

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening

(According to Schedule IB of LN 114/2007)

PA file no.: N/A GFE File no.: GFE 00003/09

Case Officer: N/A EA Officer: Charlene Smith

Project Title: Development of a Technology Enterprise Centre leading to a Life Sciences Park

Date/s of Screening: January 2009

1. Brief History and Description of Proposal

The Project Description Statement (PDS) submitted to MEPA on 20th December 2008, provides a detailed description of the proposed development situated in the San Gwann Industrial Estate as indicated in Figure 1 below. Document submitted also provides an assessment of two other alternative site locations, mainly being at Mriehel (ex-Dowty factory) and Swatar (opposite Mater Dei and UoM).

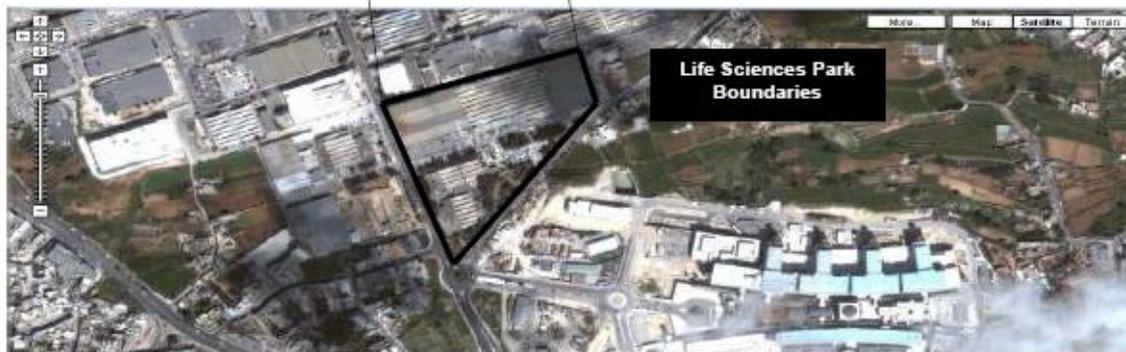
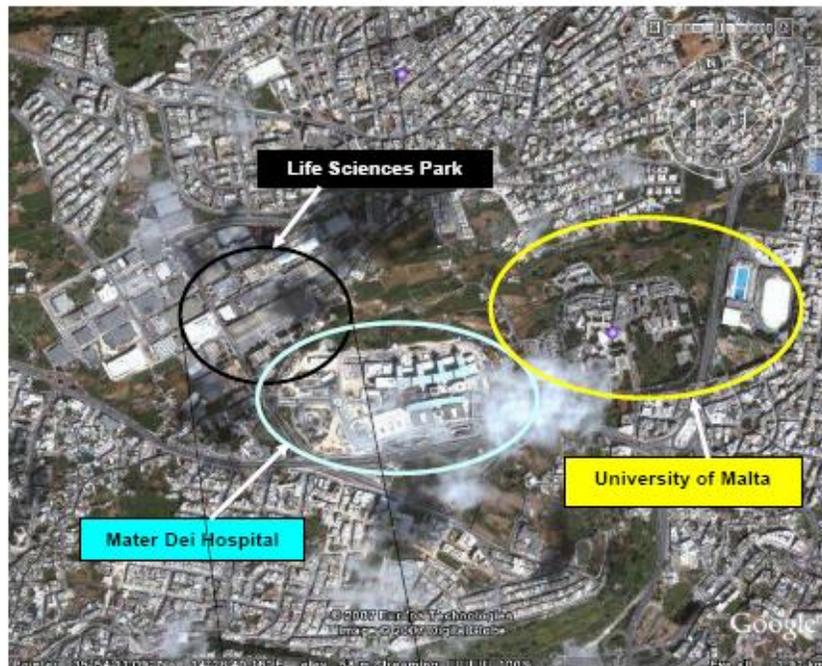


Figure 1: Location of proposed development (Source: PDS)

Location of preferred site

According to the Project Description Statement, the proposed site is being considered in view of its proximity to the Mater Dei Hospital and to the University of Malta. The geographical proximity to existing science and research institutions and its capacity to provide employment related to research and high tech orientated employment uses are considered as two of the primary criteria that led to the chose of the preferred site for the Park. Furthermore, the TEC and the eventual Life Sciences Park are to be located on the sites previously occupied by Yorkie Clothing Ltd and VF(Malta) Limited.

