

# **Final Scoping Summary Report**

## **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Joint Military Training Environmental Impact Statement / Overseas Environmental Impact Statement**

*Prepared for:*

**United States Marine Corps Forces, Pacific**



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CJMT	CNMI Joint Military Training	MARFORPAC	Marine Corps Forces, Pacific
CNMI	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
DLNR	CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources	NOI	Notice of Intent
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	OEIS	Overseas EIS
EDT	Eastern Daylight Time	PACOM	U.S. Pacific Command
		U.S.	United States

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report provides a summary of the activities of the official public scoping period for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Joint Military Training (CJMT) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) (CJMT EIS/OEIS). The CJMT EIS/OEIS will evaluate the potential impacts to the human and natural environment from the United States (U.S.) military's proposal to improve existing and develop new live-fire military training areas on Tinian and Pagan. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC), as the Executive Agent designated by the U.S. Pacific Command, is the lead agency for the preparation of the CJMT EIS/OEIS.

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 Code of Federal Regulations § 1501.7) call for a public process called "scoping." This is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. The scoping process provided opportunities for CNMI elected officials, government agencies, interest groups, and the public to learn about the proposed action and alternatives, suggest alternative approaches to meet the proposed action's need, and provide input that assists resource specialists in data collection and resource analyses for the CJMT Draft EIS/OEIS. In addition to the NEPA scoping process, MARFORPAC initiated Section 106 consultation in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Concurrent NEPA and Section 106 meetings were held to encourage government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public to participate in both processes.

The public scoping period began on March 15, 2013 with the Notice of Intent to prepare the CJMT EIS/OEIS published in the *Federal Register* (on March 14, 2013 Eastern Daylight Time (EDT); Volume 78, Number 50, pages 16257-16259). Please note that all dates are in Chamorro Standard Time, unless otherwise noted. The scoping period initially was set to end on April 29, 2013; however, in response to requests from scoping meeting participants and CNMI government officials, MARFORPAC extended the scoping period to May 13, 2013. A second notification appeared in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2013 (on April 23, 2013 EDT; Volume 78, Number 78, page 23920) announcing the extension. Local newspapers and electronic media announced the NOI and the locations, dates, and times of the scoping meetings; similar media announced the scoping period extension.

Scoping meetings were held April 10 to 12, 2013: two on Saipan and one on Tinian. All meetings were held in an "open-house format" which allowed attendees to speak one on one with U.S. military representatives and subject matter experts. Thirteen (13) displays were designed to describe the proposed action, present the purpose and need for the proposed action, and enhance public understanding of the NEPA process while emphasizing the public's role in shaping the Draft EIS/OEIS. Another three displays were associated with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 process.

During the scoping period, a total of 198 unique comment submittals were received. In addition, there were eight duplicates (i.e., content was identical to another comment submitted from the same organization, agency, or person). The public had multiple venues to provide comments. At the scoping meetings, people could submit written comments brought with them, complete a comment form provided at the scoping meetings, or have oral comments digitally recorded. Comments could also be submitted electronically on the website ([www.CNMIJointMilitaryTrainingEIS.com](http://www.CNMIJointMilitaryTrainingEIS.com)) and/or by mailing them to the CJMT EIS/OEIS project manager.

Scoping comments about Pagan alternatives centered on the short-term and long-term effects of military training on the island. Comments about Tinian alternatives focused on how military training activities could influence economic and agricultural development, constrict travel to and from Tinian, and impact residents' daily lives. Comments received during the public scoping period will assist the U.S. military in the development of the CJMT Draft EIS/OEIS.



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

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This Scoping Summary Report summarizes the activities of the official public scoping period from March 15, 2013 to May 13, 2013 for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Joint Military Training (CJMT) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) (hereinafter referred to as the “CJMT EIS/OEIS”). Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC), as the Executive Agent designated by the United States (U.S.) Pacific Command (PACOM), is the lead agency for preparation of the CJMT EIS/OEIS. All dates provided in this report are Chamorro Standard Time, unless otherwise noted.

### 1.1 PURPOSE AND GOAL OF SCOPING

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires all federal agencies to consider environmental effects that include impacts on social, cultural, economic, and natural resources. According to Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1506.6), agencies shall make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing NEPA procedures and to ensure that the public is provided notice of meetings and that materials are available and accessible. Scoping is the first step in the public involvement process. Scoping informs governmental agencies, interest groups, and the public about the proposed action, and it helps the lead agency identify the issues and concerns that are of particular interest to the affected population. In this manner, scoping assists in defining the breadth and depth of the EIS/OEIS analysis. Consideration of the views and information from interested persons promotes open communication and enables better decision making.

