

	Period of review
Egypt: Common Alloy Aluminum Sheet, A-729-803 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
Iceland: Silicon Metal, A-400-001 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
India: Common Alloy Aluminum Sheet, A-533-895 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
Indonesia: Common Alloy Aluminum Sheet, A-560-835 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
Italy:	
Certain Cold-Drawn Mechanical Tubing of Carbon and Alloy Steel, A-475-838 .....	6/1/2022-5/31/2023
Common Alloy Aluminum Sheet, A-475-842 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
Oman: Common Alloy Aluminum Sheet, A-523-814 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
The People's Republic of China:	
Aluminum Extrusions, A-570-967 .....	5/1/2022-4/30/2023
Common Alloy Aluminum Sheet, A-570-073 .....	2/1/2022-1/31/2023
Certain Vertical Shaft Engines Between 99cc and up to 225cc, and Parts Thereof, A-570-124 .....	5/1/2022-4/30/2023
Difluoromethane, A-570-121 .....	3/1/2022-2/28/2023
Drawn Stainless Steel Sinks, A-570-983 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
Small Diameter Graphite Electrodes, A-570-929 .....	2/1/2022-1/31/2023
Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip, A-570-042 .....	4/1/2022-3/31/2023
Turkey: Quartz Surface Products, A-489-837 .....	6/1/2022-5/31/2023
<b>CVD Proceedings</b>	
India:	
Carbon and Alloy Steel Threaded Rod, C-533-888 .....	1/1/2022-12/31/2022
Quartz Surface Products, C-533-890 .....	1/1/2022-12/31/2022
The People's Republic of China:	
Certain Vertical Shaft Engines Between 99cc and up to 225cc, and Parts Thereof, C-570-125 .....	1/1/2022-12/31/2022
Stainless Steel Sheet and Strip, C-570-043 .....	1/1/2022-12/31/2022
Turkey: Quartz Surface Products, C-489-838 .....	1/1/2022-12/31/2022

**Assessment**

Commerce will instruct U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to assess antidumping and/or countervailing duties on all appropriate entries during the PORs noted above for each of the listed administrative reviews at rates equal to the cash deposit of estimated antidumping or countervailing duties, as applicable, required at the time of entry, or withdrawal of merchandise from warehouse, for consumption, in accordance with 19 CFR 351.212(c)(1)(i). Commerce intends to issue assessment instructions to CBP no earlier than 35 days after the date of publication of this rescission notice in the **Federal Register** for rescinded administrative reviews of AD/CVD orders on countries other than Canada and Mexico. For rescinded administrative reviews of AD/CVD orders on Canada or Mexico, Commerce intends to issue assessment instructions to CBP no earlier than 41 days after the date of publication of this rescission notice in the **Federal Register**.

**Notification to Importers**

This notice serves as the only reminder to importers of merchandise subject to AD/CVD orders of their responsibility under 19 CFR 351.402(f)(2) to file a certificate regarding the reimbursement of antidumping duties and/or countervailing duties prior to liquidation of the relevant entries during the review period. Failure to comply with this requirement could

result in the presumption that reimbursement of antidumping duties and/or countervailing duties occurred and the subsequent assessment of doubled antidumping duties and/or countervailing duties.

**Notification Regarding Administrative Protective Order**

This notice also serves as the only reminder to parties subject to administrative protective orders (APO) of their responsibility concerning the disposition of proprietary information disclosed under APO in accordance with 19 CFR 351.305(a)(3), which continues to govern business proprietary information in these segments of these proceedings. Timely written notification of the return or destruction of APO materials or conversion to judicial protective order is hereby requested. Failure to comply with the regulations and the terms of an APO is a sanctionable violation.

**Notification to Interested Parties**

This notice is issued and published in accordance with sections 751(a)(1) and 777(i)(1) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended, and 19 CFR 351.213(d)(4).

Dated: October 19, 2023.

