

SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION QUESTIONNAIRE

*Aluminum: Competitive Conditions Affecting the U.S. Industry*

Part B—Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

**1. Response universe and survey design**

**Survey objectives**

The House Committee on Ways and Means (“Committee”) requested this investigation and report in a letter dated February 24, 2016. The Committee directed the U.S. International Trade Commission (“USITC” or “Commission”) to conduct an investigation and provide a report that contains detailed information on the domestic aluminum market and industry and to collect primary data for market participants via a questionnaire (survey). This survey is part of a larger investigation concerning the competitive conditions affecting the U.S. industry that will include gathering information from public sources and through a public hearing.

**Respondent universe**

The respondent universe of the survey is U.S. producers of unwrought and/or wrought aluminum. Unwrought aluminum includes both primary and secondary unwrought aluminum. Wrought aluminum includes: plates, sheets, strip, and foil products; wire products; bars and rods; profiles; and tube and pipe products. There are 280 firms that produce such products, all of which will receive a questionnaire.

The potential respondent universe represents the sum of firms, net of duplicative records, identified from these sources:

1. A database derived from industry associations and industry analyst research
2. Firms obtained from Bureau van Dijk’s Orbis database that are classified with either primary or secondary NAICS codes associated with aluminum. Appendix table A.1 reports the specific NAICS industries included.
3. Transaction level business information obtained from United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

**Survey design**

The questionnaire will be mailed to the entire population. The questionnaire has been designed to be clear and succinct as possible to gather the specific material requested by the Committees. (See discussion of testing below.) This clarity and brevity should reduce burden and improve response rates. The Commission anticipates a 100% overall response rate. Staff will make efforts to contact nonresponding firms by sending reminder letters and calling individual firms in order to maximize response rates. For a response rate of less than 90%, firms will be categorized based on firm size (e.g., number of employees), which is available through industry sources and

the Orbis database. If response rates differ categorically by size (e.g., small firms respond at a lower rate than large firms), firms will be stratified by size and standard nonresponse weighting will be applied to each strata.

## **2. Collection of information employing statistical methods**

### **a. Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures**

No unusual problems were encountered.

### **b. Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

This data collection is currently only intended to occur once, and therefore will not be repeated on a periodic basis. As such, the total recurring annual cost burden is zero.

## **3. Methods to maximize response rates and deal with non-response**

### **a. Maximizing response rates**

Commission staff will employ several techniques to increase the response rates of questionnaire recipient firms. Recipients will receive separate notices that (1) notify them that their firm was selected for the survey, (2) direct them to complete the questionnaire, and (3) remind them, if necessary, to complete the questionnaire before the deadline. Once the submission deadline has passed, firms that still have not responded will receive an additional reminder. Each of these communications will include a phone number and email address of a person who can help firms with filling out the questionnaire or answer their questions regarding the survey and/or study. Commission staff will also contact firms directly, via phone or email, to urge them to complete the questionnaire and to answer any questions they may have regarding this information collection or study in general. Commission staff may also contact firms, via phone or email, to correct information or fill in incomplete responses, or solicit additional information about a response. The burden associated with follow up calls or emails is included in the total response burden amount.

In addition to pre-contact and follow-up, the questionnaire itself has been designed to be clear and succinct as possible to gather the specific material requested by the Committees. (See discussion of testing below.) This clarity and brevity should reduce burden and improve response rates. The questionnaire will clearly point out that firms are obligated by law to respond. Finally, the ability to access, fill out, and submit the questionnaire electronically may also increase response.

### **b. Accuracy and reliability of information collected**

Staff believes that data acquired through the survey can be measured both accurately and reliably. The firm characteristics (e.g. number of employees) and activities (e.g. production, capacity) to be surveyed have been reliably collected in numerous surveys from the USITC and other government agencies.

### **c. Dealing with non-response**

USITC staff anticipate a 100% overall response rate. Staff will make efforts to contact nonresponding firms by sending reminder letters and calling individual firms in order to maximize response rates. For a response rate of less than 90%, firms will be categorized based on firm size (e.g., number of employees), which is available through industry sources and the Orbis database. If response rates differ categorically by size (e.g., small firms respond at a lower rate than large firms), firms will be stratified by size and standard nonresponse weighting will be applied to each strata.

### **4. Tests of procedures or methods to minimize burden or improve utility**

The Commission sought public comment on the questionnaire with nine industry representatives. These representatives provided feedback in areas such as availability of data, product coverage, definitions, and clarity of instructions. The Commission also went through a period of cognitive testing to make sure the questions, and the intent behind them, are clear. See part A for the comments field and cognitive testers made and the subsequent changes made to the questionnaire.

In addition to field testing, the questionnaire has been made available for public comment. Notice of the draft questionnaire was published in the Federal Register, and the draft questionnaire was publicized by industry associations. It has also been extensively reviewed within the Commission. Industry analysts and economists have reviewed the document to ensure it contains information needed to adequately answer questions posed in the study while imposing a minimum burden on the responding businesses.

### **5. Contact information**

Collection and analysis of the data will be the responsibility of the Office of Analysis and Research Services and the Office of Industries within the Commission. Project leader Karl Tsuji can be contacted at [karl.tsuji@usitc.gov](mailto:karl.tsuji@usitc.gov) or 202-205-3434, deputy project leader Mihir Torsekar can be contacted at [mihir.torsekar@usitc.gov](mailto:mihir.torsekar@usitc.gov) or 202-205-3350, and survey lead for this study Maureen Letostak can be contacted at [maureen.letostak@usitc.gov](mailto:maureen.letostak@usitc.gov) or 202-205-2603.

## Appendix A

**Table A.1** NAICS codes used to compile list of firms in Aluminum industry

<b>2012 NAICS Code</b>	<b>2012 NAICS Title</b>
331313	Alumina Refining and Primary Aluminum Production
331314	Secondary Smelting and Alloying of Aluminum
331315	Aluminum Sheet, Plate, and Foil Manufacturing
331318	Other Aluminum Rolling, Drawing, and Extruding