In addition to the NEPA scoping process, MARFORPAC initiated Section 106 consultation in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Concurrent NEPA and Section 106 meetings were held to encourage government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public to participate in both processes. Section 106 meetings were held in a separate area than the scoping meetings but at the same time. Subject matter experts were available to explain the Section 106 process and to solicit public input on identifying potential historic properties and the potential effects of the proposed action on historic properties.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND

The CJMT EIS/OEIS will evaluate the potential impacts associated with alternatives for meeting PACOM Service Components’ unfilled unit level and combined level military training requirements in the Western Pacific. The proposed action would establish a series of live-fire and maneuver ranges and training areas within the CNMI to meet this purpose. Existing Department of Defense ranges and training areas, and support facilities in the Western Pacific, particularly those in the CNMI, are insufficient to support PACOM Service Components’ U.S. Code Title 10 regional training requirements. Expanding existing ranges and training areas and constructing new ones will satisfy the identified training deficiencies for PACOM forces that are based in or regularly train in the CNMI. The proposed action is to improve existing and develop new live-fire military ranges and training areas on Tinian and Pagan in the CNMI. For Tinian, preliminary alternatives involve unit level training areas, including laydowns with and without relocating the International Broadcasting Bureau Voice of America facility. To date, all Tinian preliminary alternatives require the use of all the military leased land, including that currently leased back

to the CNMI government for agricultural uses. For Pagan, the preliminary alternatives support combined level training and propose using the entire island for military purposes.

### **1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT**

The report is organized as follows:

- CHAPTER 1 describes the purpose and goal of scoping, provides a brief background of the proposed action, and then outlines how the report is organized.
- CHAPTER 2 outlines the scoping process from public outreach to agency involvement.
- CHAPTER 3 provides an overview of the proceedings at the scoping meetings, including the format as well as materials disseminated and exhibited.
- CHAPTER 4 summarizes the public comments and frequently raised topics and issues.
- CHAPTER 5 lists the references cited.

Supporting documentation is in the following appendices:

- Appendix A – *Federal Register* notices and newspaper announcements.
- Appendix B – communication with CNMI government and elected officials, federal agency representatives, and non-governmental organizations.
- Appendix C – briefing materials presented to CNMI government and elected officials, federal agency representatives, and non-governmental organizations.
- Appendix D – communications with cooperating agencies.
- Appendix E – materials distributed and exhibited at the scoping meetings.
- Appendix F – Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act displays used during scoping.

## CHAPTER 2

# SCOPING PROCESS

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The public scoping period began with the Notice of Intent (NOI) announcement on March 15, 2013 (March 14, 2013 Eastern Daylight Time [EDT]) and was initially set to end on April 29, 2013. However, in response to requests from the scoping meeting participants and CNMI government officials, MARFORPAC extended the scoping period to May 13, 2013.

### 2.1 NOTIFICATION

#### 2.1.1 Federal Register

The NOI was published in the *Federal Register* (Volume 78, Number 50, pages 16257-16259) on March 15, 2013 (March 14, 2013 EDT) (Appendix A). The NOI marked the beginning of the public scoping period and announced MARFORPAC's intention to prepare an EIS/OEIS. The NOI also supplied information on the dates, times, and locations of the public scoping meetings; the means by which public comments could be submitted; a point of contact with a phone number and email address for any questions; the address of the website to access CJMT EIS/OEIS materials; and supplemental background information. A second notification, announcing the scoping period extension, appeared in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2013 (April 23, 2013 EDT) (Volume 78, Number 78, page 23920) (Appendix A).

#### 2.1.2 Public Outreach

Several methods of print and electronic media were used to notify the public of opportunities for involvement in the scoping process: letters, postcards, a public website, and newspaper announcements.

##### 2.1.2.1 Letters

Prior to the publication of the NOI, 25 letters (recipients listed below) were sent on February 27, 2013 to elected and government officials, federal agency representatives, and one non-governmental organization informing them of the upcoming NOI announcement, the scoping process, as well as the dates, times, and locations of the scoping meetings. Each letter contained a CJMT EIS/OEIS fact sheet and an example of the postcard mailer that would be sent to other interested parties. The postcard was included to apprise government, political, and agency officials of material that would be sent to interested citizens. An example of the letter is in Appendix B.

#### CNMI Elected Officials

- Governor Eloy S. Inos
- Lieutenant Governor Jude Untalan Hofschneider
- President of the Senate Mr. Ralph Torres
- Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Joseph Pinault Deleon Guerrero
- Mayor, Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan Mr. Ramon Dela Cruz
- Mayor, Municipality of Northern Islands Mr. Tobias Aldan
- Mayor, Municipality of Saipan Mr. Donald Flores
- Mayor, Municipality of Rota Mr. Melchor A. Mendiola

#### Federal Elected Officials

- U.S. House of Representatives Delegate for CNMI Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan

- U.S. House of Representatives Delegate for Guam Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo

### **CNMI Agencies**

- Coastal Resources Management Office Dr. Rita Chong-Dela Cruz (Administrator)
- Commonwealth Ports Authority Mr. Edward M. Deleon Guerrero (Executive Director)
- Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Ms. Laura Ogumoro (Acting Secretary)
- Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Office Ms. Merti Kani (Acting Director)
- Department of Labor Mr. Gil M. San Nicolas (Secretary)
- Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Mr. Arnold Palacios (Acting Secretary and Director)
- Department of Public Lands Mr. Ramon Salas (Acting Secretary)
- Department of Public Safety, Office of the Commissioner Mr. Aniceto T. Ogumoro (Commissioner)
- Division of Environmental Quality Mr. Frank Rabauliman (Director)

### **Federal Agencies and Officials**

- Commander, Joint Region Marianas Rear Admiral Tilghman Payne
- Sector Commander, United States Coast Guard Sector Command Captain Casey White
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 Mr. John McCarroll (Pacific Islands Office Manager)
- National Park Service, War in the Pacific Historic Park Ms. Barbara Alberti (Superintendent)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services Mr. Mike Pitzler (State Director)

### **Non-Governmental Organizations**

- Saipan Chamber of Commerce Mr. Douglas Brennan (President)

#### 2.1.2.2 Postcards

A total of 64 postcard mailers were sent to other elected officials (i.e., CNMI senators and representatives), federal and local government agencies, as well as special interest groups and non-governmental organizations. The postcard briefly described the proposed action; presented the dates, times, and locations of the scoping meetings; and outlined the various ways the public could participate in the scoping process—attending the meeting(s) and providing written and/or oral comments; visiting the website to review materials and submit comments; and/or mailing comments through the U.S. postal service. Appendix B provides an example of the postcard and the recipient list.

#### 2.1.2.3 Website

To provide the public with easily accessible updates, announcements, comment submittal and CJMT EIS/OEIS documentation, a public website was created ([www.CNMIJointMilitaryTrainingEIS.com](http://www.CNMIJointMilitaryTrainingEIS.com)). The site will be updated throughout the CJMT EIS/OEIS process to ensure the public is well informed and aware of the action's progress.

#### 2.1.2.4 Media Outreach and Newspaper Announcements

Three local newspapers were used to notify the public of the scoping meetings: (1) *Pacific Daily News*, (2) *Marianas Variety*, and (3) *Saipan Tribune*. As indicated in Table 2-1, the announcements were first

published in print and then posted online the same week that the NOI appeared in the *Federal Register*. The second round of announcements ran the week of the scoping meetings in the *Marianas Variety* and *Saipan Tribune* (refer to Appendix A for copies of the newspaper announcements).

**Table 2-1. Dates of Newspaper Notification Announcements for Scoping Meetings**

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>NOI Announcement Date Print Version</i>	<i>NOI Announcement Date Online Version</i>	<i>Scoping Period Extension Announcement Date Print Version</i>	<i>Scoping Period Extension Announcement Date Online Version</i>
<i>Pacific Daily News</i>	March 15 and 16, 2013 (Friday and Saturday)	March 15-21, 2013 (Friday-Thursday)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<i>Marianas Variety</i>	March 15 and 18, 2013 (Friday and Monday) and April 9, 2013 (Tuesday)	March 15-21, 2013 (Friday-Thursday) and April 5-12, 2013 (Friday-Friday)	April 23, 2013 (Tuesday)	April 23-29, 2013 (Tuesday-Monday)
<i>Saipan Tribune</i>	March 15 and 18, 2013 (Friday and Monday) and April 9, 2013 (Tuesday)	March 18-24, 2013 (Monday-Sunday) and April 5-12, 2013 (Friday-Friday)	April 23, 2013 (Tuesday)	April 23-29, 2013 (Tuesday-Monday)

The public was notified of the scoping period extension in the *Marianas Variety* and *Saipan Tribune*. Announcements were published in print on the same day that the Notice of Extension appeared in the *Federal Register* and posted to the two newspapers' webpages the same week (Appendix A).

## 2.2 BRIEFINGS

Briefings were provided to CNMI elected and government officials, federal agency representatives, and non-governmental organizations prior to NOI release and during the scoping period. All parties received the same briefing. Due to the change of leadership in the CNMI government that occurred concurrently with the release of the NOI and throughout the public scoping period of the CJMT EIS/OEIS, MARFORPAC made a concentrated effort to brief newly placed elected officials and department heads. Appendix C contains the brief, including the preliminary alternatives provided during the scoping period. The following sections summarize the entities and dates of the briefings.