**James Maeder,**

*Deputy Assistant Secretary for Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Operations.*

[FR Doc. 2023-23444 Filed 10-23-23; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-DS-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648-XD470]

**Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of issuance of letter of authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, its implementing regulations, and NMFS' MMPA Regulations for Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), notification is hereby given that a Letter of Authorization (LOA) has been issued to Murphy Exploration & Production Company (Murphy) for the take of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activity in the GOM. **DATES:** The LOA is effective from November 1, 2023, through October 30, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** The LOA, LOA request, and supporting documentation are available online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-oil-and->

*gas-industry-geophysical-survey-activity-gulf-mexico*. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rachel Wachtendonk, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined “negligible impact” in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines “harassment” as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

On January 19, 2021, we issued a final rule with regulations to govern the unintentional taking of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activities conducted by oil and gas industry operators, and those persons authorized to conduct activities on their behalf (collectively “industry operators”), in U.S. waters of the GOM over the course of 5 years (86 FR 5322,

January 19, 2021). The rule was based on our findings that the total taking from the specified activities over the 5-year period will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of those species or stocks for subsistence uses. The rule became effective on April 19, 2021.

Our regulations at 50 CFR 217.180 *et seq.* allow for the issuance of LOAs to industry operators for the incidental take of marine mammals during geophysical survey activities and prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on marine mammal species or stocks and their habitat (often referred to as mitigation), as well as requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Under 50 CFR 217.186(e), issuance of an LOA shall be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under these regulations and a determination that the amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers.

**Summary of Request and Analysis**

Murphy plans to conduct a vertical seismic profile (VSP) within Atwater Valley Block 138. The survey will occur at a water depth of 1,050 meters (m). Murphy plans to use a 12-element, 2,400 cubic inch (in<sup>3</sup>) airgun array. The survey is planned to occur for 2 days during the period from November 1, 2023 to October 30, 2024. Please see Murphy’s application for additional detail.

Consistent with the preamble to the final rule, the survey effort proposed by Murphy in its LOA request was used to develop LOA-specific take estimates based on the acoustic exposure modeling results described in the preamble (86 FR 5322, January 19, 2021). In order to generate the appropriate take number for authorization, the following information was considered: (1) survey type; (2) location (by modeling zone<sup>1</sup>); (3) number of days; and (4) season.<sup>2</sup> The acoustic exposure modeling performed in support of the rule provides 24-hour exposure estimates for each species, specific to each modeled survey type in each zone and season.

<sup>1</sup> For purposes of acoustic exposure modeling, the GOM was divided into seven zones. Zone 1 is not included in the geographic scope of the rule.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of acoustic exposure modeling, seasons include Winter (December–March) and Summer (April–November).

No VSP surveys were included in the modeled survey types, and use of existing proxies (*i.e.*, two-dimensional (2D), three-dimensional narrow azimuth (3D NAZ), 3D wide-azimuth (WAZ), Coil) is generally conservative for use in evaluation of VSP survey effort. Summary descriptions of these modeled survey geometries are available in the preamble to the proposed rule (83 FR 29212, June 22, 2018). Coil was selected as the best available proxy survey type because the spatial coverage of the planned survey is most similar to that associated with the coil survey pattern.

For the planned survey, the seismic source array will be deployed from a stationary drilling rig at or near the borehole, with the seismic receivers (*i.e.*, geophones) deployed in the borehole on wireline at specified depth intervals. The coil survey pattern in the model was assumed to cover approximately 144 kilometers squared (km<sup>2</sup>) per day (compared with approximately 795 km<sup>2</sup>, 199 km<sup>2</sup>, and 845 km<sup>2</sup> per day for the 2D, 3D NAZ, and 3D WAZ survey patterns, respectively). Among the different parameters of the modeled survey patterns (*e.g.*, area covered, line spacing, number of sources, shot interval, total simulated pulses), NMFS considers area covered per day to be most influential on daily modeled exposures exceeding Level B harassment criteria. Because Murphy’s planned survey would not cover any additional area beyond that envisioned by the stationary source, the coil proxy is most representative of the effort planned by Murphy in terms of predicted Level B harassment.

In addition, all available acoustic exposure modeling results assume use of a 72 element, 8,000 in<sup>3</sup> array. Thus, estimated take numbers for this LOA are considered conservative due to the differences in both the airgun array (12 elements and 2,400 in<sup>3</sup>), and in daily survey area planned by Murphy, as compared to those modeled for the rule.

The survey is planned to occur in Zone 5. The survey could take place in any season. Therefore, the take estimates for each species are based on the season that has the greater value for the species (*i.e.*, winter or summer).

