

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Description of the site and proposed development**

PA/05420/21 is an application for the construction of the Corinthia Oasis development at the ex-Hal Ferħ Complex in Mellieħa. The proposal involves changes to the approved development of PA/03134/19 (renewal of PA/04906/10) (see Figures 1-4).

PA/03134/19 involved a tourism complex of 228 units in an undulating building, together with ancillary services such as a restaurant, small convenience shop, pools and bars, spa, underground parking facilities (293 parking spaces) (see Figure 4). The reconstruction of the road network (widening of eastern Triq il-Manikata and upgrading of junction between Triq San Pawl il-Baħar and Triq Ghajn Tuffieħa) and the construction of the surface car park on the grounds of the Scouts Association also form part of such permit. The said road and car park works, as well as the removal of all existing structures of the Hal Ferħ complex (apart from a hall within the Chapel area, across Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar) have been permitted through PA/03134/19 and have been undertaken (or are being undertaken) in accordance with such permit specifications.

The proposal under assessment (PA/05420/21 – see Figure 4) involves revisions to the proposed development, with the introduction of a residential component (25 villas) in the southern part of the site, in addition to a 161-room hotel complex in the northern part of the site. The proposed hotel complex would include a conventional hotel building with 122 rooms, a cluster of 39 detached suites, swimming pools, food and beverage amenities, and wellness, sports and meeting facilities. The residential villas would be serviced by the hotel. All proposed development is low-lying and limited to two storeys in height.

The project also includes extensive landscaping, covering both hotel and residential zones, with 50.4 % of the hotel complex footprint reserved for open space and 20.7 % of the villa zone earmarked for gardens. The proposed landscaping will consist of native trees and dry rubble walls to respect the typical features of the Maltese landscape, to green the site and screen the development from the immediate surroundings. At the south-eastern end of the site (across Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar), the Chapel area is present, which is reserved for sports facilities.

Table 1 – Overview table of approved vs proposed development

	<b>Approved (PA/03134/19)</b>	<b>Proposed (PA/05420/21)</b>
<b>Number of units</b>		
Hotel	228	161
Residential villas	0	25
Surface car park	330	330
Below-ground car park	293	115
<b>Total footprint</b>		
Hotel (incl. sports facilities)	80,500 m <sup>2</sup>	50,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Residential villas	0 m <sup>2</sup>	30,500 m <sup>2</sup>
Surface car park	9,750 m <sup>2</sup>	9,750 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Gross floor areas</b>		
Hotel	25,000 m <sup>2</sup>	16,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Residential villas	0 m <sup>2</sup>	9,000 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Landscaped areas</b>		
Softscape	29,342 m <sup>2</sup>	30,629 m <sup>2</sup>
Hardscape	50,273 m <sup>2</sup>	48,136 m <sup>2</sup>



Figure 1 – Pre-existing aerial view (*Source: EIA Report*)



Figure 2 – Aerial view (3D model) of approved development (*Source: EIA Report*)





Figure 3 – Aerial views (3D model) of proposed development (*Source: EIA Report and <https://corinthiaoasis.com/gallery/>*)





## 1.2 Background

The approved development had been subject to an EIA in 2012 (GF/00117/10) and the then Environment Protection Directorate (under the former MEPA) had not objected to the development from an environmental point of view. The main impacts assessed through GF/00117/10 related to the alterations to the site geology, changes to the landscape and visual amenity, disturbance to fauna from operational lighting and noise emissions.

In view of the complete overhaul of the project, the proposal required the submission of a new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (in accordance with Schedule I of the EIA Regulations S.L. 549.46, namely Category I, Section 7.1.1.1) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44), in view of its location within the area of influence of the following Natura 2000 sites:

- MT0000024: Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla tač-Čirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa (Special Area of Conservation – SAC);
- MT0000101: Żona fil-Baħar bejn Rdum Majjiesa u Għar Lapsi (SAC); and
- MT0000111: Żona fil-Baħar fil-Lbič (Special Protection Area - SPA).