Description of the proposed development

Prior to the development of the Life Sciences Park, Malta Enterprise (the applicant) intends to develop a Technology Enterprise Centre. The intended project is a multi-floor development with 10,000m² of usable floor area with a 5000m² underground facility comprising a car parking area and ancillary space and laboratories. The development of this Centre is intended to be the first stepping stone towards the development of the Life Sciences Park which would eventually span over 31,600m² to be development in the area, thus in close proximity to the University of Malta and the Mater Dei Hospital respectively. The Centre will be intended to include the following facilities amongst others: laboratories and working spaces, conference hall, lecture and meeting rooms, meeting areas, common areas, etc. Breakdown of uses within proposed development is as follows:

Total site area for the eventual Park: 31,600m²

Indicative built footprint area: 23,700m²

Aggregate area for courtyards: 7,900m²

Building height: 14th floor

Gross floor area: 111,773m²

Car Park: 30,000m², i.e. approximately 1000 car parking spaces

Laboratories: 30,116m²

Courtyard: 6,258m²

Public buildings: 15,611m²

Office buildings: 36,046m²

2. Screening Matrix

The following screening matrix is based on information in the Project Description Statement (PDS) provided by the developer and the European Commission Guidance on Screening (2001). Explanatory details on use of the matrix can be found in Appendix I:

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?			PDS refere nce.
			Briefly justify			
1	Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, landuse, changes in water bodies, etc)?	Yes. Site for proposed development is being within San Gwann Industrial Estate, thus being a site already committed for development. Construction and operation of the proposal shall involve the construction of a Life-Sciences Park with a maximum building height of 14 floors, thus causing a relatively significant change to the topography of the area. With respect to the proposed land-uses, proposal shall be congruent to the surrounding ones, i.e. the Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
			Further studies would need to be carried out in relation on impact on surrounding land-uses and visual impact to determine whether proposed development is likely to have significant impacts.			

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.			
2	Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes. Mainly construction phase will use resources which are non-renewable and in short supply.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Impacts arising from the use of materials during the construction phase can be associated to similar developments, however in view of the scale of the development impact may be of significance.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
3	Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials or energy, especially any resources which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	Yes. There is a high probability that the proposal will include storage, transport and handling of materials/substances given that the proposed development will include laboratories that will most probably handle chemicals, including hazardous materials/waste.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Given that the nature of the substances to be handled in the proposed development is not known, impacts arising from such substances are not known at this stage.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10, 11
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning ?	<p>Yes. During construction normal construction waste will be generated together with very small quantities of other wastes from processes such as wiring, plastering and painting.</p> <p>During operation, normal operating waste shall be generated with the possibility of hazardous waste due to chemical handling.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Same as Question 3 above.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10, 11
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Same as Question 4 above	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Same as Question 4 above.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10, 11
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS refere nce.
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes. During construction, limited noise emissions are likely to be emitted.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear Mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007 should be employed to reduce noise and vibration emissions to a minimum.	11, 12
7	Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes during construction, spillages of oil and lubes may result.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear Spillages during construction may result. These are expected to be insignificant and can be mitigated through the proper application of mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007.	/
8	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	None envisaged, other than "normal" construction site risks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear Not significant for EIA purposes.	/
9	Will the Project result in social changes for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No. During construction, it is envisaged that a total of about 30 workers will be employed. During operation, it is estimated that employment levels for the TEC and the Life Sciences Park is considered to be minimal when compared to the levels of employment previously associated with the San Gwann Industrial Estate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	10
10	Are there any such factors which should be considered such as the consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or	No other consequential developments are being envisaged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	/

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.			
	planned activities in the locality?						
11	Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	No. Nearest protected site in terms of ecology is Wied Għollieqa found to the west of the proposed development (i.e. further “downstream” in the same runoff catchment area).	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Given the nature of the area within which the development is being proposed (San Ġwann Industrial Estate) and the considerable distance from the Wied Għollieqa valley bed, significant impacts are not envisaged.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
12	Are there any areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	As per 11 above.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
13	Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering,	As per 11 above.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.
	migration, which could be affected by the project?			
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	As per 11 above.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
15	Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be effected by the project?	No such areas are known of.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	/
16	Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	No such routes are present given the nature of the site.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
17	Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The site lies in close proximity to the Tal-Qroqq area and junction which includes two major land-uses (Mater Dei Hospital and University of Malta) as well as mainstream traffic through the Birkirkara bypass which could possibly be a source of traffic increase in the area.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impacts might be of a significant nature during construction in view of traffic in and out of the construction site which in turn may affect the critical transport nodes. During operation, impacts on such transport routes would be minimal given the low density employment envisaged for the Life Sciences Park.	/
18	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes. Given the proposed building height, i.e. 14 floors and the proximity to two main sensitive receptors being Mater Dei hospital and the University of Malta,	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impacts on landscape and visual amenity would need to be assessed in more detail to determine significance of impacts.	/