Additionally, for some species, take estimates based solely on the modeling yielded results that are not realistically likely to occur when considered in light of other relevant information available during the rulemaking process regarding marine mammal occurrence in the GOM. The approach used in the acoustic exposure modeling, in which seven modeling zones were defined over the U.S. GOM, necessarily averages fine-scale information about marine mammal

distribution over the large area of each modeling zone. This can result in unrealistic projections regarding the likelihood of encountering particularly rare species and/or species not expected to occur outside particular habitats. Thus, although the modeling conducted for the rule is a natural starting point for estimating take, our rule acknowledged that other information could be considered (see, e.g., 86 FR 5322, (January 19, 2021), discussing the need to provide flexibility and make efficient use of previous public and agency review of other information and identifying that additional public review is not necessary unless the model or inputs used differ substantively from those that were previously reviewed by NMFS and the public). For this survey, NMFS has other relevant information reviewed during the rulemaking that indicates use of the acoustic exposure modeling to generate a take estimate for Rice's whales and killer whales produces results inconsistent with what is known regarding their occurrence in the GOM. Accordingly, we have adjusted the calculated take estimates for those species as described below.

NMFS' final rule described a "core habitat area" for Rice's whales (formerly known as GOM Bryde's whales)<sup>3</sup> located in the northeastern GOM in waters between 100–400 m depth along the continental shelf break (Rosel *et al.*, 2016). However, whaling records suggest that Rice's whales historically had a broader distribution within similar habitat parameters throughout the GOM (Reeves *et al.*, 2011; Rosel and Wilcox, 2014). In addition, habitat-based density modeling identified similar habitat (*i.e.*, approximately 100–400 m water depths along the continental shelf break) as being potential Rice's whale habitat (Roberts *et al.*, 2016), although the core habitat area contained approximately 92 percent of the predicted abundance of Rice's whales. See discussion provided at, e.g., 83 FR 29228, 83 FR 29280 (June 22, 2018); 86 FR 5418 (January 19, 2021).

Although Rice's whales may occur outside of the core habitat area, we expect that any such occurrence would be limited to the narrow band of suitable habitat described above (*i.e.*, 100–400 m) and that, based on the few available records, these occurrences would be rare. Murphy's planned activities will occur in water depths of

approximately 1,050 m in the central GOM. Thus, NMFS does not expect there to be the reasonable potential for take of Rice's whale in association with this survey and, accordingly, does not authorize take of Rice's whale through the LOA.

Killer whales are the most rarely encountered species in the GOM, typically in deep waters of the central GOM (Roberts *et al.*, 2015; Maze-Foley and Mullin, 2006). As discussed in the final rule, the density models produced by Roberts *et al.* (2016) provide the best available scientific information regarding predicted density patterns of cetaceans in the U.S. GOM. The predictions represent the output of models derived from multi-year observations and associated environmental parameters that incorporate corrections for detection bias. However, in the case of killer whales, the model is informed by few data, as indicated by the coefficient of variation associated with the abundance predicted by the model (0.41, the second-highest of any GOM species model; Roberts *et al.*, 2016). The model's authors noted the expected non-uniform distribution of this rarely-encountered species (as discussed above) and expressed that, due to the limited data available to inform the model, it "should be viewed cautiously" (Roberts *et al.*, 2015).

NOAA surveys in the GOM from 1992–2009 reported only 16 sightings of killer whales, with an additional 3 encounters during more recent survey effort from 2017–2018 (Waring *et al.*, 2013; <https://www.boem.gov/gommapps>). Two other species were also observed on fewer than 20 occasions during the 1992–2009 NOAA surveys (Fraser's dolphin and false killer whale<sup>4</sup>). However, observational data collected by protected species observers (PSOs) on industry geophysical survey vessels from 2002–2015 distinguish the killer whale in terms of rarity. During this period, killer whales were encountered on only 10 occasions, whereas the next most rarely encountered species (Fraser's dolphin) was recorded on 69 occasions (Barkaszi and Kelly, 2019). The false killer whale and pygmy killer whale were the next most rarely encountered species, with 110 records each. The killer whale was the species with the lowest detection frequency during each period over which PSO data were synthesized (2002–2008 and 2009–2015). This information qualitatively informed our

rulemaking process, as discussed at 86 FR 5322, 86 FR 5334 (January 19, 2021), and similarly informs our analysis here.

