

PROJECT DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

Tal-Balal BY-PASS

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Project Description Statement (PDS) is to enable the Planning Authority to take a screening decision regarding whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. If in the affirmative, whether this should be a full EIA or a limited EPA. Furthermore terms of reference are to be prepared for the EIA in consultation with various interested parties including the general public. This PDS is based on the initial designs prepared and submitted to the authority.

Mr Paul Falzon filed a full development application (PA/5448/16) for a *Proposed Petrol Station including car wash, ATM and car service facilities*.

Currently, the proposed location is an open undeveloped unutilised land.

1.1 Details of Applicant

The proposed development is being carried out by Mr. Paul Falzon.

1.2 Background of the project

The development being proposed consists mainly of the construction of a petrol station and ancillary facilities including a car wash. The structures being proposed consist of a fuelling underground installation, four main pump machines located in a centrally and reachable area of the complex.

This service station will also offer other services such as car wash service, tyre service area, an ATM facility and a service shop.

The whole area will be surrounded with different type of landscaping, the aim of which is to reduce the visual impact and to enhance the layout of the station itself.

1.3 Current state of property

The proportion of this land has been abandoned and agricultural is a very low activity in this area. A number of scattered developments are present along the bypass varying from construction related activities to fast food outlets.

A MEPA application has been submitted PA 05448/16 for the Construction of fuel station and ancillary services.

2. Objectives of the proposed development

The area in which the development is being proposed is close to a high traffic area. Petrol stations, in general, do not generate a significant amount of new trips. The modal split establishes that most users drive into the station because they are already on the main road and find the location of the petrol station convenient to stop at, for car refuelling and servicing. With the introduction of the automated 24 hour refuelling service, users can drive into a petrol station at any time. The proposed station is very accessible and do not create any traffic congestion since a circulation area is being proposed within the same premises for vehicles to pass through, thus avoiding a traffic build up along the main road.

Apart from offering the fuelling service, this station will offer other services such as 'car wash', 'tyre service station' and a commercial space mainly to be used as a shopping outlet for car care related items.

2.2 Expected project duration

The project is expected to take six months from initial construction till completion. During this period, the project will be split in zones and individual zones will be split and developed independently, however the infrastructure/services will be developed in a holistic manner.

3. Physical Characteristics of the site

3.1 Site location and description

The site is located in the central region of Malta. The central region of Malta has a population 108, 490. This is about 27% of the entire population of the Maltese islands. This area is highly urbanised due to widespread urban sprawl and rapid development experienced in the past, when many green corridors and open space buffer zones between towns and villages were developed. Most of the surrounding areas are residential in character.

3.2 Physical Characteristics

The site forms part of a flat land abutting a main road

3.3 Current site usage

This land has been abandoned with limited agricultural activity in the surrounding area. Part of the surrounding area is presently used for industrial activities.

3.4 Surrounding land uses and environment

The buildings in the surrounding are mainly linked to industrial activities. The site is located along the main road which links Iklin to San Gwann.

4. Description of the project

4.1 Size and scale of development

The proposed development is being designed in such a manner as to localise the development around the entire area of the site, being well designed along the whole site. The scale of the development is such that only 7% of the floor area will be developed as permanent structures being utilised as control, shop and service areas. For the rest of the development lightweight structures will be used mainly to cover the fuelling and the car wash areas. The surrounding of the area will be covered with landscaping to enhance the visual aspect of the project.

4.2 Design adoption and reasons

The fuelling area will be located centrally accessible from Triq Tal-Balal. Since the area is classified as 'highly traffic area' it is expected that during peak hours quite a number of vehicles will be making use of the fuelling station, hence a four lane of pumps will be required to ease and eliminate waiting and queuing.

The layout of the plan makes it easy for the steering of vehicles on to site and for cars to line up while waiting for a place at pump; easy steering away from pump with no blocking of exit and good visibility for driving out on to road.

The other service activities are located away from the fuelling area having an adequate parking space to avoid traffic obstruction on site and a ring circulation is provided to eliminate car congestion within the site. Even the other services such as car wash are kept separate from the filling area for the same motive and for safety measurements.

