

Annex I

Environmental Impact Assessment

Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

ERA Reference no.: EA/00039/19
PA Reference no.: N/A
Project Title: Construction of New Hangar.
Location: Triq Ғal Farruġ, Ғal Farruġ, Malta International Airport (MIA), Malta
Screening date: August 2019

1. Outline of proposal

- 1.1 The proposal by Lufthansa Technik Malta (LTM) is for the construction of an additional hangar adjacent to the existing hangars and facilities at Ғal Farruġ within the confines of the Malta International Airport (MIA) in Ғal Luqa.
- 1.2 The new hangar will be approximately 94 m wide, 90 m deep and 31 m high. The hangar will have an area of circa. 8,650 sq.m and the apron will have an area of circa. 11,500 sq.m. The apron is the concreted/tarmacked area which is located in front of the hangar entrance and is used for manoeuvring the aircraft into the hangar. The back corners of the hangar will include workshops and offices.
- 1.3 The objectives of the proposal are:
 - To maintain and increase the current operations as a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) company;
 - To continue providing skilled employment opportunities in the aviation maintenance sector; and
 - To consolidate current operations in the Main Facility.

2. Site context

- 2.1 The site is adjacent to Triq Ħal Farruġ, Ħal Farruġ (**Figure 1**) and is situated within the territory covered by the South Malta Local Plan (SMLP).
- 2.2 The eastern part of the proposed development site is used as a car parking area that accommodates 132 cars. Part of this car park area is used for the temporary storage of an aircraft, which is used for training purposes. The western flank of the site overlies Apron 4. The rest of the site is unused open space. Refer to **Figure 1**.
- 2.3 As stated in the Project Description Statement (PDS) approximately half of the area of study is associated to the aviation sector. This includes the existing LTM hangars and offices, the MIA airfield and a cleared area to the west of the proposed development site that will accommodate the SR Technics (another MRO service provider) new premises.
- 2.4 On the opposite side of Triq Ħal Farruġ is an industrial group complex which includes a batching plant, storage warehouses and open yards. The area of study includes part of the multi-use recreation park estate owned by the same group. Other land uses that fall within the area of study include an eatery, a residence, a farm and an apartment block. The surrounding land uses are illustrated in **Figure 2**.
- 2.5 The site lies within the merged 300m groundwater safeguard zone and is designated as a Bird Sanctuary, 'L-Ajruport ta' Ħal-Luqa' scheduled under Legal Notice 41/03. The Bird Sanctuary is only a nominal environmental constraint and is not really related to environmental protection. Consequently, it is related to the establishment of a no-shooting zone for the purpose of public safety.

3. Site history

- 3.1 Lufthansa Technik Malta (LTM) currently holds two independent lease agreements for its two main operation buildings, the Main Facility and the Old Hangar, located within a 500 m distance of each other.
 - The Main Facility was constructed in 2008 as per DN 00945/08, and includes three hangars, workshops and offices.
 - Hangar 3 was extended to accommodate larger aircraft in 2013 as per DN 00629/13.
 - The site has also been previously subject to Planning Application 566/18 for the 'Installation of Photovoltaic Panels over hangar roofs', which has been withdrawn.

