

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

ERA Reference no.:	EA/00020/20
PA Reference no.:	PA/03237/20
Project Title:	Upgrading and widening of existing aircraft access way
Location:	Aircraft Access Way, Malta International Airport, Airport, Luqa
Screening date:	May 2020

I. BACKGROUND

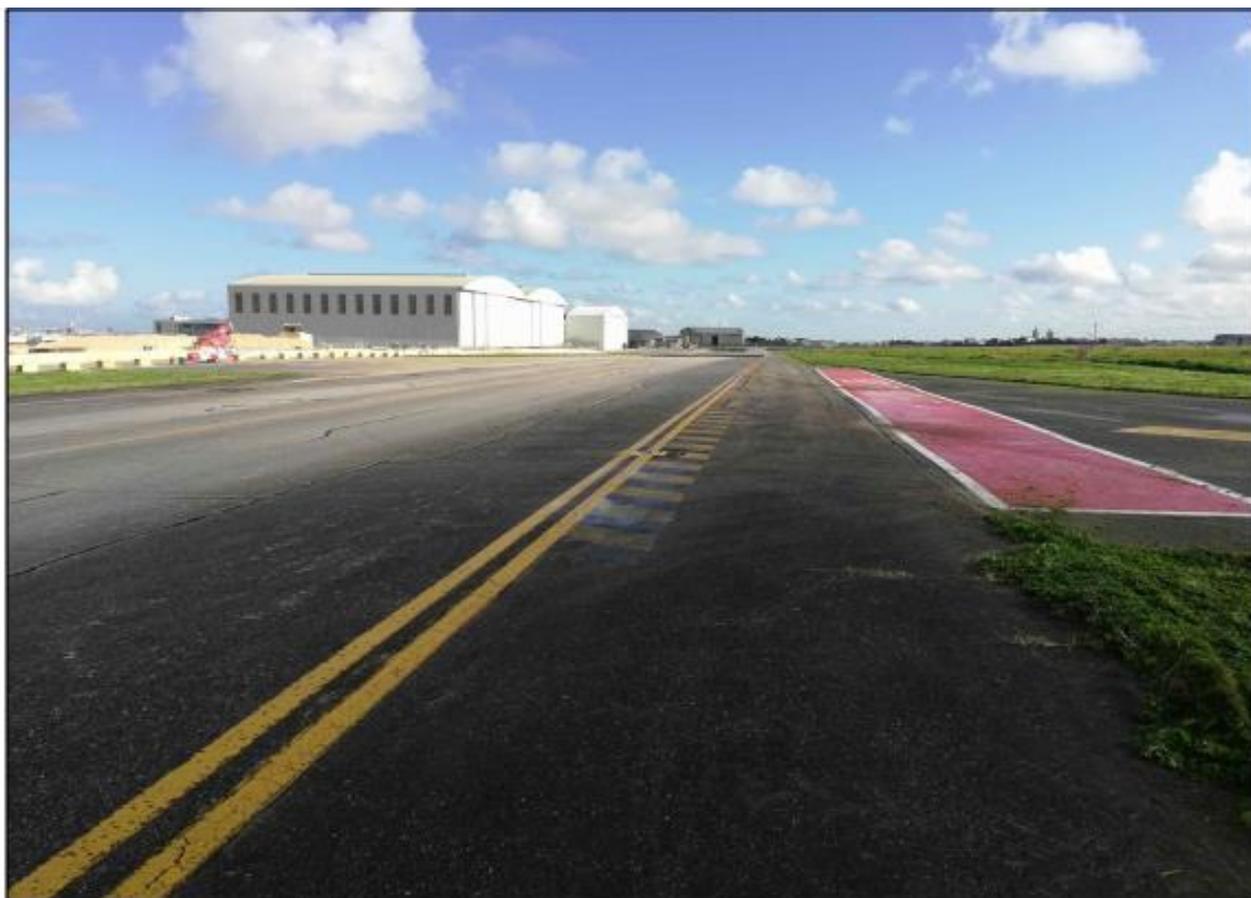
1. Outline of Proposal

1.1 The proposal by Malta Industrial Parks Ltd is for the upgrading of an existing aircraft access way, known as taxiway LIMA within the Malta International Airport (MIA) (Picture 1).