The rarity of encounter during seismic surveys is not likely to be the product of high bias on the probability of detection. Unlike certain cryptic species with high detection bias, such as *Kogia* spp. or beaked whales, or deep-diving species with high availability bias, such as beaked whales or sperm whales, killer whales are typically available for detection when present and are easily observed. Roberts *et al.* (2015) stated that availability is not a major factor affecting detectability of killer whales from shipboard surveys, as they are not a particularly long-diving species. Baird *et al.* (2005) reported that mean dive durations for 41 fish-eating killer whales for dives greater than or equal to 1 minute in duration was 2.3–2.4 minutes, and Hooker *et al.* (2012) reported that killer whales spent 78 percent of their time at depths between 0–10 m. Similarly, Kvadsheim *et al.* (2012) reported data from a study of 4 killer whales, noting that the whales performed 20 times as many dives 1–30 m in depth than to deeper waters, with an average depth during those most common dives of approximately 3 m.

In summary, killer whales are the most rarely encountered species in the GOM and typically occur only in particularly deep water. This survey would take place in deep waters that would overlap with depths in which killer whales typically occur. While this information is reflected through the density model informing the acoustic exposure modeling results, there is relatively high uncertainty associated with the model for this species, and the acoustic exposure modeling applies mean distribution data over areas where the species is in fact less likely to occur. In addition, as noted above in relation to the general take estimation methodology, the assumed proxy source (72-element, 8,000-in<sup>3</sup> array) results in a significant overestimate of the actual potential for take to occur. NMFS' determination in reflection of the information discussed above, which informed the final rule, is that use of the generic acoustic exposure modeling results for killer whales will generally result in estimated take numbers that are inconsistent with the assumptions made in the rule regarding expected killer whale take (86 FR 5322, 86 FR 5403, January 19, 2021). In this case, use of the acoustic exposure modeling produces an estimate of one killer whale exposure. Given the foregoing, it is unlikely that any killer whales would be encountered during this at most 2-day

<sup>3</sup> The final rule refers to the GOM Bryde's whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*). These whales were subsequently described as a new species, Rice's whale (*Balaenoptera ricei*) (Rosel *et al.*, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> However, note that these species have been observed over a greater range of water depths in the GOM than have killer whales.

survey, and accordingly no take of killer whales is authorized through this LOA.

In addition, in this case, use of the exposure modeling produces results that are smaller than average GOM group sizes for one species (Maze-Foley and Mullin, 2006). NMFS' typical practice in such a situation is to increase exposure estimates to the assumed average group size for a species in order to ensure that, if the species is encountered, exposures will not exceed the authorized take number. However, other relevant considerations here lead to a determination that increasing the estimated exposures to the average group size would likely lead to an overestimate of actual potential take. In this circumstance, the very short survey duration (maximum of 2 days) and relatively small Level B harassment isopleths produced through use of the 12-element, 2,400-in<sup>3</sup> airgun array (compared with the modeled 72-element, 8,000 in<sup>3</sup> array) mean that it is unlikely that certain species would be encountered at all, much less that the encounter would result in exposure of a greater number of individuals than is estimated through use of the exposure modeling results. As a result, in this

case NMFS has not increased the estimated exposure values to assumed average group sizes in authorizing take.

Based on the results of our analysis, NMFS has determined that the level of taking expected for this survey and authorized through the LOA is consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under the regulations for the affected species or stocks of marine mammals. See Table 1 in this notice and Table 9 of the rule (86 FR 5322, January 19, 2021).

**Small Numbers Determination**

Under the GOM rule, NMFS may not authorize incidental take of marine mammals in an LOA if it will exceed "small numbers." In short, when an acceptable estimate of the individual marine mammals taken is available, if the estimated number of individual animals taken is up to, but not greater than, one-third of the best available abundance estimate, NMFS will determine that the numbers of marine mammals taken of a species or stock are small. For more information please see NMFS' discussion of the MMPA's small numbers requirement provided in the final rule (86 FR 5322, 86 FR 5438, January 19, 2021).