## 2. EIA CONSULTATIONS

### 2.1 Scoping

During the scoping stage, the Project Description Statement (PDS) was made available on the ERA website (<https://era.org.mt/era-project/pa05420-21/>) for a 30-day public consultation period between 23 February and 25 March 2022, and circulated to the following consultees:

- Planning Authority;
- Malta Resources Authority (MRA);
- Regulator for Energy and Water Services (REWS);
- Energy and Water Agency;
- Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights;
- Civil Protection Department;
- Malta Tourism Authority (MTA);
- Ministry for Health – Department of Health Regulation;
- Occupational Health and Safety Authority;
- Transport Malta;
- Superintendence of Cultural Heritage;
- Local Council of Mellieħa;
- Local Council Association;
- Environmental NGOs: Archaeological Society Malta; Biological Conservation Research Foundation (BICREF); Capers (Creating A Positive Resourceful Environmental Society) Malta; Environment Commission; Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna; Friends of the Earth Malta; Malta Bat Conservation Group; Malta Beekeepers Association; Malta Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies Association; Malta Water Association; Noise Abatement Society of Malta; Ramblers Association of Malta; Sustainable Built Environment Malta; Young Reporters for the Environment Malta; Żminijietna, Magħtab Residents Association; ACT Malta; Bicycle Advocacy Group Malta; Birdlife Malta; Centre for Sustainable Development; Din l-Art Ħelwa; Entomological Society of Malta; Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar; Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti; Front Harsien ODZ; Għaqda Sigar Maltin; Greenhouse Malta; International Tree Foundation; Light Pollution Awareness Group; Malta Herpetological Society; Malta Organic and Agriculture Movement (MOAM); Malta Youth in Agriculture; Malta Health Network; Moviment Graffiti; Nature Trust Malta; and Youth for the Environment.

The consultation was also published on the Government's online consultation platform.

A scoping meeting was held on 8 March 2022 to provide an additional opportunity to the public and the above-listed consultees to raise any aspects they wished to see included in the respective Terms of Reference for the EIA and AA Reports.

Within the stipulated consultation period, comments were received from Malta Resources Authority, Environmental Health Directorate; Superintendence of Cultural Heritage; and BirdLife Malta. These are reproduced in Section 1 of the appendix to this document.

The final EIA and AA Terms of Reference were issued on 28 April 2022.

## **2.2 Review**

The EIA and AA Reports were submitted to ERA on 31 October 2024 and were published for a 30-day public consultation period on 03 November 2024 with the same consultees consulted during the scoping stage (see Section 2.1 above), in accordance with the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46). The reports were made available on the ERA webpage and notifications to the public were issued through local newspaper adverts and *via* the government's online consultation platform.

A public hearing was held on 31 January 2025 to provide the general public with the opportunity to comment on and enquire about the proposed project, its impacts, and the EIA and AA Reports. The presentation provided by the EIA Coordinator and the minutes of the meeting are available on the ERA webpage.

Within the stipulated consultation period (including a 7-day period following the public hearing), comments were received from the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage, Environmental Health Directorate (Department for Health Regulation), Energy and Water Agency, the Light Pollution Awareness Group (Astronomical Society of Malta), BirdLife Malta, and two members of the public. No additional feedback was received following the public hearing. The received comments are reproduced in Section 2 of the appendix to this document.

Comments made by ERA, and received from its consultees and the public, during the review consultation stage, were communicated to the EIA Coordinator and the applicant on 19 December 2024 and 11 February 2025, respectively.

The final EIA and AA Reports were submitted to ERA on 10 April 2025.

## **3. ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES**

### **3.1 Alternative sites**

In view that the proposal involves changes to an already approved development, the selection of alternative sites was not considered relevant to this assessment. In addition, the proposal is formulated by the project proponents in direct response to the Hal Ferh Development brief (and its partial review dated 2021), which promote the redevelopment of the site and reuse of the land predominantly for tourism, with acceptable secondary uses including separate residential accommodations.

### **3.2 Alternative layouts**

The history of the project for the redevelopment of the Ħal Ferħ site involved the following configurations:

- Ħal Ferħ Tourist Village (early 1980s): conversion of the military barracks into guest-room blocks, and the construction of a conventional hotel building in the northern part of the site.
- Development approved through PA/04906/10 (also discussed in section 1 above), including an undulating 'ribbon building' of 228 units with ancillary pools and facilities.
- Following the 2021 revisions to the Development Brief, alternative layouts were evaluated by the project proponents, introducing a residential component, considering the site in a three-block approach (conventional hotel, water and garden suites, and villas).