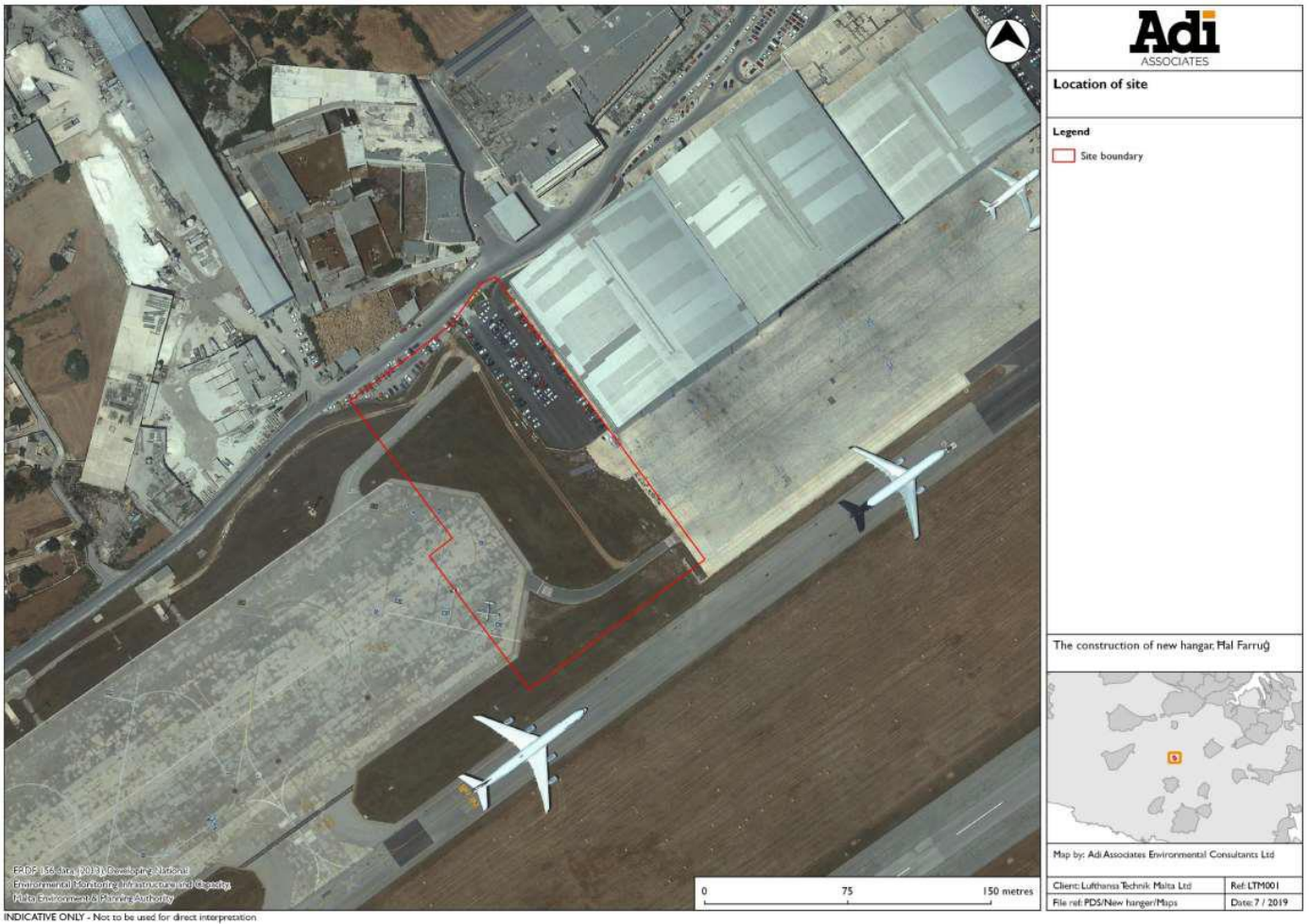


Figure 1: Aerial image showing location of the proposed development site, marked in red (Source: PDS).

