pub. L. 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)], this notice announces that the following information collection activity has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The United States Information Agency (USIA) is requesting OMB approval of a new information collection entitled, "USIA Grantee/Customer Survey" through December 1999. Also, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act and as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, USIA invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on this proposed public use form. Comments are requested on the proposed information collection concerning (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the agency, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's burden estimates; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to the United States Information Agency, M/AOL, 301 Fourth Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547; and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Docket Library, Room 10202, NEOB, Washington, DC 20503, Attention: Desk Officer for USIA.

DATES: Comments are due on or before June 17, 1999.

COPIES: Copies of the Request for Clearance (OMB 83-I), supporting statement, and other documents that have been submitted to OMB for approval may be obtained from the USIA Clearance Officer.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Agency Clearance Officer, Ms. Jeannette Giovetti, United States Information Agency, M/AOL, 301 Fourth Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547, telephone (202) 619-4408, Internet address JGiovett@USIA.GOV; and OMB review: Mr. Jefferson Hill, Office of Information And Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Docket Library, Room 1002, NEOB, Washington, DC 20503, telephone (202) 395-5871.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The information collection activity involved with this program is conducted pursuant to the mandate given to the United States Information Agency under the terms and conditions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, 22 U.S.C. 2451.

An Agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting initial comments on this collection was published on March 23, 1999, vol. 64, no. 55. Public reporting burden for this collection of information (Paper Work Reduction Project: OMB No. 3116-xxxx) is estimated to average ten (10) minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responses are voluntary but respondents are requested to respond one time.

Current Actions: This information collection has been submitted to OMB for the purpose of requesting approval of this new one-time collection through December 1999.

Title: USIA Grantee/Customer Survey.
Form Number(s): N/A.

Abstract: In support of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, USIA's Grants Office proposes to conduct a one-time survey to streamline the grants-making process to consistently identify ways to effectively and efficiently execute grant awards and to enhance the quality of service to our customers in developing future workshops.

Proposed Frequency of Responses:
 No. of Respondents—800
 Recordkeeping Hours—16
 Total Annual Burden—80

Dated: May 12, 1999.

Rose Royal,

Federal Register Liaison.

[FR Doc. 99-12452 Filed 5-17-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

College and University Affiliations Program

ACTION: Notice—Request for Proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Academic Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in the United States Information Agency announces an open competition for an assistance award program. For applicants' information, on October 1, 1999 the Bureau will become part of the U.S. Department of State without affecting the content of this announcement or the nature of the program described. Accredited, post-secondary educational institutions meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to pursue institutional or departmental objectives in international partnerships whose goals will strengthen, through teaching, scholarship, and professional outreach from the partner institutions, mutual understanding and cooperation on specified themes of mutual interest to the United States and eligible foreign institutions. Eligible fields are education or educational administration; the social, political, economic, or environmental sciences; law; business; public administration; or communications. Within these fields, themes of special interest are described in additional detail in the section on "Country Eligibility."

In general, underlying the specific objectives of projects funded by this program should be the goal of fostering freedom and democracy through a deepened mutual understanding of fundamental issues and practical applications in the encouragement of civil society, economic growth and prosperity, environmental cooperation, or the free flow of information. Creative, innovative strategies to address these underlying concerns in the pursuit of clearly defined institutional goals are encouraged. The extension of understanding about these issues through outreach from academic institutions to larger communities of citizens and practitioners is also encouraged.

The Bureau supports institutional linkages in higher education through the College and University Affiliations Program, for which this Request for Proposals invites applications for funding in FY2000. In addition, for the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, the N.I.S. College and University Partnerships Program Request for Proposals will be issued separately in the summer of 1999 to invite applications for funding in FY2000. For further information about this program see the section of this Request describing eligibility of the N.I.S. under "Country Eligibility."

In the College and University Affiliations Program, partner institutions may pursue specific institutional goals with support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs through exchanges of teachers, administrators or, in limited circumstances, students for any appropriate combination of teaching, consultation, research, and outreach, for periods ranging from one week (for planning visits) to an academic year. The Bureau's support may be used to defray the costs of the exchange visits as well as the costs (up to a maximum of 20 percent of the total grant) of their administration at any partner institution, including administrative salaries but excluding indirect costs. Although grants will be issued to eligible U.S. colleges and universities, adequate provision for the administrative costs of the project at all partner institutions is encouraged. Administrative salaries may include salary support for project directors and administrative assistants within the 20 percent maximum that may be allocated to administrative costs, but the Bureau will not fund salaries, stipends, or honoraria for program participants. (See sections of this document on "U.S. Partner and Participant Eligibility" and "Foreign Partner and Participant Eligibility" for details.) The costs of exchange visits of foreign students and U.S. graduate student teaching or research assistants who are working under the supervision of a faculty participant or project director toward the achievement of project objectives are eligible for support. Other students may participate in the project, but not with the Bureau's support for the costs of their visits. With the Bureau's support, institutions may reinforce the activities of exchange participants through the establishment and maintenance of Internet and/or electronic mail communication facilities as well as through interactive technology or non-technology-based distance-learning

programs. Applicants may propose other project activities not specifically anticipated in this solicitation if the activities reinforce exchange activities and their impact.

Proposals must be submitted by the U.S. institutional partner and must include a letter of commitment from the foreign partner(s). While the benefits of the project to each of the participating institutions may differ significantly in nature and scope, proposals should outline well-reasoned strategies leading to specific, demonstrable changes (for example, new courses, new research or teaching capacities or methodologies, new programs or revised curricula) that are anticipated for each participating department or for the institution as a whole as a result of the project. Proposals to pursue a limited number of related thematic objectives at each institution are encouraged over proposals whose thematic goals within each institution are unrelated. The strategy for achieving project goals may include exchange visits in either or both directions, but no single formula is anticipated for the duration, sequence, or number of these visits. However, visits of one semester or more for participants from at least one of the institutional partners are encouraged. Although strong budgetary and programmatic emphasis may be given to visits in one direction over another, the benefits of these visits to the sending as well as the receiving sides should be clearly explained in terms of their contributions to the departmental or institutional objectives which the project is designed to achieve.

In addition to demonstrating the capacity of each participating institution to contribute to its partner(s), proposals should also explain how this cooperation will enable each of the institutions to address its own needs.

Accordingly, applicants are encouraged to describe the needs as well as the capabilities of each participating department. Effective proposals will explain the anticipated cooperation in ways that demonstrate that the institutions proposed for participation in the partnership clearly understand one another and are committed to support one another in project implementation. If the proposed partnership would occur within the context of a previous or on-going project, the proposal should explain how the request for Bureau funding would build upon the pre-existing relationship or complement concurrent projects and cooperation. Projects that direct assistance from one institution to another in one direction only are not eligible for consideration.