The take numbers for authorization, which are determined as described above, are used by NMFS in making the necessary small numbers determinations through comparison with the best available abundance estimates (see discussion at 86 FR 5322, 86 FR 5391, January 19, 2021). For this comparison, NMFS' approach is to use the maximum theoretical population, determined through review of current stock assessment reports (SAR; <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessments>) and model-predicted abundance information (<https://seamap.env.duke.edu/models/Duke/GOM/>). For the latter, for taxa where a density surface model could be produced, we use the maximum mean seasonal (*i.e.*, 3-month) abundance prediction for purposes of comparison as a precautionary smoothing of month-to-month fluctuations and in consideration of a corresponding lack of data in the literature regarding seasonal distribution of marine mammals in the GOM. Information supporting the small numbers determinations is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1—TAKE ANALYSIS

Species	Authorized take <sup>1</sup>	Abundance <sup>2</sup>	Percent abundance
Rice's whale .....	0	51	n/a
Sperm whale .....	53	2,207	2.4
<i>Kogia</i> spp .....	<sup>3</sup> 20	4,373	0.4
Beaked whales .....	232	3,768	6.2
Rough-toothed dolphin .....	40	4,853	0.8
Bottlenose dolphin .....	189	176,108	0.1
Clymene dolphin .....	112	11,895	0.9
Atlantic spotted dolphin .....	76	74,785	0.1
Pantropical spotted dolphin .....	510	102,361	0.5
Spinner dolphin .....	<sup>4</sup> 137	25,114	0.5
Striped dolphin .....	<sup>4</sup> 44	5,229	0.8
Fraser's dolphin .....	<sup>4</sup> 13	1,665	0.8
Risso's dolphin .....	33	3,764	0.9
Melon-headed whale .....	<sup>4</sup> 74	7,003	1.1
Pygmy killer whale .....	<sup>4</sup> 17	2,126	0.8
False killer whale .....	28	3,204	0.9
Killer whale .....	0	267	n/a
Short-finned pilot whale .....	<sup>4</sup> 21	1,981	1.1

<sup>1</sup> Scalar ratios were not applied in this case due to brief survey duration.

<sup>2</sup> Best abundance estimate. For most taxa, the best abundance estimate for purposes of comparison with take estimates is considered here to be the model-predicted abundance (Roberts *et al.*, 2016). For those taxa where a density surface model predicting abundance by month was produced, the maximum mean seasonal abundance was used. For those taxa where abundance is not predicted by month, only mean annual abundance is available. For Rice's whale and killer whale, the larger estimated SAR abundance estimate is used.

<sup>3</sup> Includes 1 take by Level A harassment and 19 takes by Level B harassment.

<sup>4</sup> Modeled exposure estimate less than assumed average group size (Maze-Foley and Mullin, 2006).

Based on the analysis contained herein of Murphy's proposed survey activity described in its LOA application and the anticipated take of marine mammals, NMFS finds that small numbers of marine mammals will be taken relative to the affected species

or stock sizes (*i.e.*, less than one-third of the best available abundance estimate) and therefore the taking is of no more than small numbers.

**Authorization**

NMFS has determined that the level of taking for this LOA request is consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under the incidental take regulations and that the

amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers. Accordingly, we have issued an LOA to Murphy authorizing the take of marine mammals incidental to its geophysical survey activity, as described above.

Dated: October 19, 2023.

**Kimberly Damon-Randall,**

Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2023-23455 Filed 10-23-23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No.: PTO-C-2023-0020]

#### Formal Tribal Consultation on WIPO IGC Negotiations

**AGENCY:** United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of Tribal Consultation meetings and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Department of Commerce, announces a formal Tribal Consultation, and requests written comments on issues involving genetic resources (GR), traditional knowledge (TK), and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs). These topics are being discussed at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Specifically, the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Folklore (traditional cultural expressions) (WIPO IGC) is undertaking negotiations regarding how best to protect GR, TK, and TCEs of Indigenous Peoples.

**DATES: Webinar Dates:** The webinar for federally recognized Tribal Nations and their proxies will be held on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, from 3 to 5 p.m. ET and Wednesday, January 17, 2024 from 3 to 5 p.m. ET. The webinar for state recognized Tribes and other Tribal members, Native Hawaiians and their representatives, and inter-tribal organizations, will be held on Friday, January 19, 2024, from 3 to 5 p.m. ET and Tuesday, January 23, 2024, from 3 to 5 p.m. ET. Please register in advance to participate in one of these webinars at: <https://event.me/bZRP3L>. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. If you are unable to join via the platform, a call-in number also will be provided. The webinar for federally recognized

Tribes is open only to federally recognized Tribal Nations and their proxies and is closed to the press. The webinar for state recognized Tribes and other Tribal members, Native Hawaiians and their representatives, and inter-tribal organizations is open only to these entities and communities and is also closed to the press.