No alternative layouts involving higher densities of development were considered, in view of the limitation to low density/rise development set by the Development Brief.

With respect to the watercourse, the Development Brief requires the retention of the route through which runoff from il-Wied ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa flows to ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, through the site. Such runoff route has remained part of the project, with the proposal now including an underground duct to allow unhindered passage through the site of runoff water originating from the upstream areas of the Wied ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa.

### **3.3 Do-Nothing scenario (zero option)**

With the Do-Nothing Scenario, the approved development (PA/04906/10, renewed through PA/03134/19) could be implemented. The original site condition (military barracks) is no longer existent, as the structures on-site (apart from the chapel) have already been removed (or are being removed) through PA/03134/19.

## **4. EIA FINDINGS**

The summary of the characteristics of the site, assessment of impacts, mitigation measures and residual impacts (taking into account cumulative effects) as identified in the EIA Report are as follows:

### **4.1 Land cover and land/sea uses**

The main site originally consisted of two military camps, being il-Qasam ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa (lower camp – barracks) and il-Kamp ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa (upper camp). Across Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar, is the Chapel area. The current situation involves ongoing interventions (undertaken through PA/03134/19) with the completion of the public car park abutting the main site to the north, the upgrading of the Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar, and the demolition of all buildings within the main site.

The main land uses in and around the il-Qasam ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa area are:

- *Agricultural* - Wied tal-Pwales;
- *Tourism* - Radisson Blu Resort and former Riviera Martinique Hotel;
- *Leisure/recreation* - Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, ir-Ramla ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa, camping grounds of the Scouts Association of Malta, marine area for water sports, Majjistral Nature and History Park;
- *Food and beverage* – kiosks, Apple's Eye restaurant, F&B facilities within the Radisson Blu Resort; and
- *Residential* – il-Manikata.

Construction-phase disturbance to nearby land-uses (notably farmers, residents, visitors) due to dust, noise, vibrations, light generation and disruptions caused by construction vehicles and machinery can be mitigated through proper adherence to the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09) and are assessed as *minor significant*.

No operational adverse impacts in terms of land use were assessed in view that the proposal reflects the Development Brief and includes fewer units than the approved development.

#### **4.2 Landscape character and visual amenity**

A desk study and a field survey were carried out to determine the landscape and visual baseline survey. The most sensitive receptors identified are farmers, residents (notably those of il-Manikata), ramblers/walkers, and campsite users. Fourteen (14) viewpoints were identified to represent short, medium and long-distance views:

- Viewpoint 1: Entry point Upper Camp;
- Viewpoint 2: Intersection of Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa with Triq tal-Wilga;
- Viewpoint 3: Triq tal-Wilga;
- Viewpoint 4: Adjacent to western edge of il-Manikata (villa area);
- Viewpoint 5: South of il-Manikata;
- Viewpoint 6: Station in tal-Pwales valley (long-distance);
- Viewpoint 7: Bajda ridge (southern boundary of il-Mizieb woodland (long-distance);
- Viewpoint 8: Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa (near cluster of buildings known as il-Ballut);
- Viewpoint 9: Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa (in closer proximity to the site);
- Viewpoint 10: Triq tal-Wilga (midway between vp 2 and 3;
- Viewpoint 11 and 12: Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa;
- Viewpoint 13: Car park adjacent Riviera Martinique building; and
- Viewpoint 14: undeveloped areas of il-Moxa ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa and ix-Xagħra l-Ħamra (western side of il-Manikata).

The presence and activity of construction machinery/cranes and associated structures is *not expected to have a significant impact* on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, noting the large footprint that can contain all equipment and the temporary duration of such phase.

During operation, the presence of new buildings (urban development in a predominant rural context) will have a *major significant* effect on the visual amenity of the area from short- to medium-distance viewpoints, noting the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of the change to the site. With respect to long-distance viewpoints, the effects are less pronounced and assessed as *minor to moderate significant*, this is especially in view of the low-lying nature of the development (limited to maximum two storeys). However, noting that the proposal includes an extensive landscaping scheme that would provide a dense vegetation cover and visual screening all around the site, the visual effect of such mature landscaping on the surrounding areas may be perceived as beneficial instead of adverse (refer to Figures 5-10).





