

Annex I

Environmental Impact Assessment

Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

ERA Reference no.: EA/00076/18
PA Reference no.: PA 03427/18
Project Title: Proposed sanctioning of road works at part of Triq Hal-Qormi and proposed widening of part of Triq Hal-Qormi and Triq San Tumas, Luqa.
Location: Site at, Triq Hal-Qormi, Triq San Tumas, Luqa, Malta
Screening date: January 2019

1 Outline of Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal is for the widening of part of Triq Hal-Qormi and Triq San Tumas in Hal-Luqa, as well as sanctioning of already undertaken road works in part of Triq Hal-Qormi. Circa 9,000m² of land will be expropriated for the project, 6,600m² of which is agricultural land.
- 1.2 The existing road is characterized by a single carriageway of one northbound and one southbound lane, separated road markings. At the approaches to the roundabouts, the single carriageway changes into a dual carriageway for a short stretch, again with a single lane in each direction. The central reserve in these locations varies from concrete strips to strips with agricultural soil and a number of trees/shrubs
- 1.3 The proposal seeks to increase the capacity of both northbound and southbound directions by providing four lanes on the carriageway, as well as an additional cycle lane. The widening proposal includes the demolition of existing boundary walls and the excavation of agricultural soil. All rubble stone that is removed from the existing walls and which is considered acceptable for re-use shall be set aside for re-use in the new boundary walls which are proposed to be constructed at the edge of the new alignment.
- 1.4 Agricultural soil will also be re-used at the same sites.

2 Site Context

2.1 The road spans along Triq San Tumas and part of Triq Hal-Qormi. The area is characterised by the residential area of Hal-Luqa as well as the Hal-Farrug Industrial Area; the West side of the road is also dominated by the Malta International Airport.

2.2 Furthermore, the site is located:

- within various Drinking-Water Safeguard Zones as identified by the Malta Resources Authority (MRA) under the Water Policy Framework Regulations (Legal Notice 194 of 2004); and
- approx. 250 metres from L-Ajruport ta' Hal-Luqa Bird Sanctuary (as per Legal Notice 41 of 2003, which in this case is only a nominal environmental constraint, for the purpose of airport safety, and is not really related to environmental protection).