1.2 The project site occupies an area of approximately 64,000 m² and the upgrading works will consist of:

- extension and widening of the access way in the northeastern section of the site; widening of the link to secondary landing runway 05 - 23 in the southwestern section of the site;
- lowering of the access way (by a maximum of approximately 1.2 m) to match the level of the apron in front of the new SR Technic hangar, which is currently under construction; and
- improvement of the load-bearing capacity of the access way to enable it to accommodate larger aircraft.

1.3 Upgrading the existing aircraft access way within the MIA complex will facilitate access to a new hanger facility which is currently under construction (under PA/09961/18 and PA/09710/19).



Picture 1. Safi Taxiway Lima (Source: E-Apps, document 1a).

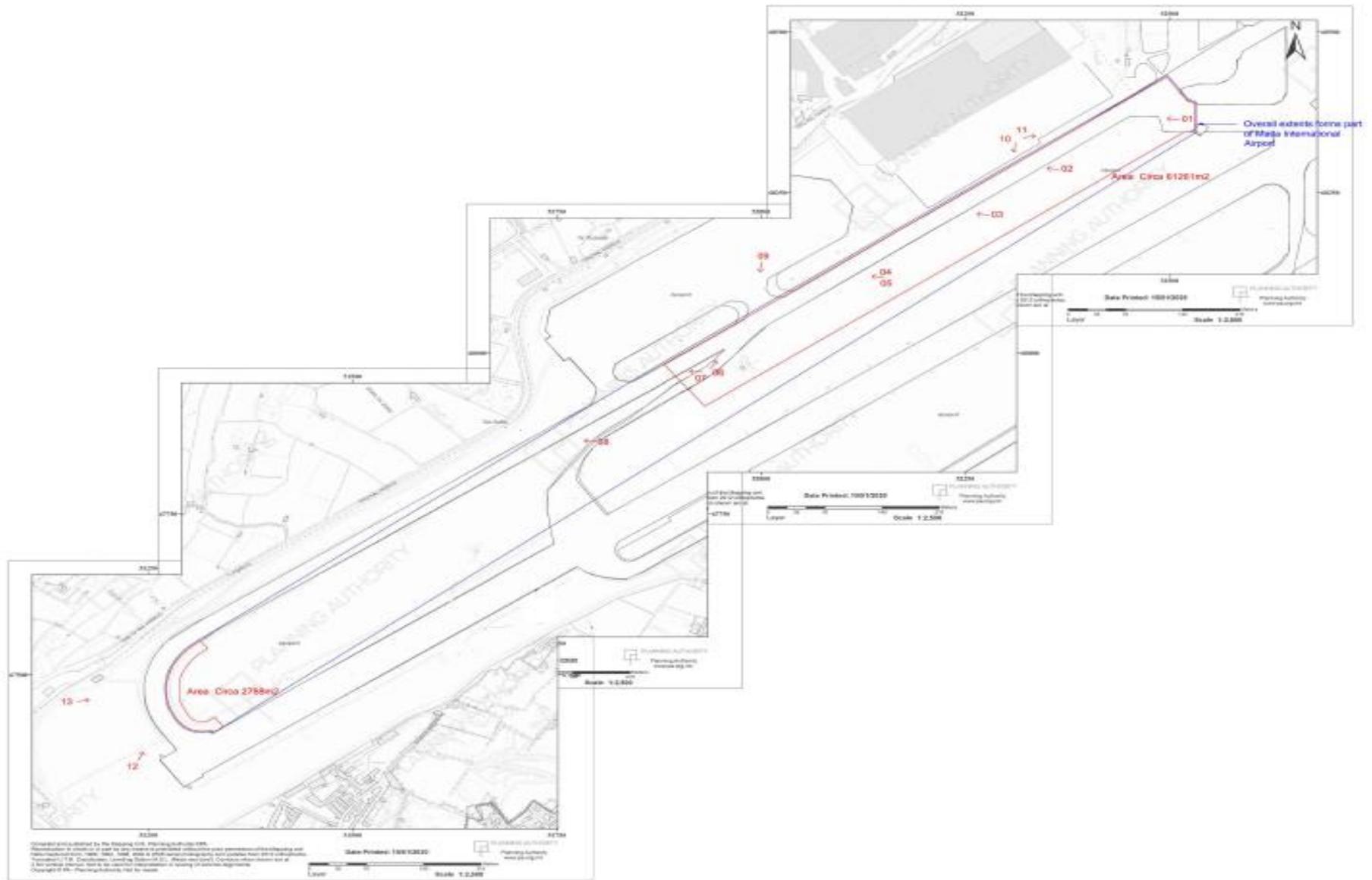


Figure 1. Site Plan (Source: E-Apps, document 1b).

2. Site context

- 2.1 The site is located at the Aircraft Access Way, Malta International Airport, Luqa (Figure 2). As stated in the PDS the predominant land use is aviation-related. This includes the airfield itself, as well as the Lufthansa hangars and offices. The Ғal Farruġ Area of Containment is located to the north of the MIA, across Triq Ғal Farruġ. This accommodates batching plant, storage warehouses and open yards. A multi-use recreation park, is also located north of Triq Ғal Farruġ.