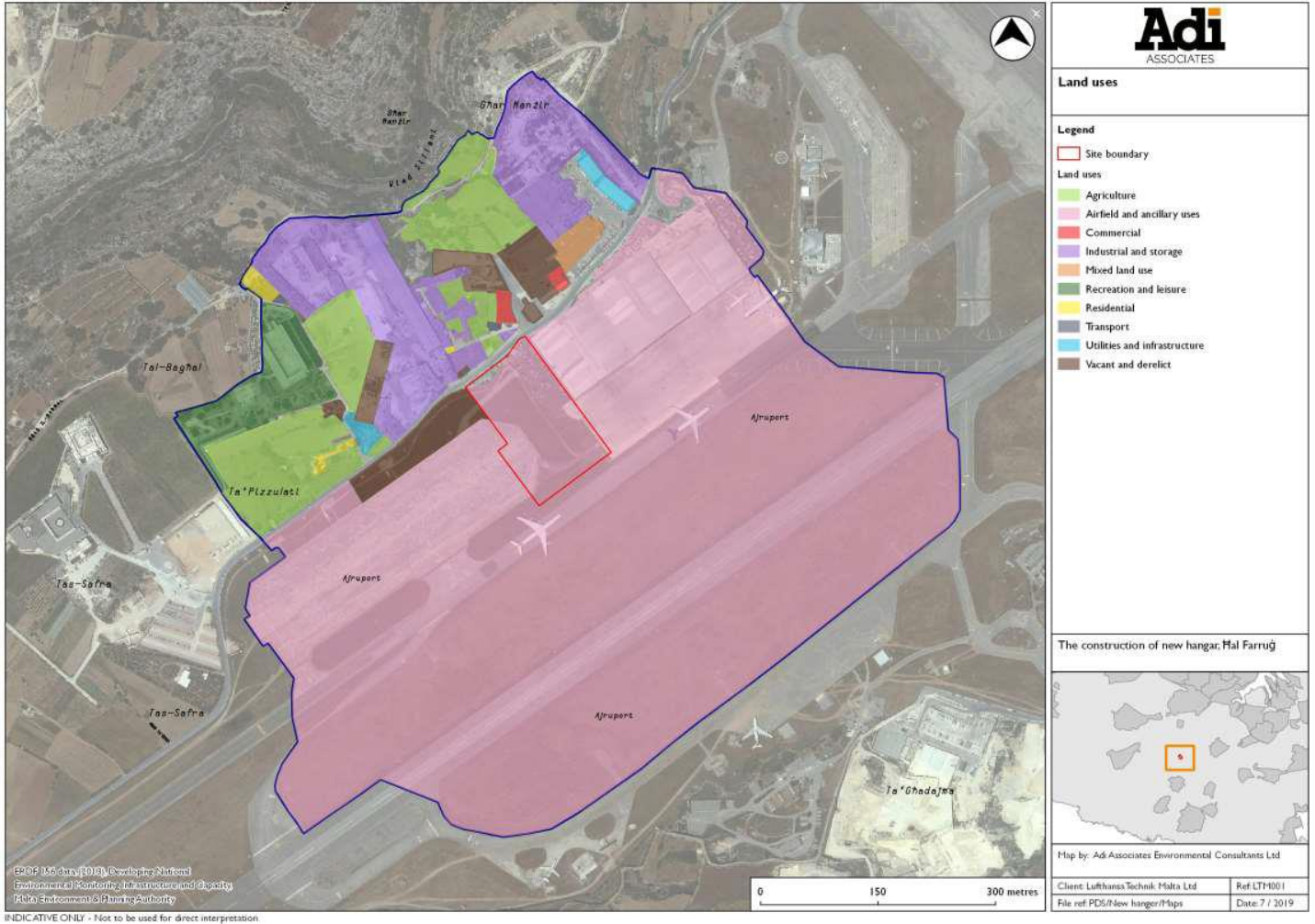


Figure 2: Aerial view of land uses around the proposed development site (Source: PDS).