Figure 5 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 1 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



Figure 6 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 2 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)





Figure 7 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 4 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



Figure 8 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 7 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)





Figure 9 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 11 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



Figure 10 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 13 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



### 4.3 Geology, geomorphology, hydrology, hydrogeology

The geology on site is characterised by Upper Coralline Limestone (Tal-Pitkal member), which also forms the floor of Wied tal-Pwales and is exposed in the cliff face around Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa. Blue clay is exposed to the south of the site. Quaternary to recent deposits, made up of red clays, silts and conglomerates are also present in the general area, and cover most of the development site, hence excavated material would be mostly soil. Fossil dunes are present at Ir-Ramla ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa.

The catchments relevant to the site are the Wied tal-Pwales, Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa and the new carpark's catchments. The Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa catchment is rather small but includes a narrow watercourse that originally discharged into Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, through the Hal Ferħ site. This was, however, disrupted with the construction of Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar, rendering the original watercourse mostly redundant. The proposal involves the reinstatement of this watercourse by the installation of an underground duct to allow unhindered passage of runoff to reach the area downstream of the site.

The proposed excavation and removal of 127,000 m<sup>3</sup> of ground material (91% soil [Quaternary and more recent valley deposits] and remainder rock) is assessed as *major significant*, noting its irreversibility and the large volume, and cannot be mitigated from a geology perspective *per se*. However, it is worth noting that a large portion of such soil and rock is proposed to be retained on site and used for the landscaping works.

With respect to hydrology and hydrogeology, all construction works involve a risk of spillages of contaminated liquids (lubricants, paints, building chemicals), however, with appropriate transportation, storage and containment of such materials, these effects are assessed as *minor significant*.

During operations, the extensive soft landscaping would require the use of fertilisers and pesticides, which could remain within the water runoff leaving the site. With the proposed implementation of a management programme to control irrigation and the use of plant nutrition in line with Malta's Nitrates Action Programme Regulations and National Action Plan for Sustainable Use of Pesticides, such effect is assessed as *not significant*. In the event of an accidental spillage or escape of hazardous liquids (fuels, lubricants, pool chemicals, fertilisers/pesticides) taking place, the resulting effect on the water body is assessed as *minor significant*, as long as all operational plant and equipment is managed responsibly, and all hazardous liquids are appropriately stored.

### 4.4 Ecology

The surrounding area is sensitive from an ecological perspective and is afforded protection on a national level (the coastal stretch, Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa and Il-Mizieb woodland are Areas of Ecological Importance (as per Government Notices 117 of 1995, 1137 of 2008 and 715 of 2010). In addition, the coastal terrestrial area forms part of the Natura 2000 network, being an SAC. While the SAC does not include the site, it abuts the site from the side of Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa. The marine area is both an SAC (for the presence of important marine habitats such as *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass) and an SPA due to the presence of sensitive seabird species. The potential implications on the SACs and SPA are addressed further in the section on Appropriate Assessment (refer to section 5 below).

Site clearance works were undertaken by virtue of the approved permit PA/03134/19 and involved the removal of on-site vegetation (apart from protected trees which required transplanting within the site for integration into the landscaping). In view that the surveys undertaken showed that the site is currently mostly colonised by exotic species, and no species of particular conservation interest were recorded, further removal of vegetation is

assessed as *minor significant*. In this regard, subject that the effects from the works are strictly contained to the site boundaries, construction-phase disturbances (e.g. from dust-dispersion, trampling, stockpiling) on the relevant ecological features are also *minor significant*.

With respect to fauna, site illumination during construction works may affect birds, bats and other nocturnal mammals, reptiles or insects. Subject that lighting is kept minimal and only low-intensity downlighters are used, such impacts are assessed as *minor significant*.

During operations, light and noise emissions may disturb vertebrates. Operational rules and procedures (on both light and noise generation) are proposed to be established in a manual, addressing the management of both the hotel, the landscaped areas, and the villas. In addition, lighting is to be addressed through a lighting report, confirming that all lighting will be designed in a sensible manner to prevent contribution of light pollution in the area, in line with the relevant guidelines. In this regard, such impact on vertebrate fauna is assessed as *minor to moderate significant*. With respect to lighting, the effectivity of the proposed mitigation is highly dependent on improvements effected to the exterior lighting of the nearby Radisson Blu Resort tourism complex. ERA notes that the environmental permit recently granted for this facility includes the requirement for an improvement programme on lighting, hence addressing such aspect and allowing the proposed mitigation as part of the proposal under assessment to be effective.