- 2.2 The nearest urban settlement is Mqabba, to the south, where the Development Zone lies approximately 283 m (plan distance) from the project site at its closest point. The Category 3 Small Rural Settlement of Tax-Xantin lies approximately 153 m (plan distance) from the project site at its closest point. Refer to Figure 3.
- 2.3 The proposed project is geographically located less than 300 m south of Tree Protection Area (TPA) - Ta' Bloq - Ghar Hanzir (l/o Qormi & Siggiewi) as per G.N. 473 of 2011. Wied Qirda is situated 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. Refer to Figure 3.
- 2.4 The site overlies the Mean Sea Level Aquifer and the southwest portion of the site lies within the 300m Groundwater Safeguarding Zone SMCO08.
- 2.5 The area around the site is known for its cultural heritage and archaeological sensitivity. The closest scheduled feature to the site is the Tal-Wilġa (or Tal-Għassiewi) Punico-Roman Tower scheduled as Grade A archaeological site under G.N. 588 of 1994, located on the opposite side of Triq Ғal Farruġ, approximately 65 m from the site on its southwest corner. Refer to Figure 3.
- 2.6 The site is designated as a Bird Sanctuary, 'L-Ajruport ta' Ғal-Luqa' scheduled under Legal Notice 41/03. The Bird Sanctuary is only a nominal environmental constraint and is actually related to the establishment of a no-shooting zone for the purpose of airport safety rather than to environmental protection. Refer to Figure 3.



Figure2. Aerial View of the Project Site (Source: Geoserver Planning Authority)