**Comment Deadline:** Written comments pursuant to the questions in this Notice must be received by Friday, February 23, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments may be submitted by email to: [TribalConsultWIPOIGC2023@uspto.gov](mailto:TribalConsultWIPOIGC2023@uspto.gov). Please use the heading "WIPO IGC FORMAL TRIBAL CONSULTATION 2023" in the subject line.

If electronic submission of comments is not feasible due to a lack of access to a computer and/or the internet, please submit comments by First-Class Mail or Priority Mail to: Susan Anthony, Tribal Affairs Liaison, Mail Stop OPIA, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22314-1450.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Susan Anthony, Tribal Affairs Liaison, Office of Policy and International Affairs (OPIA), USPTO, at [Susan.Anthony@uspto.gov](mailto:Susan.Anthony@uspto.gov) or at 571-272-8459. Please direct media inquiries to the USPTO's Office of the Chief Communications Officer at 571-272-8400. These webinars are closed to the media.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The USPTO has been actively engaged in discussions in the WIPO IGC, along with other Federal agencies, and has been responsible for leading the development of U.S. positions on WIPO IGC issues. The USPTO's announcement for formal Tribal Consultation on WIPO IGC issues aligns with the Federal Government's policies and relationship with Tribal Governments, including: Executive Order 13175;<sup>1</sup> President Biden's Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships;<sup>2</sup> President Biden's Memorandum on Uniform Standards for Tribal Consultation;<sup>3</sup> and the Tribal Consultation and Coordination Policy for the U.S. Department of Commerce ("Policy").<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.federalregister.gov/documents/2000/11/09/00-29003/consultation-and-coordination-with-indian-tribal-governments/](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2000/11/09/00-29003/consultation-and-coordination-with-indian-tribal-governments/).

<sup>2</sup> [www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/26/memorandum-on-tribal-consultation-and-strengthening-nation-to-nation-relationships/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/26/memorandum-on-tribal-consultation-and-strengthening-nation-to-nation-relationships/).

<sup>3</sup> [www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/11/30/memorandum-on-uniform-standards-for-tribal-consultation/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/11/30/memorandum-on-uniform-standards-for-tribal-consultation/).

<sup>4</sup> [www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/media/files/2013/tribal-consultation-final.pdf](https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/media/files/2013/tribal-consultation-final.pdf).

The Policy requires that the Department and operating units engage in meaningful dialogue with Tribes regarding policies that have Tribal implications. This Tribal Consultation will consist of a webinar for federally recognized Tribal Nations and their proxies and a separate webinar for state recognized Tribes and other Tribal members, Native Hawaiians, and inter-tribal associations.

In addition to these webinars, the USPTO seeks written comments regarding the questions in this Notice. Written comments may include comments responsive to the questions in this Notice, comments responsive to issues discussed during the webinars, and any other related concerns.

WIPO is a specialized United Nations agency based in Geneva, Switzerland, that focuses on intellectual property (IP). Established in September 2000, the WIPO IGC serves as a forum where WIPO Member States<sup>5</sup> and accredited observers can discuss the intellectual property issues that arise in the context of access to GR and benefit-sharing, as well as the protection of TK and folklore/TCEs.

Since 2009, the WIPO IGC has been engaged in text-based negotiations on an international legal instrument for GR, TK, and TCEs. The U.S. understands the term "international legal instrument(s)" in the WIPO IGC mandate<sup>6</sup> to include declarations, recommendations, best practices, toolkits, and other forms of "soft law" and actively seeks practical recommendations in addressing the matters under discussion within the WIPO IGC. WIPO also has the authority to initiate norm-setting discussions and to propose international rules for adoption by a diplomatic conference or adoption by another WIPO body. "International legal instrument(s)" could also include a treaty or international agreement, although there is no requirement that prescribes this particular outcome. This request for comments seeks Tribal input on, among other topics, whether a treaty or forms of soft law are necessary to address issues regarding TK and TCEs.

The WIPO General Assembly, held in Geneva, Switzerland, on July 14-22, 2022, decided to convene a diplomatic conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources, based on document

<sup>5</sup> WIPO currently has 193 Member States: [www.wipo.int/members/en/](https://www.wipo.int/members/en/).

<sup>6</sup> The current "IGC Mandate" may be found at: [www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc](https://www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc). As of this writing, the IGC Mandate covers the biennium 2024/2025.