### 2.2.1 Prior to the Scoping Period

CNMI elected and government officials briefed include the following (meeting dates are in parentheses):

#### CNMI Elected Officials

- Governor Benigno Fitial (February 7, 2013)
- Staff of the Mayor, Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan (February 8, 2013)
- Staff of the Mayor, Municipality of Northern Islands (February 7, 2013)

#### National Elected Officials

- U.S. House of Representatives Delegate for CNMI Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (February 7, 2013)
- U.S. House of Representatives Delegate for Guam Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo (via conference call, February 11, 2013 EDT)

**Military**

- Commander, Joint Region Marianas Rear Admiral Tilghman Payne and local commands (February 5, 2013)

**2.2.2 During the Scoping Period**

CNMI elected and government officials briefed include the following (meeting dates are in parentheses):

**CNMI Elected Officials**

- Lieutenant Governor Jude Untalan Hofschneider and the Military Integration Management Committee (April 10, 2013)
- Mayor, Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan Mr. Ramon Dela Cruz and cabinet staff (April 11, 2013)

**National Elected Officials**

- U.S. House of Representatives Delegate for CNMI Congressman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (via video teleconference, April 11, 2013)
- U.S. House of Representatives Delegate for Guam Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo (via conference call, April 16, 2013 EDT)

**CNMI Agencies**

- Coastal Resources Management Office Dr. Rita Chong-Dela Cruz (April 10, 2013)
- Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Office Ms. Laura Ogumoro (April 10, 2013)
- Division of Environmental Quality Mr. Frank Rabauliman (April 10, 2013)
- Department of Public Lands Mr. Pete A. Tenorio (April 10, 2013)
- Division of Fish and Wildlife, DLNR Mr. Arnold I. Palacios (April 10, 2013)
- Commonwealth Port Authority (Saipan) Mr. Edward M. Deleon Guerrero (April 10, 2013) and (Tinian) Mr. Joseph Mendiola (April 11, 2013). Note that Federal Aviation Authority officials attended this briefing.

**Non-Governmental Organizations**

- Tinian Chamber of Commerce Mr. Phillip Mendiola-Long, including Tinian Cattlemen's Association (April 11, 2013)

**Federal Agencies**

- Federal Highway Administration (March 20, 2013 EDT)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Regional Office (March 21, 2013 EDT)
- National Marine Fisheries Service Headquarters (April 4, 2013 EDT)
- National Park Service (April 9, 2013)
- Office of Economic Adjustment (March 20, 2013 EDT)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (March 20, 2013 EDT)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (March 19, 2013 EDT)

**Military**

- Commander, Joint Region Marianas Rear Admiral Tilghman Payne and staff (April 9, 2013)

## **2.3 INTERAGENCY COMMUNICATION**

### **2.3.1 Lead Agency**

MARFORPAC, as the Executive Agent designated by PACOM, is the lead agency for preparing the CJMT EIS/OEIS. As the designated Executive Agent, MARFORPAC collaborates with the PACOM Service Components.

### **2.3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

MARFORPAC identified several agencies as potential candidates to serve as cooperating agencies. As such, their general role and responsibilities would be to: (1) participate in the NEPA process, including scoping; (2) assume responsibility, upon request, for developing information and preparing analyses on issues for which they have special expertise; and (3) make staff available for interdisciplinary reviews. On March 13, 2013, MARFORPAC invited the following agencies to become a cooperating agency:

- Federal Aviation Administration
- International Broadcasting Bureau
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service
- Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Air Force<sup>1</sup>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Federal Aviation Administration, the International Broadcasting Bureau, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Office of Insular Affairs, and the U.S. Air Force have accepted the invitation. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declined the invitation due to staffing and workload constraints, but indicated willingness to continue to collaborate with MARFORPAC throughout the CJMT EIS/OEIS process. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has not yet formally accepted cooperating agency status. Please refer to Appendix D for cooperating agency correspondence.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: U.S. Air Force accepted cooperating agency status February 21, 2012.

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## CHAPTER 3

### PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

Public scoping provides opportunities for government agencies, interest groups, and the public to learn about the proposed action and alternatives, suggest alternative approaches to meet the proposal's need, and provide comments to refine the issues as well as the breadth and depth of analyses to be conducted within the EIS/OEIS. Three scoping meetings were held—two on Saipan and one on Tinian.

#### 3.1 SCOPING MEETING ATTENDANCE

Table 3-1 presents the scoping meetings, number of attendees, and the number of comment submittals received. A total of 227 people attended the scoping meetings and 24 comment submittals were received during the scoping meetings. In some cases, several individuals came to multiple meetings.

**Table 3-1. Summary of Meeting Attendants and Number of Comment Submittals**

	<i>Meeting 1 April 10, 2013 Dandan Elementary School</i>	<i>Meeting 2 April 11, 2013 Tinian Gym</i>	<i>Meeting 3 April 12, 2013 Carolinian Utt</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Attendance	70	61	96	227
Number of comment submittals	5	6	13	24

#### 3.2 SCOPING MEETING FORMAT

The goal of the scoping meetings was to provide the public an opportunity to learn about and provide input on the proposed action. The scoping meetings were conducted in an “open house” format to allow attendees to speak one on one with U.S. military representatives and subject matter experts. The meeting consisted of the following elements:

- **Overview Video:** A 6.5-minute video was set up in the meeting area to familiarize meeting attendees with the NEPA process and the proposed action. A compact disc of the video is included as part of Appendix E.
- **Welcome Station:** A welcome table with handouts, mailing list signup sheets, and a poster providing an overview of the CJMT EIS/OEIS poster stations was set up at the entrance of each meeting venue. Greeters welcomed attendees at the entrance and explained the purpose of the scoping meetings, provided them with informational handouts and comment forms, and provided them an opportunity to sign up for the CJMT EIS/OEIS mailing list. Greeters also identified the comment table where attendees could provide written or verbal comments.
- **Poster Stations:** CJMT EIS/OEIS subject matter experts staffed poster stations and answered questions from the attendees. In addition, three Section 106 posters were set up in a separate area and staffed with subject matter experts to explain the Section 106 process and to solicit public input on identifying potential historic properties and potential impacts on historic properties that could result from the proposed action.
- **Comment Station:** A table was set up at each scoping meeting to provide attendees an area to compose their comments in written format or to provide them orally on to a digital recorder.
- **Translators:** A Chamorro translator was available at all three scoping meetings. Additionally, a Carolinian translator was available at the two Saipan meetings.

- **Media Outreach:** Representatives from the CJMT EIS/OEIS team, including Public Affairs Officers made themselves available for interviews and other media outreach at each of the scoping meetings.

### 3.3 SCOPING MATERIAL

Posters, a booklet, a fact sheet, and a 6.5-minute video constituted the scoping materials (Appendix E). These materials were also available for viewing and downloading on the public website throughout the scoping period, and continue to be available on the website.

#### 3.3.1 Posters

The sixteen posters displayed at the public scoping meetings are listed below:

##### CJMT EIS/OEIS Posters (Appendix E)

1. Welcome
2. NEPA Process and Scoping Overview
3. Resources
4. Proposed Action and Purpose and Need
5. Proposed Training – Unit Level
6. Preliminary Unit Level Training for Tinian – Alternative 1
7. Preliminary Unit Level Training for Tinian – Alternative 2
8. Preliminary Unit Level Training for Tinian – Alternative 3
9. Proposed Training – Combined Level
10. Preliminary Combined Level Training for Pagan – Alternatives 1 and 2
11. Air and Sea Space
12. U.S. Military in Your Community
13. How to Provide Comments

##### Section 106 Posters (Appendix F)

1. Section 106 Process and Public Involvement
2. Potential Effects on Historic Properties
3. Cultural Resources Area of Potential Effect

#### 3.3.2 Handouts

##### 3.3.2.1 Fact Sheet

A CJMT EIS/OEIS fact sheet was available in three languages: English, Chamorro, and Carolinian and was available to all attendees. It provided an overview of the proposed action, explained the purpose and need for the proposed action, and described the format of the scoping meetings. The back of the fact sheet outlined the various ways to comment (by mail, online, and in person at the scoping meetings), details of the scoping meeting locations and times, and provided space for taking notes (Appendix E).

##### 3.3.2.2 Booklet

A 16-page color CJMT EIS/OEIS scoping meeting booklet (Appendix E) was available to all meeting attendees and extra copies were given to the Mayor, Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan for further dissemination to Tinian residents. The booklet contained an overview of the scoping meetings and NEPA process, a brief explanation of why the action requires preparation of an OEIS, potential topics that may be analyzed in the CJMT EIS/OEIS, background information on the purpose and need for the proposed

action, safety measures that would potentially be employed under the proposed action, a description of the preliminary alternatives for training on Tinian and Pagan, proposed special use air and sea space, and information on how to provide scoping comments.

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## CHAPTER 4

# SCOPING COMMENT SUMMARY

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### 4.1 COMMENT METHODS

Throughout the scoping period, MARFORPAC provided multiple avenues for the public to submit comments:

- written and oral comments at the scoping meetings;
- mailed through U.S. postal service; and
- electronically via the website.

In addition to providing the above avenues for public comment, MARFORPAC accepted comments submitted via U.S. postal service in non-traditional formats such as recorded audio and video media, petitions, and public forums.

Regardless of the method, each submittal was considered as a single comment even if the same person addressed multiple topics. A comment submittal could contain one or more topics of public concern. These topics were categorized as such and tabulated. All comments received, regardless of format, became part of the administrative record associated with the proposed action.

#### 4.1.1 Written and Oral Comments

Written comments, whether composed prior to or at the scoping meetings, were solicited and accepted. Comment forms were handed out at the welcome table and available at the comment table. A box was designated to collect written comments from meeting attendees. Comments were also accepted verbally through a digital recorder at the meetings. Translators were available to assist Chamorro- or Carolinian-speaking individuals and assist in translation.

#### 4.1.2 Mailed Comments

Hard-copy comments as well as recorded audio and video comments were accepted via U.S. mail.

#### 4.1.3 Website Comments

Public comments were submitted via the website at [www.CNMIJointMilitaryTrainingEIS.com](http://www.CNMIJointMilitaryTrainingEIS.com). Comments submitted through the website were transferred to a database where each submission counted as an individual comment document.