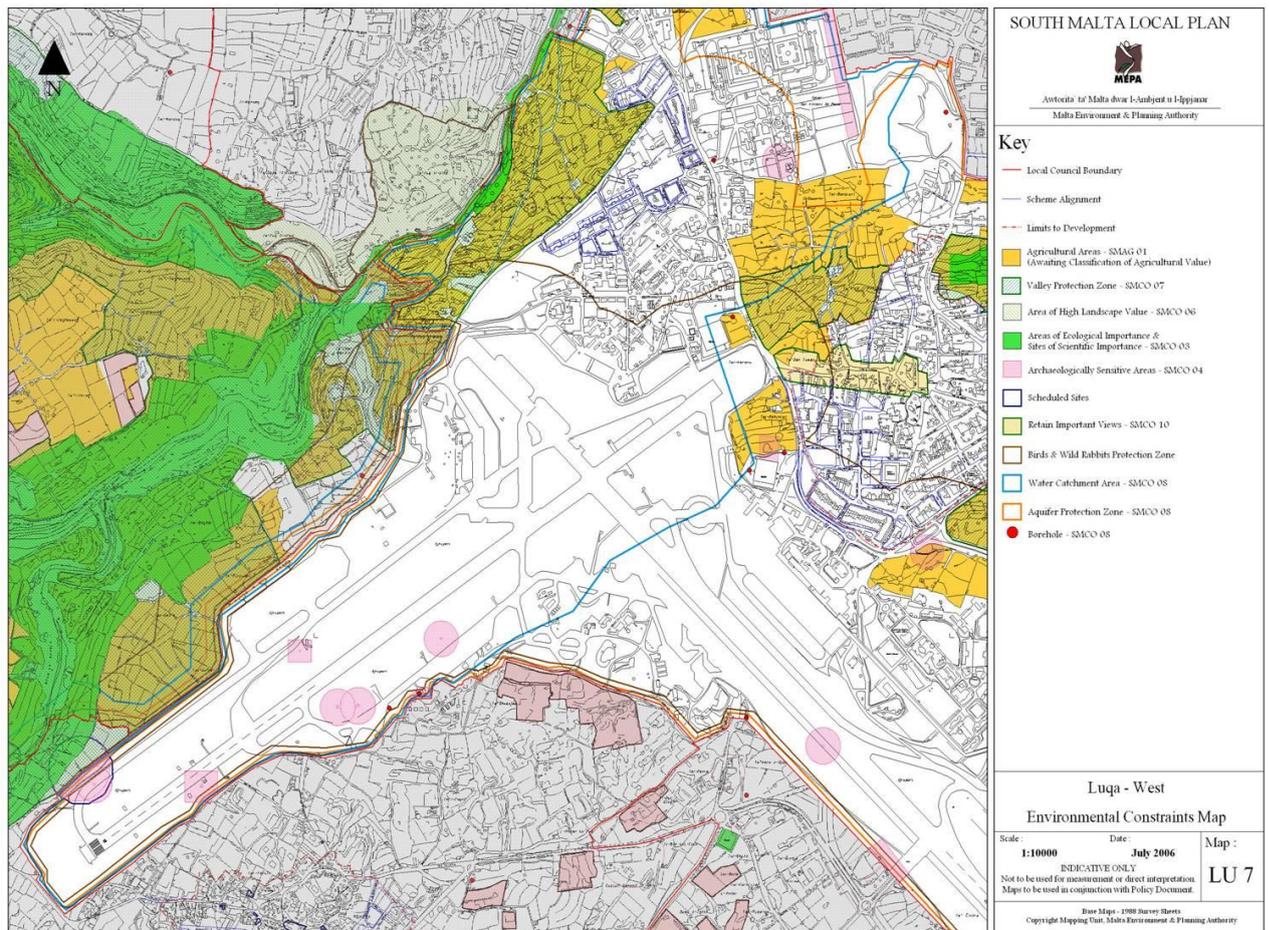


Figure 3. Luqa Policy Map-West Environmental Constraints Map (Source: PDS).

3 Case history

3.1 This site has been previously subject to the following Planning applications:

- PA 00371/07 - *To develop aircraft base facilities including hangar associated workshops and offices.* Application approved.
- PA 00945/08 - *Amendments to DN371/07, including aircraft hangar and associated workshops and offices.* Application approved.
- PA 04098/08 - *To reconstruct existing gates in Luqa Airfield fence including fence.* Application approved.
- PA 00629/13 - *Extension to existing Lufthansa Technik Hangar 3.* Application approved.
- PA 01285/13 - *Installation of PV infrastructure at Malta International Airport.* Application approved.
- PA 09961/18 - *Construction of Aircraft MRO Hangar Facility including two wide-bodied aircraft hangars and annex building on six levels including warehouse level (Class 6A), entrance level, mechanical and cabin interior workshop levels (Class 5A), workers' facilities level including changing rooms, fitness centre, training centre, canteen and kitchen, and, administration level; as ancillary uses to the hangar complex; plus external car parking areas.* Application approved.
- PA 09710/19 - *Construction of Aircraft MRO Hangar Facility with a different layout from that*