Operational effects on biological communities are mainly related to the use of pesticides, fertilisers (as already discussed above in section 4.3 in relation to the water body) and the introduction of species for landscaping. Noting that the proposed landscaping does not include any invasive species and will be limited to indigenous shrubs and trees, similar to those found in the adjacent natural habitats, and no effects from pesticides or fertilizers are expected beyond the site boundaries, impacts are assessed as *minor significant*. In addition, the proposed landscaping is expected to act as a refuge and attract migrant species across different seasons.

#### **4.5 Cultural Heritage**

In line with development permit PA03134/19, all structures (apart from the chapel) have been removed. Hence, such effect on the cultural heritage value of the site is beyond the scope of this assessment. In view that the retention of the chapel is part of the current proposal, and is integrated into the design, *no significant effects* on cultural heritage can be attributed to this project, apart from a beneficial one due to the proposed restoration of the chapel structure.

#### **4.6 Human populations**

The assessed environmental effects, considering all proposed mitigation measures, are such that *no consequential significant effects* on the human populations in the surrounding area were identified.

#### **4.7 Climate change and climate change adaptation**

The proposed development will generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, both directly from traffic generation and indirectly from electricity and water demand and the management of generated waste. The proposal includes various measures to reduce emissions, including the use of highly efficient mechanical and electrical systems, such as heat pumps for hot water production, heat recovery systems, efficient chiller systems, grey water treatment plants and harvesting and re-utilisation of rainwater. Nonetheless, during normal operations, the development would still generate 980 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> due to electricity demand, 2,891 tonnes

of CO<sub>2</sub> due to traffic (light and heavy goods vehicles) and 180 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> due to required water production and waste treatment, totalling to 4,051 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

No particular measures to adapt to changing climatic processes were identified in this assessment.

## 5. AA FINDINGS

Due to the nature of the development and the site's close proximity to the coastal and marine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and the marine Special Protection Areas (SPA) identified in section 1.1 above, preliminary screening did not eliminate the likelihood of adverse impacts on the integrity of such protected sites. In this regard, an AA study was requested in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44) to investigate whether the proposed development will or will not significantly affect the integrity of the protected sites, taking into account the objectives outlined in the respective management plan (as available for the terrestrial area). The first draft AA report was submitted by the consultant on 31 October 2024. The final version was submitted on 10 April 2025.

### **5.1 Terrestrial area (MT0000024 - *Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla taċ-Ċirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa* (Special Area of Conservation – SAC)**

The coastal area is characterised by the *Rdum* habitats (coastal cliffs and boulder screes). The site itself is not located within but adjacent to the protected SAC, and has been subject to human alterations and disturbances for a long time. Only a small portion of the studied area was observed to be natural and in good condition, including habitat type 5330 (Thermo-Mediterranean arid scrubs) in parts of the nearby afforested area previously managed by the GAIA Foundation and under current management of Ambjent Malta, as well as habitat 1240 (Mediterranean and Black Sea rocky sea cliff and shore) situated below the escarpment and boulder scree. At Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, a rare and intact sand dune habitat (habitat type 2110 - Mediterranean, Micronesian and Black Sea shifting coastal dune) is present. All these habitats are important ecological features, of community interest, and listed as Annex I habitats under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

During construction works, potential adverse effects were mainly associated with the cordoning of fauna (due to site hoarding), increased movement of heavy machinery, release of airborne/waterborne particulate matters, noise and vibrations generation, and spillages of stockpiled (hazardous) materials. To prevent significant effects on the afore-mentioned habitats (and their species), the following mitigation measures are to be adhered to:

- Hoarding with corridor spaces, allowing small fauna to move freely in and out of the site.
- Optimisation of traffic management to reduce congestion and time spent within the site;
- Dust suppression mechanisms (e.g. cleaning, misting of stockpiles, wheel washing facility);
- The use of noise and vibration dampening measures for machinery and equipment; and
- Proper containment and covering of stored materials.