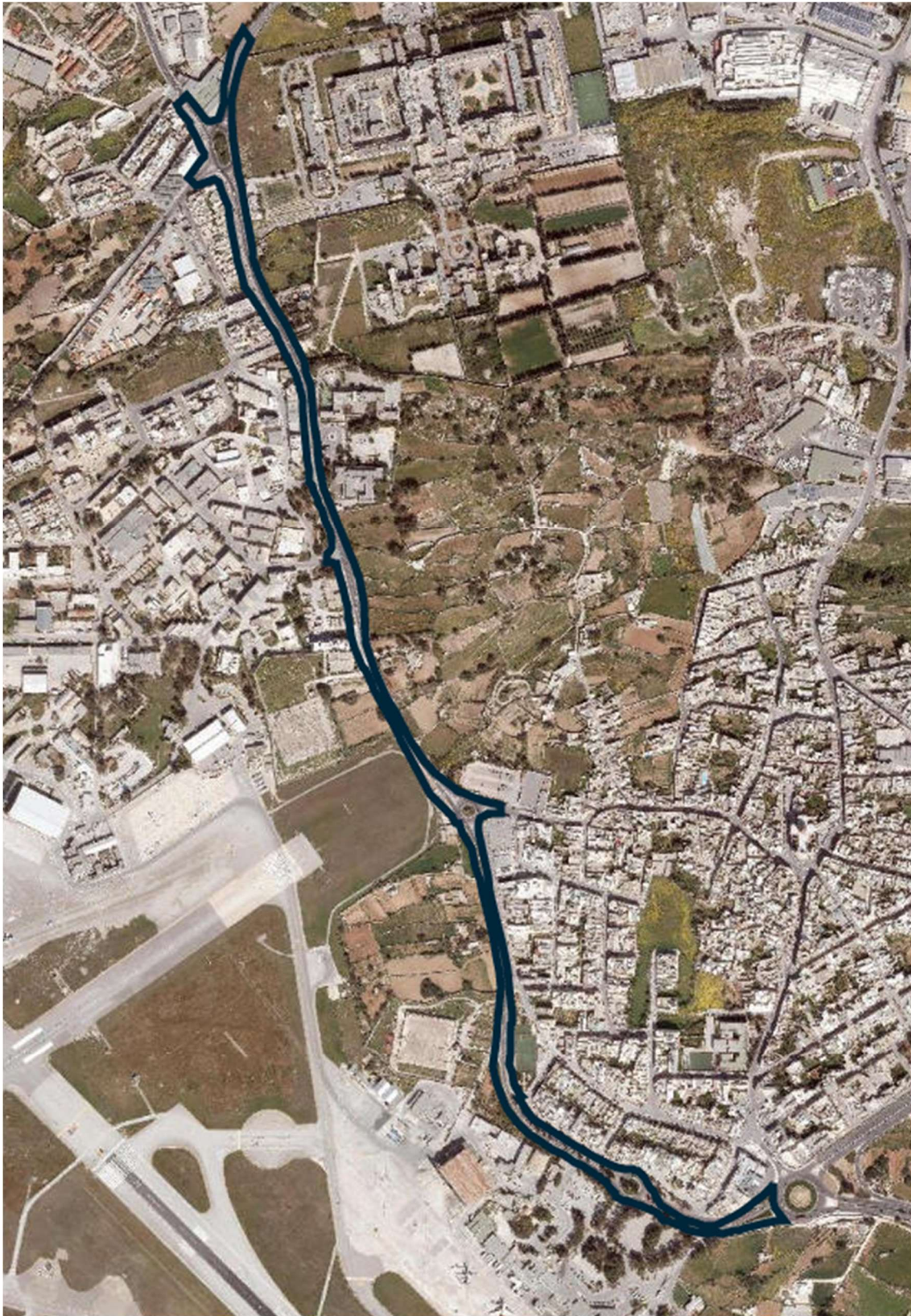


Figure 1. Close-up of the site and its immediate surroundings
(Source: PA Geoserver)