#### 4.1.4 Non-traditional Formats

Audio and video comments that were submitted in non-traditional formats were translated into English, as appropriate, and the commenter's words were summarized. Every effort was made to treat each speaker as a single comment submittal.

### 4.2 COMMENT DATA

A total of 198 unique comment submittals were received during the public scoping period. In addition, there were eight duplicates (i.e., content was identical to another comment submitted from the same organization, agency, or person). The 198 comments are considered to be individual comment submittals for purposes of this report and are displayed in Table 4-1, which outlines comments received by

submission type (e.g., mailed, in person, via website). As shown in the table, 42 percent of the comments were submitted via the website.

**Table 4-1. Comment Submittals Received by Method of Submission**

<i>Method of Submission</i>	<i>Number of Comments Received</i>
Written comments (via U.S. mail)	30
Audio comments (via U.S. mail)	47
Written comments collected at the Dandan scoping meeting	5
Written comments collected at the Tinian scoping meeting	6
Written comments collected at the Carolinian Utt scoping meeting	6
Audio comments collected at the Carolinian Utt scoping meeting	7
Video comments (recorded outside the Carolinian Utt scoping meeting and submitted via U.S. mail)	9
Via comment website	84
Via email	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>198</b>

#### 4.3 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS BY CATEGORY

During the CJMT EIS/OEIS public scoping period, MARFORPAC received comments from a variety of groups including: CNMI and federal government agencies, elected officials, business and commercial entities, interest groups, and individual citizens. Table 4-2 summarizes the number of comment submittals received by category (excluding duplicates). Please note that the following summarizes topics identified from comment submittals received during the scoping process, and does not represent an agency policy or decision.

**Table 4-2. Commenters by Category**

<i>Commenter Category</i>	<i>Number of Commenters</i>
Individual citizens	134
CNMI government (agencies and elected officials)	29
Federal government (agencies)	5
Non-governmental organizations	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>198</b>

#### 4.4 PROCESSING OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

All comment submittals were assigned an identification number for tracking purposes; duplicates were removed (but were kept for inclusion in the administrative record). Each unique submittal was evaluated and every topic was identified and tagged by issue. For example, a comment submittal could have touched on topics such as the proposed action, marine biology, and historic landmarks. Then within the proposed action topic, there could be separate issues the submittal has identified such as training over land, why choose CNMI, and what type of training could occur on the beach. Table 4-3 shows the topics for which comments were received. Section 4.5 provides a summary of the scoping comments listed below.

**Table 4-3. Comments by EIS Topic**

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Number of Comments</i>	<i>Issues (described in Section 4.5)</i>
Description of the proposed action/purpose and need	48	Land activities, sea activities, air activities
NEPA process/public involvement	44	Scoping period length, two EIS/OEISs, public participation
Action alternatives	49	Tinian, Pagan, International Broadcasting Bureau, other alternatives
Location	198	CNMI, Pagan, Tinian
Indirect/cumulative impacts	95	Induced development
Ecological effects	91	Ecosystems, sensitive habitats
Geology and soils	28	Soil erosion, topography, geological hazard
Water resources	25	Fresh water, marine water, surface water
Air quality	9	Increased infrastructure construction
Noise	15	Community, marine and terrestrial biology
Airspace	17	Special Use Airspace
Land use	109	Resettlement/homesteading, access, acquisition, agriculture
Recreation	31	Boating/fishing/diving/beach, access
Terrestrial biology	66	Threatened and endangered species, habitat destruction, mortality, resilience
Marine biology	49	Threatened and endangered species, coral, habitat destruction, invasive species
Section 106/cultural resources	64	Cultural identity, historic resources, National Historic Landmark, medicinal plants
Visual resources	25	Visual landscape, island beauty
Transportation	28	Marine transportation, roads, traffic
Utilities	21	Energy, potable water, wastewater
Socioeconomics and general services	119	Settlement (general/Pagan), fishing, subsistence agriculture, cattle ranching, agriculture, tourism
Hazardous materials and waste	58	Contamination, unexploded ordnance, hazardous materials
Public health and safety	61	Cancer, contamination, unexploded ordnance, hazardous materials
Environmental justice	93	Inequality toward CNMI residents
Mitigation	20	Previous NEPA mitigation measures

Note: One comment submittal may contain multiple identified topics and/or issues.

## 4.5 SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS

The following subsections provide a summary of the comments received during the extended CJMT EIS/OEIS scoping period.

### 4.5.1 Description of Proposed Action/Purpose and Need

Comments requested that the proposed action be separated into two distinct EIS/OEISs, one each for Tinian and Pagan. Comments questioned the need for live-fire training given computer simulation technology and the existing training ranges on Farallon de Medinilla, Guam, and Hawaii.