Operational effects mainly include the disturbance of susceptible fauna and flora due to site illumination (and noise disturbance on faunal species), infiltration of invasive alien species into surrounding habitats, leaching of pesticides/fertilizers into surrounding (downstream) areas and pest control efforts. To prevent significant effects on the present habitats and species, the following measures are to be adhered to:

- Use of low intensity ground facing light fixtures;
- Selection of indigenous non-invasive species for landscaping, typical for the surrounding environment; and
- Use of biodegradable pesticides, controlled use of fertilisers, non-fatal means of pest control to avoid accidental harm to non-target species.



While not all above-mentioned effects can be entirely mitigated (e.g. noise and light disturbance during operations), the resulting impacts are not expected to significantly affect the integrity of the protected SAC.

### **5.2 Marine area – avifauna (MT0000111 - Žona fil-Baħar fil-Lbiċ - Special Protection Area - SPA)**

The marine area is designated as a Special Protection Area due to its importance for seabirds, namely *Calonectris diomedea* (Scopoli's shearwater), *Puffinus yelkouan* (Yelkouan shearwater) and *Hydrobates pelagicus* (Storm Petrel), especially during the breeding season.

The AA identified light pollution as the main concern on avifauna. As discussed in section 4.4 above, while the surrounding land-uses (notably the nearby hotel) have a cumulating effect on the overall issue of light pollution, it is of utmost importance to rigorously follow the local guidelines for the reduction of light pollution and that a lighting plan is adopted that limits lighting to ground-facing lighting and avoids glare beyond the site boundaries. Subject to the proper implementation of such mitigation, the proposed development is not expected to have a significant impact on avifauna during both construction and operational phases and overall on the integrity of the protected SPA.

### **5.3 Marine area – habitats (MT0000101 - Žona fil-Baħar bejn Rdum Majjiesa u Għar Lapsi - SAC)**

During both construction and operational phases of the project, no significant impacts are envisaged on the designated marine habitats or species within the bay (and thus of the SAC as a whole), in view that no direct interventions in the marine environment are proposed, and runoff effects (including any potential load of fertiliser or pesticides) are unlikely to affect the downstream areas leading towards the marine environment. Hence, the project will not affect the integrity of the marine SAC.

## **6. Summary of EIA and AA findings**

While most assessed residual impacts are either not significant or up to minor significant, the EIA Report has still identified moderate and/or major adverse residual impacts in relation to the effects on:

- landscape character and visual amenity of the surrounding area (notably from short- and medium-distance viewpoint – *major significant*),
- geology (removal of geological material - *major significant*); and
- vertebrate fauna (disturbance due to operational lighting – *minor to moderate significant*).

The AA assessed potential impacts from the proposed project on the designated protected species/habitats within the designated SACs and SPA and concluded that the impacts from the proposal are not expected to significantly affect the integrity of these protected sites.

The main residual impacts identified in this assessment are similar to those envisaged for the previously approved development, no additional significant adverse impacts have been identified. On the contrary, certain impacts, such as those related to visual amenity are expected to be mitigated to a greater extent through the proposed dense landscaping.



## **Appendix to this document – Feedback received by ERA during public consultations**

### **Section 1 – 30-day consultation on scoping:**

#### **1) Government Entities**

No:	From:	Comments:
1	Malta Resources Authority (dated 9 March 2022)	We would like to know if any part of any excavations are to be carried out within the saturated zone.
2	Environmental Health Directorate (dated 14 March 2022)	<p>Please be informed that we would like to have the following issues related to public health included in the Terms of Reference for this proposed development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Air pollution impacts assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emissions from heavy vehicles</li><li>• Transports, storage, and handling of waste materials</li><li>• Operational traffic</li><li>• And their effects on the area of influence taking into consideration the fields used to grow crops.</li></ul>Necessary monitoring and mitigating measures must be clearly stated.</li><li>2. Noise and vibration impacts including construction activities, operational traffic and from other operational activities. Monitoring and mitigating measures must be clearly stated.</li><li>3. Traffic impact assessment and mitigation measures.</li><li>4. Light pollution impact and mitigation measures.</li><li>5. Waste Management Plan shall be implemented which should include the impacts from waste generated both during the construction (demolishing, excavated and construction material) and the operational phase. Hence the importance of a detailed Construction and Waste Management Plan, which should be enforced by the site project manager. Details of monitoring and feedback mechanisms must be clearly stated and adhered to.</li><li>6. Adverse impacts caused by heavy machinery used for this project. Necessary monitoring and mitigation measures are to be clearly stated and adhered to. These should include the method used for the refueling of said machinery.</li></ol>