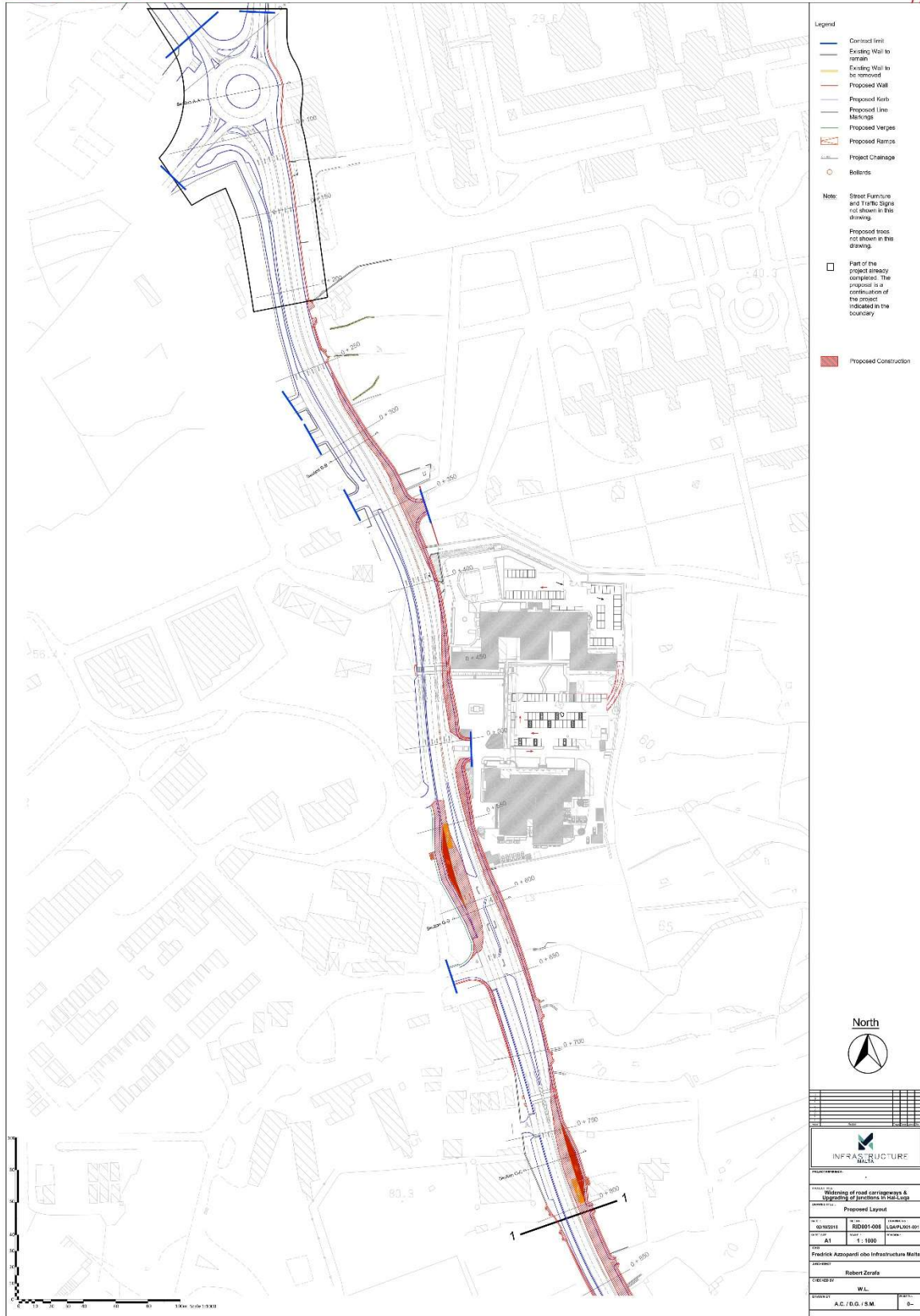


Figure 2. Block plan of the proposed road works/widening at Triq Ħal-Qormi (Source: PA/03427/18/Doc.77c)



Figure 3. Block plan of the Proposed road works/widening at Triq San Tumas (Source: PA/03427/18/Doc.77d)

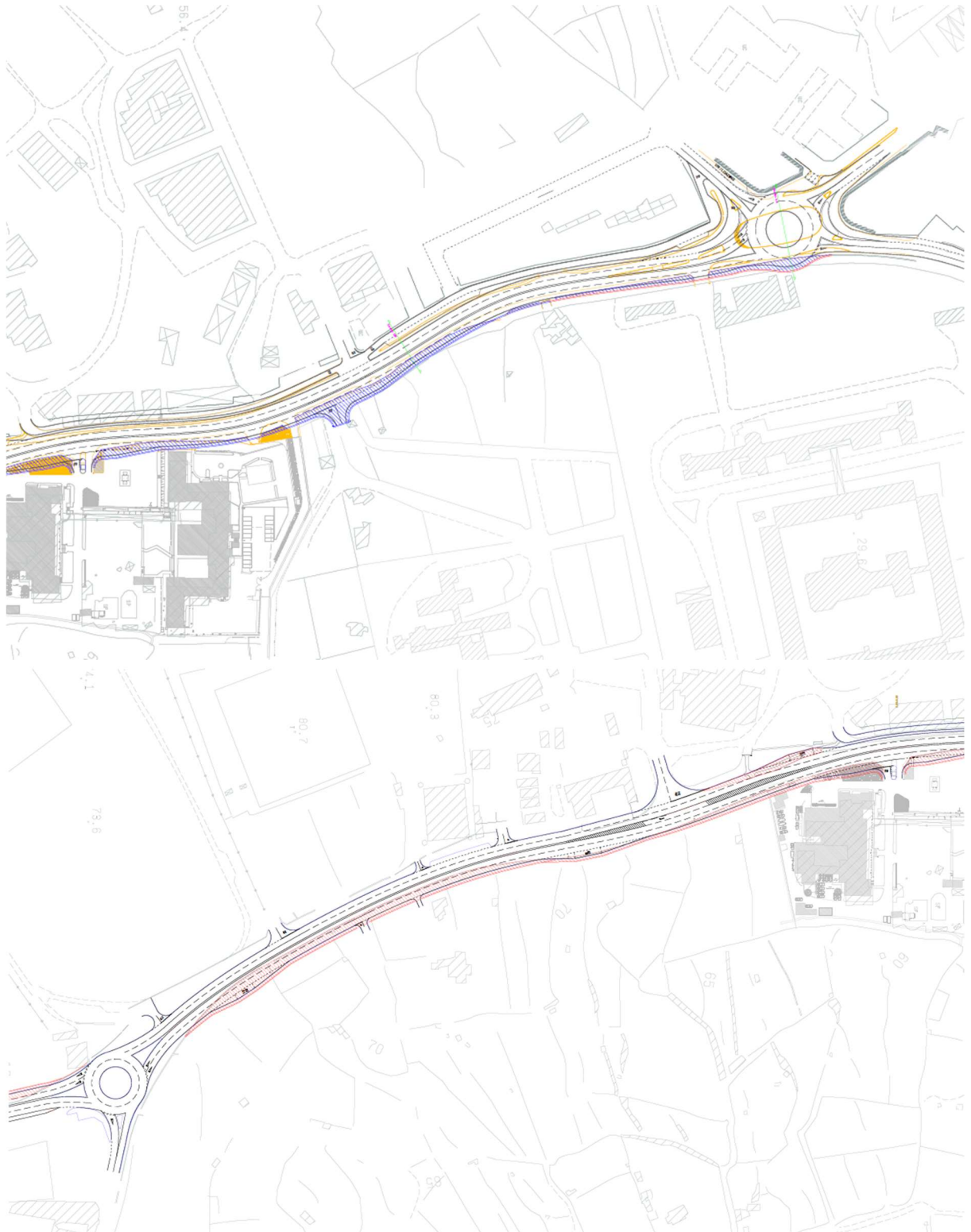


Figure 4. Detailed block plan of the Proposed road works/widening at Triq Ħal-Qormi
(Source: PA/03427/18/Doc.17a/13h)

