

# Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Economic Research Service

#### Notice of Intent To Request Renewal of a Currently Approved Information Collection

**AGENCY:** Economic Research Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the Economic Research Service (ERS) to request extension of a currently approved information collection, the Generic Clearance for Survey Research Studies.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by November 26, 2018 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Address all comments concerning this notice to Pheny Weidman, ERS Clearance Officer, Economic Research Service, Room 4-163B, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Mail Stop 1800, Washington, DC 20050-1800. Submit electronic comments to [pweidman@ers.usda.gov](mailto:pweidman@ers.usda.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Pheny Weidman at the address in the preamble. Tel. 202-694-5013.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Generic Clearance for Survey Research Studies.

*OMB Number:* 0536-0073.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* Three years from the date of approval.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

*Abstract:* In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and OMB regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the ERS' intention to request renewal of approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for a generic

clearance that will allow ERS to rigorously develop, test, and evaluate its survey methodologies, instruments, and administration. The mission of ERS is to provide economic and other social science information and analysis for public and private decisions on agriculture, food, natural resources, and rural America. This request is part of an on-going initiative to improve ERS data product quality, as recommended by both its own guidelines and those of OMB.

The purpose of this generic clearance is to allow ERS to evaluate, adopt, and use state-of-the-art and multi-disciplinary research to improve and enhance the quality of its current data collections. This clearance will also be used to aid in the development of new surveys. It will help to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed.

ERS envisions using a variety of survey improvement techniques, as appropriate to the individual project under investigation. These include focus groups, market analysis, cognitive and usability laboratory and field techniques, exploratory interviews, behavior coding, and respondent debriefing.

Following standard OMB requirements, ERS will inform OMB individually in writing of the purpose, scope, time frame, and number of burden hours used for each survey improvement or development project it undertakes under this generic clearance. ERS will also provide OMB with a copy of the data collection instrument (if applicable), and all other materials describing the project.

*Authority:* These data will be collected under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2204(a).

ERS intends to protect respondent information under the Privacy Act of 1974, Section 1770 of the Food Security Act of 1985, and 7 U.S.C. 2276. ERS has decided not to invoke the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA). The complexity and cost necessary to invoke CIPSEA is not justified given the nature of the collection; the collections would generally be conducted by ERS'

contractors and designed to be hosted in non-government owned computer systems, where CIPSEA compliance could not be assured.

Specific details regarding information handling will be specified in individual submissions under this generic clearance.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for these collections of information is estimated to average from .5 to 1.5 hours per respondent, depending upon the information collection and the technique used to test for that particular collection.

*Respondents:* Individuals or households, farms, and businesses or other for-profits.

*Estimated Total Number of Respondents:* 3,630.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 1,820 hours. Public reporting burden for these collections of information is estimated to average from .5 to 1.5 hours per respondent, dependent upon the survey and the technique used to test for that particular survey.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Pheny Weidman at the address in the preamble.

*Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments should be sent to the address in the preamble. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: September 19, 2018.

**Chris Hartley,**

*Interim Administrator, Economic Research Service.*

[FR Doc. 2018-21051 Filed 9-26-18; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Information Collection: Post-Hurricane Research and Assessment of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Communities in the U.S. Caribbean

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on the renewal of the currently approved information collection, *Post-Hurricane Research and Assessment of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Communities in the U.S. Caribbean*.

**DATES:** Comments concerning this notice must be received in writing on or before November 26, 2018 to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments concerning this information collection should be addressed to Kathleen McGinley, Social Scientist, USDA Forest Service, International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF), 1201 Calle Ceiba, Rio Piedras, PR 00926. Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to 787-766-6302, or by email to [kmcginley@fs.fed.us](mailto:kmcginley@fs.fed.us). Please put "Comments re: Post-Hurricane Research" in the subject line.

Comments submitted in response to this notice may be made available to the public through relevant websites and upon request. For this reason, please do not include in your comments information of a confidential nature, such as sensitive personal information or proprietary information. If you send an email comment, your email address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the internet. Please note that responses to this public comment request containing any routine notice about the confidentiality of the communication will be treated as public comments that may be made available to the public notwithstanding the inclusion of the routine notice.

The public may inspect the draft supporting statement and/or comments received at IITF, 1201 Calle Ceiba, Rio Piedras, PR 00926 during normal business hours. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead to 787-764-7790 to facilitate entry to the building. The public may request an electronic copy of the draft supporting statement and/or any comments received be sent via return email. Requests should be emailed to [kmcginley@fs.fed.us](mailto:kmcginley@fs.fed.us).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information should be made to Kathleen McGinley, Social Scientist, USDA Forest Service, by electronic mail to [kmcginley@fs.fed.us](mailto:kmcginley@fs.fed.us) or phone 919-600-3108. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, including holidays.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Title:** Post-Hurricane Research and Assessment of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Communities in the U.S. Caribbean.

**OMB Number:** 0596-0246.

**Expiration Date of Approval:** 12/31/2018.

**Type of Request:** Renewal.

**Abstract:** In September 2017, two major hurricanes passed through the Caribbean, causing catastrophic damage to communities, infrastructure, farms, and forests across Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and many neighboring islands, significantly compromising local livelihoods, food security, and economic stability throughout the region. To date, there is limited information on the impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, particularly in terms of agricultural and forestry systems and the people who depend on them, and likewise, limited information about the effectiveness of related conservation practices or mitigation and adaptation strategies. Such information is critical to the design and implementation of ongoing recovery work and to longer-term resilience efforts in the U.S. Caribbean and in other regions affected by hurricanes or other major disturbances.

Building on the initial data collection under the emergency approval, USDA Forest Service seeks this renewal to continue to collect information about the effects of Hurricanes Irma and Maria on agriculture, forestry, and rural communities in the U.S. Caribbean and the internal and external factors that affected their vulnerabilities or resilience. This renewal also will permit the investigation of vulnerabilities,

resilience, and effects associated with future hurricanes or major storms that may occur within the three year time period for this requested approval. This information is essential to the Department of Agriculture mandate to support agriculture and natural resources that are productive, sustainable, and provide benefits for the American public under the Rural Development Policy Act of 1980, and to the Forest Service mandate to provide expert advice and conduct research on the management of forests outside the National Forest System through the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. Additionally, the importance of gathering, analyzing, and sharing this type of information is reflected in the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended, and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978.

Information will be collected through focus groups and interviews with participants selected purposively in line with the collection objectives. This collection will generate scientifically-based, up-to-date information that can be used to inform ongoing and any future recovery efforts and related risk reduction and mitigation and adaptation strategies by USDA, Forest Service, other Federal agencies, local government, civil society, and the private sector.

**Affected Public:** Individuals and Households, Private Sector Businesses, Non-Profit and Non-Governmental Organizations, State or Local Government.

**Estimate of Annual Burden per Response:** 45 minutes for interviews, 90 minutes for focus groups.

**Estimated Annual Number of Respondents:** 550.

**Estimated Annual Number of Responses per Respondent:** 1 response/respondent.

**Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours on Respondents:** 266 hours.

#### Comment Is Invited

Comment is invited on: (1) Whether this collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes and the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical or scientific utility; (2) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on