A canopy is required to cover all filling positions with enough projection beyond pumps on both sides.

Other site essentials such as ATM and the shop will be placed at the back of the site surrounded by landscaping. Landscape buffer strips around the whole perimeter of the site are to be planted and maintained. External lights are to be directed away from the road to prevent light spill and glare.

4.3 Duration and phasing of the development

The proposed development will be phased in zones and the duration of the project is expected to be as follows:

Zone	Works	Duration
Fuelling zone including underground storage	Excavation	3 months
	Construction Finishes	2 months
Shop/Services/Control	Construction	1 month
	Finishes	1 month
Car wash/ air-water supply	Construction	1 month
	Finishes	2 months

4.4 Services necessary on site

During the construction and finishes stage a nominal amount of electricity and water supply will be necessary for the use of power generated hand tools. A small generator can also be utilised to provide the necessary electricity on site. Water facility will also be necessary for the sanitary areas where the workers would be able to change, wash and also provide the basic sanitary requirements. A water bowser can supply fresh water stored in appropriate containers.

The site office is to be equipped with internet connections. Temporary toilets will be used.

4.5 Amount of workers and parking during each construction phase

During the construction phase a compound area within the site will be dedicated for the parking of vehicles. It is being estimated that around 10 skilled labourers will be present on site at any time during the whole duration of the construction period.

4.6 Waste generation during construction and operation

All waste generated during the construction stage such as paper, plastic and timber will be stored in identified and separated recycling bins and taken to recycling sites identified by Waste Services Malta. Other construction debris such as crushed rock and reinforcement cut-offs will be disposed in landfills.

4.7 Storage and waste handling during construction/operation

As stated above the waste materials are to be stored on site and taken away in truck loads to approved waste separation facilities.

On the other hand, the demolition waste consisting of masonry blocks and concrete is to be loaded on trucks and carted away.

The proposed development shall require the use of the following raw materials up to shell form:

- Graded backfill material which can be generated from the excavated material and crushed on site
- Franka stone blocks
- Concrete blockwork/insulated bricks
- Various grades of concrete (cast in situ or precast)
- Steel reinforcements
- Structural steel beams and columns

Waste generated during the construction phase is low due to the fact that a small amount of excavation is to be carried out. The Proposed structures are to be composed of precast units which reduce further the waste generated.

The fuelling area: during operation should a leak occur, all operation must be stopped immediately. A proper bunding is being proposed to eliminate any leakage of oil products. Any waste oil products must be contained, reported and action taken for clean up.

To allow for expansion and to prevent a spill, the tanks shall not be filled above 95% capacity.

When topping up tanks

1. The valve to the next tank to be filled should be opened gradually and the valve to the tank being topped up closed gradually until full.
2. When topping up the final tank the flow is to be reduced accordingly and stopped when there is ample volume remaining to drain the hose, and piping to be purged.

4.8 Mitigation Measures

A 3m high boundary wall will be constructed around the surrounding of the site overlooking the main and side roads, whilst, an adequate hoarding of a minimum height of 2.7m shall be built around the remaining site perimeter.

Excavation works will be carried out using a cutting machine to minimise vibration. Mobile cranes shall be used during the full construction process. These shall be necessary to lift and erect various heavy items. The method of construction shall be a mix of composite structures using precast elements.

Works on site are to be carried out on a six day basis (except Sundays and Public Holidays). The operating hours shall be from 7.00am to 7.00pm during week days and from 7.00am till 1.30pm on Saturdays.

Dust within the area is to be kept to the minimum and monitored. This can be achieved using adequate watering during the demolition works, whilst vacuum equipped tools are to be used during the construction phase. Furthermore dust monitoring will be

carried out to ensure that the measures taken are being effective.

