

SEC INTERROGATORY #61

INTERROGATORY

[B/6/4, p. 45] Please advise whether the expert agrees with the view of the working group that self-report surveys are necessary because “other available methods and research designs are generally not feasible for large nonresidential customer programs”.

RESPONSE

The Navigant team agrees. Self-report surveys may be the best option for nonresidential customer programs; however, they pose challenges in implementation and it is important for these efforts to mitigate biases common to these approaches as discussed in section 2.3 of the cited report and on page 26 of the report. These include issues with recall bias and the following types of response bias:

- provision of socially desirable answers;
- rationalization of past decisions;
- inability of respondents to know what they would have done in hypothetical situations;
- failure of respondents to recognize the influence of other parties, e.g., influence of the program on contractors due to market effects; and,
- arbitrariness in the scoring methods used to translate the responses into free-rider estimates and overall estimates of NTG

Best practice studies need to mitigate these issues and potential biases. Often this is done by pre-testing instruments and through sensitivity analyses to determine how the responses drive the final estimates. The report cited in this question was prepared for the Uniform Methods Project (“UMP”) sponsored by the U.S. DOE in 2017. Page 26 of this report discusses these issues.

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