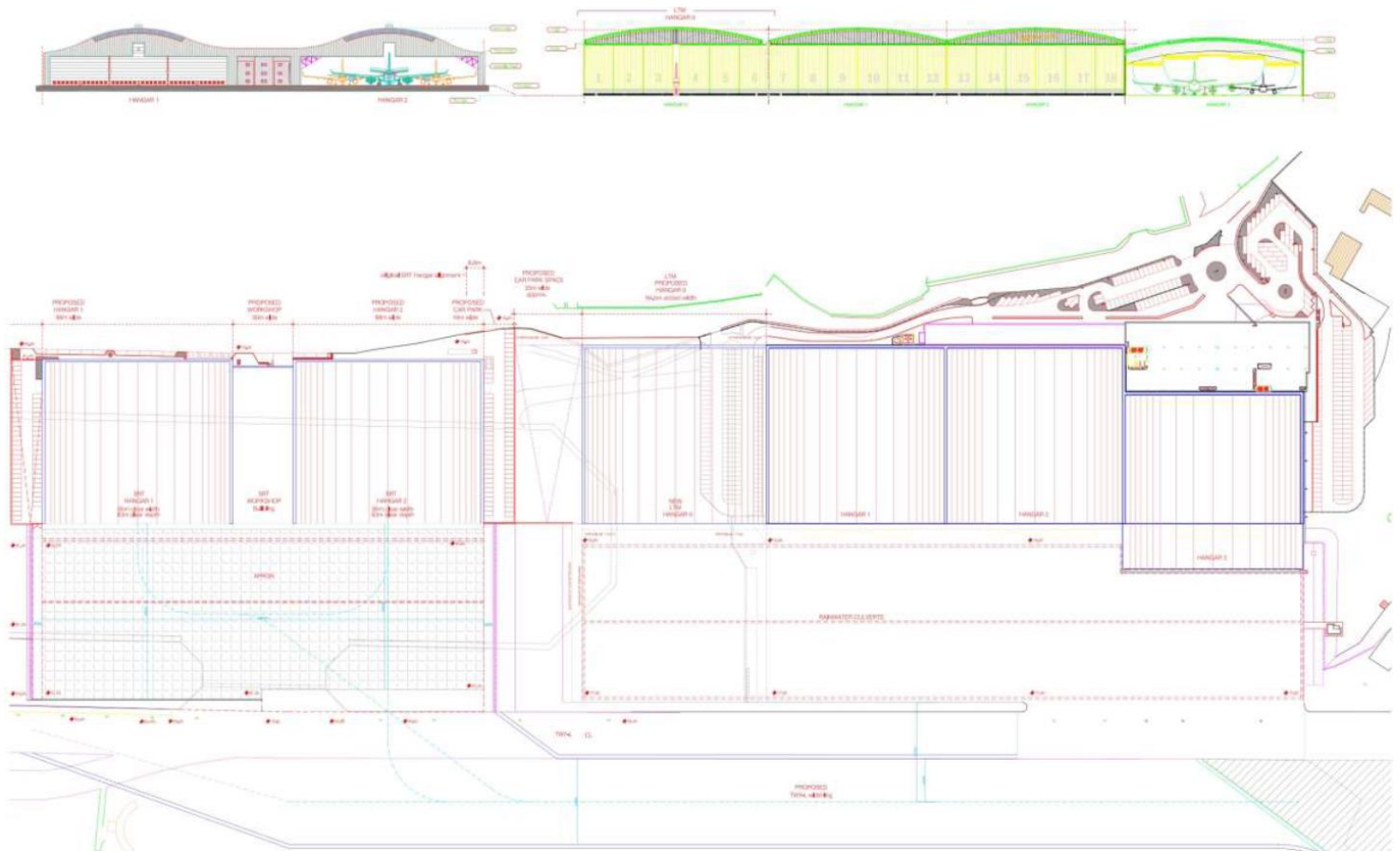


Figure 3: Proposed block plan showing existing LTM Hangars 1, 2 & 3 to the right and approved SR Technics Hangars 1 & 2 to the left (Source: PDS).

4 EIA Screening (*citations refer to S.L. 549.46, except where otherwise specified*):

- 4.1 The proposed development falls under the scope of Schedule I Category II Section 1.0.2.1 (Development with a site area of 2ha or more) of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46).
- 4.2 Documents used for screening:
- Project Description Statement (PDS), which was referred to ERA on 23rd July 2019 directly by the applicant.

Type and characteristics of potential impact/s

Resource and Land use

- 4.3 An approximate weight of 700 tonnes of steel and a volume of 10,000 m³ of concrete (of which circa. 6,500 m³ is C30/37 grade and will be used for the apron and hangar floor) are the main resources that will be utilised for construction.
- 4.4 During operation, the total electrical consumption for the hangar is envisaged to be approximately 1,038,953.7 kVAh. ERA views positively the proposal for the installation of Building Applied Photovoltaics (BAPVs) on the roof of large buildings. In this regard, the plans to install and subsequently extend the BAPVs on the roofs of the existing hangars as remarked in the PDS, are highly encouraged.
- 4.5 Although the proposed development has a significant site area, the nature of the proposal is coherent with the operations at the MIA. In this regard, there are no significant concerns relating to the land use.

Waste

- 4.6 The proposed development will involve the excavation of circa. 16,000 m³ of excavated waste including circa. 13,800 m³ of soil. Inert waste, generated during demolition and excavation processes, is to be disposed in facilities that are licensed to accept or recycle this waste, duly permitted by ERA and in accordance with the Waste Management Regulations (S.L. 549.63) and Waste Management (Activity Registration) Regulations (S.L. 549.45). In this context, the applicant is requested to take into consideration the provisions of the *Fertile Soil (Preservation) Act* and consult with the Agriculture Department for further instructions on soil management.
- 4.7 As regards operation, the PDS states that it is expected that the proposal will generate the same type of wastes that are generated by the existing hangars.