		<p>7. Adverse impacts caused by unsafe, inadequate storage and improper handling of raw materials on site and from potential accidental spillage of hazardous fluids, fuel, and lubricants. Necessary monitoring and mitigation measures are to be clearly stated and adhered to.</p> <p>8. Monitoring and mitigation measures in case of rain, heavy winds and storms that may affect the works and might cause undesired spillage at sea and/ or land during the project should be clearly identified.</p> <p>9. A hydrology assessment should be made available. Such assessment must include but not limit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details for the supply, distribution, and storage of potable water for the COL site.</li> <li>Details of collection, storage, overflow and use of rainwater and grey water.</li> <li>Ground water, surface water in terms of water quality including run-off management.</li> </ol> <p>10. Details of proposed sanitary facilities for workers during construction phase.</p> <p>11. Details of the proposed recreation and health facilities including the horse-riding facilities.</p> <p>12. The overall cumulative impacts of the development and operation on the public.</p> <p>13. Details of measures proposed to be taken to prevent nuisances at all stages of the project on the Area of Influence.</p> <p>The EIA should also include a detailed description of the measures envisaged to prevent, minimise and where possible offset any significant temporary or permanent adverse health effects and nuisances on the Area of Influence and to the public. This should include details regarding monitoring programmes that may be proposed. The EIA should also identify, describe, and discuss in detail the possible health effects of any residual impacts that cannot be mitigated.</p> <p>Applicants are also requested to carry out specific discussions with the various Units within the Environmental Health Directorate once the detailed plans for the public areas, catering establishments, food outlets and other facilities (such as water distribution, water features, etc.) are prepared in view of specific regulations under the Food Safety Act, the Public Health Act, and the Control of Legionella.</p>
3	Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (dated 17 March 2022)	<p>In response to your email of the 23rd of February 2022, please find recommended Terms of Reference for a Cultural Heritage Assessment i.c.w. the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).</p> <p><b>1.0 Preamble</b></p> <p><i>The current application (PA/05420/21), which covers amendments from previous permits at PA/04906/10 and PA/03134/19, still involves a large-scale development within the perimeter of a historical British military camp. Likewise, the site is situated within an area with a degree of scenic value and is in the vicinity of an Area of Ecological Importance (Ir-Ramla tal Mixquqa: GN 401/96)</i></p>

	<p><i>and an Area of High Landscape Value (GN 400/96). Potential impacts may occur within the project's site footprint and may include direct impacts on the existing historical structures, as well as visual impacts on the landscape.</i></p> <p><i>The Superintendence notes that this current application (PA/05420/21) reflects the validity of earlier permit PA/03134/19 (that was for the renewal of PA/04906/10). The Superintendence further notes that PA/04906/10 had been subject to EIA assessment GF/00117/10, which included a section on the cultural heritage assets, covering even the Lower Military Camp and its associated chapel.</i></p> <p><i>The Superintendence notes that the current application (PA/05420/21) effectively proposes a new design, with new volumes and a new disposition of structures and interventions. This would not materially impact the development site beyond the impact approved in PA/04906/10 (renewed by PA/03134/19) but alter the impact of perceptions of the area and the surrounding landscape.</i></p> <p>The above is expressed without prejudice to concerns and recommendations as had been expressed by the Superintendence in its response to PA/04906/10 and PA/03134/19 and without prejudice to its position and recommendations as may eventually be expressed in connection with PA/05420/21.</p> <p><b>2.0 Scope and Definitions of the EIA</b></p> <p>2.1 The study area will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate environs of the development site, with the site as viewed from approach roads and the immediate countryside.</li> <li>Viewshed of the development site as viewed from, with views of the site as visible from within the valley and from ridges flanking the valley.</li> </ol> <p>2.2 The Environmental Impact assessment will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify impact of development on the visual value of the environs.</li> <li>Assess the impact on the visual values of the environs.</li> <li>Propose appropriate mitigation to lessen impact on the visual value of the environs.</li> </ol> <p><b>3.0 Methodology</b></p> <p>In identifying the visual and special values within the study area, and assessing the impacts of the proposed development, the EIA will undertake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A study of the visual amenity of the area, including photomontages from significant viewpoints.</li> </ul> <p><b>4.0 Authorisation by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage</b></p>
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		As per Cultural Heritage Act 2019, any form of investigation or prospection required for the identification of cultural heritage (including excavation, field walking, topographic survey and remote sensing) may only be undertaken by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage or with its written approval.
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## 2) NGOs

