

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) for the BE-85 Quarterly Survey of Financial Services Transactions by U.S. Financial Services Providers and Unaffiliated Foreign Persons

1) What is the threshold for having to file?

Completion of a BE-85 survey is required of any U.S. financial services provider that had

- a. receipts from unaffiliated foreign persons in all financial services combined that exceeded \$20 million in the previous fiscal year or that are expected to exceed that amount in the current fiscal year; or*
- b. payments to unaffiliated foreign persons in all financial services combined that exceeded \$15 million for the previous fiscal year or that are expected to exceed that amount in the current fiscal year.*

2) When is the survey due?

A completed form is due within 45 days after the close of each fiscal quarter, except for the fourth quarter of the respondent's fiscal year when the report is due within 90 days of the close of the quarter.

3) How do I obtain another copy of the survey or additional overflow sheets?

- a. Call (202) 606-5588 to request the survey.*
- b. Go to www.bea.gov/ea/surveys/be85.pdf to download a copy of the survey.*
- c. Send an email to be-85@bea.gov for an .xls version of the BE-85.*

4) How do I request a filing extension?

A written request for an extension will be considered if it is received at least 15 days before the due date. BEA will provide a written response to such a request. Requests for extensions may also be sent via e-mail to BE-85extension@bea.gov.

5) Why did I receive this survey?

Either you filed in the past, or we believe that you may have had transactions covered by this survey.

6) Why do I need to complete the BE-85?

This survey is authorized by the International Investment and Trade in Services Survey Act and the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988. U.S. financial services providers that receive this survey, or that have transactions covered by the survey with unaffiliated foreign persons are required to complete and return the survey to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Data reported on this survey are confidential and may be used only for analytical or statistical purposes. Without your prior written permission, the information filed on the survey cannot be presented in a manner that allows it to be individually identified. Your survey cannot be used for purposes of taxation, investigation, or regulation. Copies retained in your files are immune from legal process.

7) How should I account for mergers and acquisitions?

- a. If your company was acquired by a U.S. company, please complete the survey including question number 7.*
- b. If your company was purchased by a foreign company, complete the survey as it pertains to you and go to www.bea.gov/bea/surveys/fdiusurv.htm for information on foreign direct investment survey requirements.*
- c. If your company purchased another U.S. company, your BE-85 survey should consolidate their selected services for the entire reporting period.*

8) The address and the contact person listed are no longer current. How do I update this information?

- a. Cross out the incorrect information at the top of the front page of the survey and write in the new address and contact name, or*
- b. You may call (202) 606-5588 and we will update this information for you.*

9) I believe I am exempt from filing data on Schedule A and/or B on this survey. What do I do?

Complete pages 1-3 of the survey. If you do not check a box “yes” in Step 2 or Step 3 and you do not wish to report on a voluntary basis on Schedule A or B, then mail the form to the address on the first page.

10) Can I fax the completed survey?

Yes, the fax number is (202) 606-5318. It is not necessary to address it to anyone’s attention.

11) Can I e-mail my completed survey?

We discourage reporters from sending their completed surveys via e-mail because of concerns about confidentiality. Your e-mail is not necessarily secure against interception by a third party.

12) How can I obtain a MS Excel (.xls format) version of this form?

You can obtain a MS Excel version of the BE-85 by sending an email to be-85@bea.gov. This is an automated system, and it will automatically send you an .xls version.

13) Can I complete the form online?

Yes, you may file electronically at www.bea.gov/astar.

14) Do I need to submit a hard copy of the BE-85 form if I am submitting the form by fax or ASTAR?

No. A single submission, whether by mail, fax, or ASTAR, is sufficient.

15) We purchased services from a German company, but we sent the payments to a Swiss bank. How should we report this transaction?

Since your transaction was with a German entity, you should report this as a transaction with Germany. Where the money actually goes is irrelevant, even if you were to send your payments to a bank in the U.S. as a matter of convenience.

16) We provide services to a U.S. affiliate of a German company. Is this transaction applicable to the BE-85?

No. Your transaction is with a U.S. affiliate of that German company. This would be considered a domestic transaction and therefore not applicable to the BE-85.

17) Should I report on an accrual basis or cash basis?

Report purchases or sales in the periods when they occur or are charged (that is, in the period when the provider of the service recognizes or performs the service), whether expensed by the purchaser of the service in that accounting period, amortized over several accounting periods, or included in expenses in a subsequent accounting period.

18) Should I net payments against receipts?

No. Please report on a gross value basis. Receipts are reported on Schedule A and payments are reported on Schedule B of the BE-85 form.

19) When reporting data by country, can regions be used instead?

No. We collect data by country, not by region.

20) How should transactions with international organizations be reported?

International organizations (such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund) are, according to balance of payments conventions, considered foreign entities, even if they are headquartered in the United States. Transactions with these organizations should be reported on the BE-85.

21) How should I report receipts/payments data on the BE-85?

Report data in U.S. dollars rounded to thousands (omitting 000). For example \$1,455,328 should be reported as 1,455 and \$2,328,596 should be reported as 2,329. Amounts less than \$500 round to 0 and should, therefore, be omitted.

22) How do I indicate on the BE-85 what types of services I am selling/purchasing?

On page three of the survey, each type of service covered by the survey has a number corresponding to it (for example, brokerage services are reported under service code 1). If you sold brokerage services, in the space provided below "Service Code" in column three of Schedule A, you would enter service code 1 for brokerage services. If you check the "yes" box in Step 2, then enter the service code associated with that service on Schedule A (U.S. Reporter's Sales of Financial Services to Unaffiliated Foreign Persons). If you check the "yes" box in Step 3, then enter the service code associated with that service on Schedule B (U.S. Reporter's Purchases of Financial Services from Unaffiliated Foreign Persons). If you have more types of services than columns provided, simply report them on the overflow sheets provided.

23) I have transactions with countries that are not listed on the BE-85. Should I include those on the survey?

Yes, include services transactions that you have with all countries (even those that are not listed on the form). Write in the names of the countries on the lines below where it says "Other-Specify." If you run out of space, use the overflow sheets provided or write the data on a separate sheet of paper, making sure that you list the proper service type with the proper country.

24) My company purchased financial management services from three countries: \$5 million from Norway, \$5 million from the United Kingdom, and \$4 million from Venezuela (totaling \$14 million). How should I report the data?

You have a few options. You could report this data on Schedule B under service code 3, financial management services, and list the country detail. Because the total purchases of this particular type of service totaled less than \$15 million, you have a second option of reporting this data on Schedule B under service code 3, financial management services, without the country detail and reporting the total purchases of financial management services on line 20. Finally, you have the option of not reporting these transactions.

25) Should I report all financial services not otherwise listed on the BE-85?

No. Only report those financial services listed on the survey. Please see Section IV, Services Covered, of the general instructions for the list of services covered on this survey.

26) We receive interest payments from a foreign corporation. Do we report the interest received under credit-related services?

No. Interest is not a financial services transaction covered by the survey. Please see Section V, Type of Financial Services Excluded From Coverage, of the general instructions for financial services not covered by the BE-85.

27) Can we use estimates?

Estimates are allowed to be used if actual data are not available and estimates are labeled as such.