



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Comment Request; Grantee

Reporting Requirements for the Engineering Research Centers

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, and as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, the National Science Foundation (NSF) is inviting the general public or other Federal agencies to comment on this proposed continuing information collection. NSF will publish periodic summaries of the proposed projects.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**], to be assured consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable. Send comments to address below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone (703) 292-7556; or send e-mail to splimpto@nsf.gov. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339, which is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (including federal holidays).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Foundation, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the

accuracy of the Foundation's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Title of Collection: Grantee Reporting Requirements for the Engineering Research Centers (ERCs).

OMB Number: 3145-0220.

Expiration Date of Approval: August 31, 2024.

Type of Request: Intent to seek approval to renew an information collection.

Abstract:

Proposed Project:

The Engineering Research Centers (ERC) program supports an integrated, interdisciplinary research environment to advance fundamental engineering knowledge and engineered systems; educate a globally competitive and diverse engineering workforce from K-12 on; and join academe and industry in partnership to achieve these goals. ERCs conduct world-class research through partnerships of academic institutions, national laboratories, industrial organizations, and/or other public/private entities. New knowledge thus created is meaningfully linked to society.

ERCs conduct world-class research with an engineered systems perspective that integrates materials, devices, processes, components, control algorithms and/or other enabling elements to perform a well-defined function. These systems provide a unique academic research and education experience that involves integrative complexity and technological realization. The complexity

of the systems perspective includes the factors associated with its use in industry, society/environment, or the human body.

ERCs enable and foster excellent education, integrate research and education, speed knowledge/technology transfer through partnerships between academe and industry, and prepare a more competitive future workforce. ERCs capitalize on diversity through participation in center activities and demonstrate leadership in the involvement of groups underrepresented in science and engineering.

Centers are required to submit annual reports on progress and plans, which will be used as a basis for performance review and determining the level of continued funding. To support this review and the management of a Center, ERCs also are required to submit management and performance indicators annually to NSF via a data collection website that is managed by a technical assistance contractor. These indicators are both quantitative and descriptive and may include, for example, the characteristics of center personnel and students; sources of cash and in-kind support; expenditures by operational component; characteristics of industrial and/or other sector participation; research activities; education activities; knowledge transfer activities; patents, licenses; publications; degrees granted to students involved in Center activities; descriptions of significant advances and other outcomes of the ERC effort. Such reporting requirements will be included in the cooperative agreement which is binding between the academic institution and the NSF.

Each Center's annual report will address the following categories of activities: (1) vision and impact, (2) strategic plan, (3) research program, (4) innovation ecosystem and industrial collaboration, (5) education, (6)

infrastructure (leadership, management, facilities, diversity) and (7) budget issues.

For each of the categories the report will describe overall objectives for the year, progress toward center goals, problems the Center has encountered in making progress towards goals and how they were overcome, plans for the future and anticipated research and other barriers to overcome in the following year, and specific outputs and outcomes.

Use of the Information: The data collected will be used for NSF internal reports, historical data, performance review by peer site visit teams, program level studies and evaluations, and for securing future funding for continued ERC program maintenance and growth.

Estimate of Burden: 150 hours per center for 17 centers for a total of 2550 hours.

Respondents: Academic institutions.

Estimated Number of Responses per Report: One from each of the 17 ERCs.

Dated: February 22, 2024.

Suzanne H. Plimpton,
Reports Clearance Officer,
National Science Foundation.

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