approved in permission PA/09961/18, including one wide-bodied aircraft hangars, one narrow body aircraft hangar, a warehouse (Class 6A) and annex building on six levels, with reduced reservoir area, including entrance level, mechanical and cabin interior workshop levels (Class 5A), workers' facilities level including changing rooms, fitness centre, training centre, canteen and kitchen, and, administration level as ancillary uses to the hangar complex; plus external car parking areas. Application approved.

- PA 03416/20 - Installation of photovoltaic panels over hangar roofs. Application is awaiting a response to initial consultations carried out.

4 Screening Criteria

4.1 EIA Screening

The proposed development falls under the scope of *Schedule I, Category II of the EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46)*, namely *Section 2.2.2.1. (Expansion of an airport, airstrip or airfield, not falling within Category I)*. Therefore, the proposal was also screened in terms of the EIA Regulations.

5 Documents used for screening

- Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 18th May 2020;
- Picture 1. Safi Taxiway Lima (Source: E-Apps, document 1a);
- Figure 2. Site Plan marked (Source: E-Apps, document 1b).

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

6 Assessment of Impacts and Ancillary Considerations

(Screening in terms of Schedule III of the EIA Regulations, S.L. 549.46)

Resource and Land use

- 6.1 No areas within or around the location of the proposed project contain important, high quality or scarce natural resources. In fact, the land affected by the proposed intervention is already occupied by aviation-related uses within the airport precincts. This includes the airfield itself, as well as the Lufthansa hangars and offices.
- 6.2 Given the nature of the proposal, no significant impacts are being envisaged as regards resource use. In fact, there will be no additional demand on electricity and water use. The main resources that will be utilised for construction are granular material (backfill) 60.000 m³, asphalt 13.000 m³, concrete 9.000 m³. All of the material generated by the excavation works (rock and loose material) will be used a backfill.

Cultural Heritage

The site is located in an area of high archaeological sensitivity as recent archaeological monitoring works have resulted in the discovery of the *Id-Debdieba* temple ruins, cart ruts, silo pits and several other rock-cut features. Therefore, as also stated in the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH) consultation reply on E-Apps (Doc. 54a), the works for the proposed development require archaeological monitoring. In view of this and any other potential discoveries, direct consultation with the SCH is to be carried out.

Ecology (valley system)

6.3 The proposed project is geographically located less than 300 m south of Tree Protection Area (TPA) - Ta' Bloq - Għar Hanzir (I/o Qormi & Siggiewi) as per G.N. 473 of 2011. Wied Qirda found northeast of the site is also protected as a Special Area of Conservation 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, given the topography of the Wied il-Kbir valley system which separates it from the site under consideration.

Waste

6.4 There will be a limited amount of waste produced during the construction phase of the project. The upgrading works will involve the removal of approximately 50,000 m³ of soil and approximately 30,000 m³ of loose material and rock. All of the latter will be reused on site (in the construction works). In this regard, no significant impacts from the proposed development are envisaged as long as any waste generated during the course of this development will be managed according to the Waste Regulations- (S.L.549.63).

Air Quality and Noise

6.5 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. rebuilding and widening, respectively phase 1 and 2, will be completed by July 2020). All works are to be in line with the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09).

6.6 The upgrading of the LIMA access is intended to be used for wide-bodied aircraft (A350 family) and will allow these aircrafts to access the new SR hangar facility currently under construction. In this regard, the intended use is such that it is not expected to have a significant impact relative to the current baseline.

6.7 The proposed works are not envisaged to generate any increase in noise levels. However, the below recommended good practices are to be followed throughout the construction works:

- 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, shouting, loud radios or excessive revving of engines.
- Stationary equipment such as pumps and generators should be located away from neighbours.

III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

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.

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 this screening would need to be re-opened.