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No such features are known of.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	No. Development will take place in a previously industrial area.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
21	Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Yes. During construction, proposed development may affect the nearest sensitive receptors, mainly being the Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta. No impacts are envisaged during operation.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further studies would need to be carried out to verify whether works would have any impacts on the surrounding land-uses, particularly those related to sensitive receptors.	/
22	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Possibility of future expansion of the Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta. However, no such plans currently affect the site in question, and it is unlikely that the project would affect these uses.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Given the contained nature of the proposed development within the San Gwann Industrial estate, impacts on future land uses on or around the location of the proposal are unlikely.	/
23	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built up, which could be affected by the project?	No. Site lies in close proximity to densely populated areas of Birkirkara and San Gwann.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> In spite of the closeness of these densely populated areas, impacts on such areas are highly unlikely.	/

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.			
24	Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities which could be affected by the project?	Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta are in close proximity to the proposed development.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Further studies would need to be carried out to verify whether works would have any impacts on the surrounding land-uses, particularly those related to sensitive receptors.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
25	Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	No such areas are present, other than as per 11 above.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
26	Are there any areas on or around the location which have already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No such areas are present.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
27	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, or subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or	No extreme environmental conditions are envisaged to occur in the area.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.
	adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?			

Summary of features of the Project and of its location indicating the need for EIA.

Following screening in accordance with Schedule IB, no definitely significant environmental impacts were identified, however a number of impacts were considered as being unclear, further studies would need to be carried out to ascertain the significance of such impacts. Moreover, with respect to Schedule IA of the EIA Regulations, 2007 (L.N. 114 of 2007), the proposal may qualify for an EIA in terms of the following criteria:

1. 3.1.2.1 – ‘Development with a site area of more than 3ha.’;
2. 3.2.2.1 – ‘Development of a Business Park with a site area of more than 1ha.’
3. 3.10.2.1 – ‘Construction of car-parks providing more than 600 spaces’

Following confirmation from the Planning Directorate on the *prima facie* acceptability in principle of the proposed development and the conformity with policy NHSG 04 of the North Harbours Local Plan, proposal therefore qualifies for an EPS (Environmental Planning Statement) as per criteria listed above.

Appendix I: Explanatory notes on the Screening matrix

The matrix is designed to help users decide whether Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for a project, based on the characteristics of the project, its environment, and any other relevant information. Essentially, it consists of 2 complementary sets of criteria, as follows:

Checklist A (Screening Criteria)

Each question in Column 2 should be answered as **YES**, **NO** or **UNCLEAR** (as relevant) and a concise explanation for the answer should be provided. An indication as to whether the factor in question is expected to result in any significant effect should then be entered into Column 3 with a note of the reasons why. Should difficulty be encountered in evaluating significance, Checklist B below should be used for guidance.

Checklist B (Criteria for Evaluating Significance)

A useful simple check to help determine significance is to ask whether the effect is one that ought to be addressed in the development consent decision or in any permit conditions. At the early stage of Screening there may be little information on which to base this decision but the following list of questions may be helpful. The questions are designed so that a "Yes" or "Unclear" answer in Column 3 will generally point towards the need for EIA (and/or other appropriate measures in line with EIA regulations) and a "No" answer to EIA not being required.

Questions to be Considered.

- 1 Will there be a large change in environmental conditions?
- 2 Will new features be out-of-scale with the existing environment?
- 3 Will the effect be unusual in the area or particularly complex?
- 4 Will the effect extend over a large area?
- 5 Will there be any potential for transfrontier impact?
- 6 Will many people be affected?
- 7 Will many receptors of other types (fauna and flora, businesses, facilities) be affected?
- 8 Will valuable or scarce features or resources be affected?
- 9 Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached?
- 10 Is there a risk that protected sites, areas, and features will be affected?
- 11 Is there a high probability of the effect occurring?
- 12 Will the effect continue for a long time?
- 13 Will the effect be permanent rather than temporary?
- 14 Will the impact be continuous rather than intermittent?
- 15 If it is intermittent will it be frequent rather than rare?
- 16 Will the impact be irreversible?
- 17 Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effect?