Site office, lavatories and storage areas are to be located within the site and adequate gate controls are to be carried out to ensure that the site is restricted to passersby. Furthermore a site safety officer is to be appointed to ensure that all site activity is carried out according to the current health and safety legislations

4.9 Machinery requirement, parking and traffic arrangements

Various machinery is needed during various phase of the project:

All Phases:

Wheel Washing Facility. This machinery is necessary to ensure that all the access roads are kept clean during all the periods of demolition and construction.

Mechanical sweeper. This would be necessary to ensure that the access roads are occasionally washed and kept clean

Excavation:

Chain Saw Machinery. These will be needed to cut the excavated rock into large blocks and carted away from the site.

Mobile lifting cranes. These are to be used to erect the masonry blocks and load them onto trailers and carted away from the site

Construction

Mobile crane. This is necessary to be able to lift and transport heavy items within various areas/levels within the site.

Parking and Traffic Arrangements

All parking for workers working on site is to be provided within the site. Thus during the construction/finishing of the project, the on street parking should not be effected.

4.10 Economic viability of the project

The petrol station will ensure development of part of the plot, which has been abandoned for some time.

The proposed project will create employment opportunities. The project will provide a modern service station to both the nearby residents and those who will pass by next to it.

5. Environmental Impacts and proposed Mitigation Measures

5.1 Visual Impact

Whilst the proposed service area will result in specific and localised visual impacts it is considered that when taken in conjunction with the proposed provision of landscaping the impact will be minimised.

It is recommended that part of the topsoil excavated from the construction site be re-spread in areas to be landscaped to enhance plant health which will lead to improved visual quality of the area.

5.2 Noise Impact

The main sources of noise in the operational stage of the proposed petrol station include services noise, car parking, filling station activities, traffic movement within the proposed site and refrigerated vehicles parked on the proposed site.

The selection of low noise pumps, plant and the location of noisy equipment as far away from the residential buildings, as permitted by site perimeter, will ensure that the resultant noise impact related with the petrol filling station is insignificant

5.3 Air Quality Assessment

To ensure that the air quality is up to standards the following measures should be secured:

Provide solid waste handling facilities such as waste bins and skips.

Ensure that solid waste generated is regularly disposed of appropriately at authorised dumping site.

Ensure efficient waste management through recycling, reuse and proper disposal procedures.

Provide adequate and safe means of handling sewage generated at the petrol station.

Energy Consumption

Switch off electrical equipment, appliances and lights when not being used

Install energy saving fluorescent tubes at all lighting points instead of bulbs which consume higher electric energy during operation.

5.4 Environmental impact during construction

Particulates in the form of dust generation, engine exhaust accidental spillage of chemicals/oils, vibration and noise are the main environmental impacts during the construction phase. To reduce the dust generated, it is being recommended that the site is often. Furthermore, minimal stock piling is to be stored on site, thus reducing the amount of dust generated by wind.

Vehicles are to be inspected and ensured that they are road worthy and that their emissions are adequate.

All liquid stored on site is to be stored within a bund to make sure that all spillage is easily controlled. Furthermore all stationary machinery within the site is to be equipped with an adequate drip tray.

Vibration and noise is to be reduced using adequate machinery and regularly monitored.

5.5 Environmental impacts during operation

The proposed development is such that it will have least effect on the environment during its operation.

Liquid waste generated from the service station will be passed to the septic tank/soak.

Proper facilities will be provided for handling solid waste generated within the station. These include dust bins/skips for temporarily holding of solid waste within the premises before final disposal at an appropriate dumping site.

The management will be in charge of the washing and cleaning of the area and related facilities, pavements, the parking area etc. Cleaning operations will involve the use of considerable amounts of water, disinfectants and detergents.

To avoid needless power consumption at filling station the following measures need to be adopted.

Energy efficient night-time lighting to be used at the premises.

Light sensor switches are to be provided to ensure outdoors lights are not used in daytime.

All energy using equipment used in lighting and heating should be switched off when not in use.

Alternative energy sources need to be installed such as solar energy

6. Preliminary Conclusions

It is our considered opinion that the provision of a quality fuelling station in the proposed location will help limit traffic and refuelling within central Naxxar and deviate it to the outskirts