3 EIA Screening (citations refer to EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L 549.46), except where otherwise specified):

3.1 The proposed project falls within the scope of Schedule I, Category II of the EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46): Section 2.1.2.1 (*Construction, excavation or realignment of roads, tunnels, viaducts or bridges, not covered by Category I, if located ODZ or at the edge of the development zone*).

3.2 Documents used for screening:

- Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 18th December 2018 (PA/03427/18/Doc.89a).

3.3 The following are a number of impacts envisaged on the surrounding environment:

Construction

3.3.1 With regards to construction, environmental impacts include noise, vibration, and dust emissions, as well as issues relating to surface water management. These potential impacts arising during construction will be short term and temporary and localised to the more sensitive areas along the development, namely, the agricultural land and valley (Wied il-Knejjes) adjacent to the East of Triq Ħal-Qormi, the agricultural land adjacent to the West of Triq San Tumas, and any trees within, or in the vicinity of, the development site. Such impacts should be mitigated at source through the implementation of conditions imposed as part of ERA's Works Method Statement (WMS).

3.3.2 Construction and excavation will also result in a number of waste streams, namely 7,200m³ of soil, 7,250m³ of scarified asphalt material, 10,300m³ of Type 1 granular material, and uncertain amounts of metal crash barriers and street lighting poles (depending on their state of wear and tear). According to the PDS, any waste material will either be reused both on-site and off-site, or disposed of in approved dumping sites. Given the nature of the proposal, there will be no operational waste.

Land Use

3.3.3 The area of undeveloped land required for the widening measures approximately 9,000 m², of which 6,600m² is agricultural land, in the form of a relatively narrow strip that extends along most of the sides of the existing road.

Ecology

3.3.4 The loss of soft ground cover and vegetation, and the increase in hard-surfacing, is likely to increase storm water runoff and reduce aquifer recharge within a Drinking-water Safeguard Zone. This is expected to be marginal, though, and is unlikely to lead to any significant impacts.

3.3.5 The proposal also involves the uprooting of 145 trees of varying maturity, 101 of which belong to protected species. Of these, 76 will be transplanted in various sites, with preference being given to areas within and close to the development site, with the remainder being uprooted. An additional 45 *Olea europea* trees will also be planted along the roadside. The applicant is currently in the process of applying for Nature Permit for the removal/transplantation of the affected trees.

Visual Amenity

3.3.6 The extensive, but ultimately marginal, land uptake and the uprooting of existing trees will also result in a modifications to the visual amenity all along the route, albeit such impact as well as the ensuing impact on the landscape is not expected to be particularly significant relative to the existing baseline, as long as appropriate measures are taken to ensure the effective blending of the realigned road verges into the rural surroundings.

Air Quality and Noise

3.3.7 While it is likely that the project will lead to an increased number of vehicles using this route, the removal of bottlenecks is also likely to facilitate traffic flow and ease congestion. Thus, the net effect on air and noise emissions is not expected to be significant from an environmental point of view.

Waste

3.3.8 All waste produced onsite should be handled in line with local legislation: Waste Regulations S.L. 549.63 and Waste Management Activity (Registration) Regulations S.L. 549.45.

4 ERA Conclusion

Screening Conclusion and recommended way forward

- 4.1 The above EIA screening has identified the following main areas of concern:
- iii. Sideways extension of the overall road footprint with consequent localised uptake of undeveloped land (primarily agricultural land) along the East of Triq Ħal-Qormi, and the to the West of Triq San Tumas; and
 - iv. The uprooting of a number of mature trees, which will change the visual aspect of the road.
- 4.2 The above detailed EIA screening concludes that impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA, as long as various mitigation measures are duly incorporated into the mainstream development consent mechanism by means of conditions and specifications (e.g. approved documents) in the development permit.
- 4.3 Furthermore, it is being recommended that all proposed upgrades and extensions to the national road network are assessed at a strategic level, in order to have a clear outline of the resultant impacts on traffic and air quality.

Screening 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