Ecology (Valley System)

- 4.8 The proposed project is geographically located less than 300 m south of Tree Protection Area (TPA) - Ta' Bloq - Ghar Hanzir (I/o Qormi & Siggiewi) as per G.N. 473 of 2011. Wied Qirda found northeast of the site is of National Importance as per G.N. 223 of 2005. However, both Wied Qirda and Ta' Bloq are well beyond the actual area of influence of the proposed development, in view of the topography of the Wied il-Kbir valley system.
- 4.9 Furthermore and as also mentioned in the PDS, Wied Sillani which lies approximately 350 m north of the site, forms part of a wider valley system and has been proposed for environmental and landscape protection in the South Malta Local Plan (SMLP). The SMLP designated this valley system as a valley protection zone and recommended the creation of an Environmental Management Plan for this area.
- 4.10 Given the site falls within the 300m merged groundwater safeguard zone, in addition to the collection of surface runoff from the buildings' roofs, all discharges should be adequately contained by the appropriate waste management infrastructure (e.g. oil-water separators as mentioned in the PDS). Moreover, storm-water drainpipes should be installed and connected to the existing network. The collected storm-water should be carried to reservoirs for second class use.
- 4.11 Therefore, the appropriate mitigation measures and conditions as per Annex II are to be adhered to in order to limit the risks of contamination into the surrounding. In this regard, the Applicant is requested to immediately contact the Environmental Permitting Unit (industrial.applications@era.org.mt) to discuss the requirements relating to effluent discharges and any other associated matters.

Air Quality & Noise, Vibration and Light

- 4.12 No significant impacts are envisaged during the construction phase given that potential impacts arising during construction are likely to be minimal, short term and temporary i.e. excavation works will last just over two months (ref: Table 4 of PDS).
- 4.13 Construction works are to be in line with the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09). Moreover, the mitigation measures listed in the PDS under Paragraph 55 as well as those listed below are to be adhered to.
- All mechanical plant and construction equipment is to be silenced by best practical means including silencing measures such as compressor panels and mufflers should be properly maintained and utilised.
 - Noise enclosures should always have all doors or hatches closed when the equipment is in use.

- Hoarding to be built around the site and maintained to maximise the reduction in noise levels to sensitive buildings.
 - Avoid unnecessary noise, such as leaving noisy idle machinery operating.
- 4.14 As regards operation, although the proposal will operate 24/7 as the existing facilities, the operations will take place in a closed environment and in an area dedicated to aviation and industrial uses. Painting works will be kept to a minimum and will also be undertaken in dedicated workshops as per existing operations.

Visual Impact and Landscape Character

- 4.15 As shown by the plans (**Figure 3**) and as stated in the PDS, although the proposed development will add to the massing of the entire complex, it would not be higher than the existing levels. In this regard, as well as taking into consideration the location of the site, no significant visual and landscape impacts on the surroundings are envisaged.
- 4.16 It is also envisaged that the proposed development will integrate with the surrounding uses and that the proposal will be an infill development between the existing LTM Main Facility, and the SR Technics committed development, within the already-existing airport grounds.

Cultural Heritage

- 4.17 The area is archaeologically sensitive so there is the possibility that features will be discovered during the excavation of the site. Therefore, as also mentioned in the PDS, the appointment of an archaeology monitor approved by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH) to supervise all ground interventions is being recommended. Applicant should liaise with the SCH for further guidance.

5 ERA Conclusion

5.1 EIA screening conclusion

The above detailed EIA screening concludes that impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA, in accordance with Regulation 15(3b) of the EIA Regulations 2017 (S.L. 549.46), as long as various mitigation measures are duly incorporated into the mainstream development consent mechanism and mitigated by means of conditions and specifications (e.g. approved documents) in the development permit.

5.2 Environmental Permit Considerations

The executable version of this development permission together with the approved plans and the commencement notice shall not be issued until such time that the applicant submits a written acknowledgement from the ERA confirming that an application for an updated Environmental Permit application of the EP 0023/15 has been submitted and validated by the ERA. This shall cover all operational aspects of the applicant's site including related operations not necessarily covered by this development application. The operational changes to the site shall not commence until such time that the Environmental Permit is granted by ERA.

Disclaimer

The above screening results, the ensuing conclusions and recommendations are without prejudice to any required changes or updates should the development proposal be eventually modified or should the information/assumptions provided turn out to be incorrect. Any deviations of the proposal from this submission would need to be re-assessed and the merits of this screening would need to be re-opened.