#### **4.5.2 NEPA Process/Public Involvement**

Commenters encouraged others to participate in the NEPA process and to submit written comments. Commenters requested an extension of the scoping period. Commenters made several observations about NEPA, generally requesting more explanation of the analysis methodology and stating that NEPA is inherently a western approach to knowledge generation and decision making that is not in tune with the cultural practices of the people of the CNMI. Comments stated that the process prioritizes English speakers, but acknowledged the effort made during the scoping process to accommodate non-English speakers. Comments were expressed about the appropriateness of multiple NEPA analyses currently or recently conducted in the region. There were requests for weekend public tours of all areas under consideration prior to public meetings for the CJMT Draft EIS/OEIS.

#### **4.5.3 Action Alternatives**

Commenters requested that each alternative discuss how it complies with the CNMI Covenant and the “Technical Agreement Regarding Use of Land to be Leased by the U.S. in the Northern Mariana Islands” (signed February 15, 1975). Comments also requested the EIS/OEIS include a full discussion of reasonable alternatives and the use of environmental criteria and operational criteria for evaluating alternatives. On Tinian, comments asked about an alternative where training would occur only in the north-central part of the island, that range alternatives allow for continued use of leased land for agricultural production, and cattle grazing. For Pagan, comments asked why all of the island of Pagan is included in both preliminary alternatives for the island. Other comments requested that the CJMT EIS/OEIS examine the benefits and disadvantages between having training activities only in the CNMI instead of having both training and housing on Guam.

#### **4.5.4 Location**

Comments expressed a desire for military training to occur in a location other than Pagan, Tinian, or in the CNMI. Comments related to the island of Pagan expressed opposition to any use of the island for military training activities or avoid Pagan entirely and conduct military training only on existing leased lands in Tinian. Other comments recommended that the live-fire training occur on one of the northern islands and not on Tinian or Saipan (i.e., away from populated areas).

#### **4.5.5 Indirect/Cumulative Impacts**

Indirect and cumulative impacts, including induced development, were topics of concern for both islands. For instance, what type of indirect impacts would occur from military airspace operations for aircraft traveling to and from other islands such as Rota, and effects to operations and tourism at the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument.

#### **4.5.6 Ecological Effects**

Comments expressed concerns about potential degradation of the natural environment such as effects on ecosystems and sensitive habitats (i.e., wetlands) due to military training.

#### **4.5.7 Geology and Soils**

Under geology and soils, comments included the potential for impacts to the topography of the islands, soil erosion and sedimentation effects to coral reefs, and impacts to soil stability on Pagan.

#### **4.5.8 Water Resources**

Commenters were concerned if the proposed action would degrade water quality in marine, surface, and/or groundwater locations.



#### **4.5.9 Air Quality**

Comments expressed concerns about potential impacts to air quality from increased human activity and infrastructure development (e.g., energy generation) resulting from the proposed action.

#### **4.5.10 Noise**

Comments expressed concerns about the effects of noise associated with live-fire training to humans and wildlife, as well as the distance noise could travel from some artillery exercises.

#### **4.5.11 Airspace**

Comments expressed concerns about potential impacts to air travel from any proposed airspace restrictions.

#### **4.5.12 Land Use**

Land use comments included whether resettlement would be possible on the island of Pagan, continued access to leased lands on Tinian, the type of land control needed by the military, and if agriculture uses would continue to be permitted within the lease lands on Tinian. Comments expressed support for the military proposal but not for the military's acquisition of additional land. Commenters requested that any proposed land acquisition of privately owned land be identified in the EIS/OEIS. Specific land use concerns for Tinian and Pagan were on access to graves, cemeteries, shrines, *latte* sites, and areas where traditional cultural practices are undertaken. Comments associated with Pagan expressed concern over future mining of pozzolan, status of individuals on the island, and the rights of individuals who claim past land interest on the island. Tinian comments were on the scope of the military lease agreement, potential resettlement of the Military Lease Area, and compatible use of leased area for cattle ranching and agriculture. Concerns were also expressed about access to the following areas: Tinian National Historic Landmark, other cultural sites, beaches, diving areas, fishing areas, other recreational sites, and food production areas.

#### **4.5.13 Recreation**

Commenters expressed concerns regarding how the proposal would impact tourism, fishing, hunting, cultural activities, beach access, and boating.

#### **4.5.14 Terrestrial Biology**

Comments identified threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, sensitive species, and biological diversity that the EIS/OEIS should study and include in the EIS/OEIS. Comments noted the tree snail (*Partula gibba*), potential effects to non-listed/non-protected terrestrial organisms including birds, livestock, and vegetation, as well as the potential for the accidental introduction of invasive species including the brown tree snake. Comments requested an update to the Regional Biosecurity Plan.

#### **4.5.15 Marine Biology**

Comments requested the potential impacts to threatened and endangered marine species, marine mammals, and biological diversity, and coral reefs be studied. Specifically, comments asked what type of impacts would occur to the marine environment including fishes, coral reefs, and essential fish habitat. Comments also expressed concern about potential for the accidental introduction of invasive species such as water-borne organisms carried on the hulls of ocean vessels. Comments requested an update to the Regional Biosecurity Plan.

#### **4.5.16 Section 106/Cultural Resources**

Cultural resource comments for Tinian and Pagan focused on impacts and access to cultural, archaeological and historic resources, the National Historic Landmark (Tinian), and the presence and availability of medicinal plants. Comments expressed concerns about how military training would affect Chamorro self-determination and the cultural identity of those individuals having historic roots to Pagan, Tinian, and the Northern Islands. For Pagan, comments emphasized the cultural connection former residents and their families have with Pagan.

#### **4.5.17 Visual Resources**

Comments identified concerns about the possibility of the proposed action negatively affecting the visual landscape and beauty of the islands. Increased light pollution was another concern raised by commenters.

#### **4.5.18 Transportation**

Comments identified concern about changes to ground, marine, and air transportation routes on and between the islands. Specifically, comments asked if airspace restrictions would conflict with civilian and commercial air traffic, affect the availability and frequency of flights between Tinian and Saipan, and if the airspace restrictions would have direct/indirect effects on the economies of Tinian, Saipan, and Rota. Commenters indicated that the markets on Tinian, Saipan, and Rota are too small to support larger airplanes or different routes.

#### **4.5.19 Utilities**

Comments asked about the ability of local utilities and associated infrastructure (e.g., energy, potable water, wastewater, solid waste, and stormwater) to meet the demand of population growth resulting from the proposed action. Comments raised concern about the potential need to improve infrastructure, fuel availability and storage, and developing new energy sources.

#### **4.5.20 Socioeconomics and General Services**

Under this topic, concerns were expressed about socioeconomic impacts to the CNMI and to operations and tourism such as those associated with the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. Generally, there were concerns about the quality of life for both current and future Northern Islanders, whether they would still be able to reside on Tinian, have the ability to homestead on Pagan, or continue to practice subsistence living. Specific to Pagan, concerns focused on opportunities for commercial fishing, eco-tourism, travel (aircraft and ocean vessel), proposed pozzolan mining/quarrying, and food production. For Tinian, comments expressed concerns about the proposed action economic impact on cattle ranching and farming within the lease area, tourism, commercial fishing, and commercial diving as a source of income for island residents. Comments suggested the U.S. military examine the potential for Tinian agriculture to supply military food produce needs. Comments inquired if mitigation would be provided for the loss of agricultural production currently taking place within the Military Lease Area, and the potential increased cost and availability of fresh produce and meat on the island of Tinian. Additionally, comments requested that the EIS/OEIS examine how Tinian's private sector would be engaged in the proposal in terms of number and type of jobs and availability of contracted work.

#### **4.5.21 Hazardous Materials and Waste**

Concerns were raised about potential impacts from expended and unexploded ordnance, residual munitions constituents, petroleum products, heavy metals, and other contaminants related to proposed training activities.

**4.5.22 Public Health and Safety**

Commenters expressed concerns about increased rates of cancer. On Tinian, commenters were concerned about safety hazards including bird aircraft strike hazard, wildfire, and unexploded ordnance associated with training. Comments asked if medical services would be provided and whether residents would have access to medical services. Comments noted the need to study whether more public services, such as fire, emergency, medical, and police services, will be needed as a result of the proposed action or increased population.

**4.5.23 Environmental Justice**

Comments were expressed on the inequality in treatment toward indigenous peoples and CNMI residents with a connection to the Northern Islands compared to residents of Guam and the U.S. mainland.

**4.5.24 Mitigation**

Comments requested an examination of how the proposed action may impact mitigation measures that have resulted from commitments made in previous NEPA actions.

**4.6 POST-SCOPING: NEXT STEPS**

With the conclusion of the public scoping period, MARFORPAC, as the Executive Agent, will utilize the comments to inform and shape the analyses to be conducted within the EIS/OEIS.

As discussed above, public scoping comments are an essential part of developing the Draft EIS/OEIS. Responses are not provided to scoping comments. However, the comments are shared with all EIS/OEIS team members to ensure that they are fully considered during preparation of the Draft EIS/OEIS.

The next opportunity for public involvement will occur with the publication of the Draft EIS/OEIS. The public will be able to review the Draft EIS/OEIS, provide comments, and participate in public meetings. Comments provided on the Draft EIS/OEIS during the public comment period will be incorporated into the Final EIS/OEIS. The Final EIS/OEIS will include the comments and responses to comments.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **REFERENCES**

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Federal Register (FR) 16257. 2013. *Notice of Intent To Prepare the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Joint Military Training Environmental Impact Statement / Overseas Environmental Impact Statement*. 14 March.

Federal Register (FR) 23920. 2013. *Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period for the Notice of Intent to Prepare the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Joint Military Training Environmental Impact Statement / Overseas Environmental Impact Statement*. 23 April.

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