No:	From:	Comments:
1	BirdLife Malta (dated 25 March 2022)	<p>After reviewing the PDS available on ERA's website, BirdLife Malta would like to contribute to the consultation regarding the Terms of Reference for the EIA for the respective development with the following feedback.</p> <p>The development envisages the construction of a 5-Star hotel and residential complex, upgrading of the road network in the Qasam ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa area and the development of a surface car park on a site which has been transferred by the Government of Malta (GoM) to the Scouts Association Malta.</p> <p>The site area is 80,770m<sup>2</sup>, out of which the footprint of the hotel constitutes 45,958m<sup>2</sup> and the proposed residential area another 30,645m<sup>2</sup>. According to PDS, the built-up area stands for 15,580m<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>In general, the project is of such a footprint and location which evokes major concerns. The site is adjacent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SCI Rđumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla tač- Ċirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa (MT0000024);</li> <li>- An Area of Ecological Importance and Area of High Landscape Value;</li> <li>- Il-Majjistral, Park ta' Natura u Storja.</li> </ul> <p>Furthermore, it partly overlaps with the Area of Agricultural Value (NWAG 1), as defined by the North West Local Plan, the potential impact on which should be assessed accordingly. In line with the SPED, the area is of High Landscape Protection, also being a Rural Coast. SPED encourages continuation of traditional agricultural use of the rural coast (SPED, Coastal Objective 1). The Local Plan outlines the strategy for the coastal areas, as follows:</p>

		<p><b>NORTH WEST LOCAL PLAN</b>            L-Awtorità ta' Malta Dwar l-Ambjent u l-Idrografa          Malta Environment &amp; Planning Authority</p> <p><b>Key</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predominantly Urban Coast</li> <li>Predominantly Rural Coast</li> <li>Protected Areas (including scheduled property, nature reserves, and areas that merit protection)</li> <li>50 metre bathymetric contour</li> <li>Land extension of candidate Marine Conservation Areas (Structure Plan 1990)</li> </ul>
		<p><i>Source: North West Local Plan</i></p> <p>❖ At the basement of a hotel, 120 car parking spaces are being proposed, this is in addition to more than 370 car and motorbike parking spaces proposed on the parking area currently under the Scout Association. The bungalows in the proposed residential area is also proposes to each have a parking space. Considering the relative large number of proposed car parking spaces at the location, a <b>the traffic impact assessment during both construction and operation phases</b> should be undertaken, paying special attention to comparison between current and foreseen traffic flow during the peak season.</p> <p>❖ The location has a number of buildings proposed for demolition within the site which have been unoccupied for some time and that may potentially host a significant number of avifauna species (especially, during the breeding season). Species such as Tree Sparrow, Barn Swallow, Blue Rock Thrush, Spotted Flycatcher, Collared Dove and Spanish Sparrow are known to frequent the site in the area with some breeding in the buildings on in the trees surrounding them. Therefore, it is important to conduct <b>an ecological survey during the breeding season</b> to assess the environmental impact due to potential loss of breeding bird species. Further attention should be given to any roosts of <i>Chiroptera</i> that may have occupied parts of the buildings over the years.</p> <p>❖ The cliffs located in close proximity to the development site are known for their seabird colonies. Particularly, up to 400 pairs of Yelkouan Shearwater nest along the cliffs of Majjistral park, with other seabird species such as Scopoli's Shearwater and Mediterranean Storm-petrel also present. The marine area adjacent to the cliffs is designated as SCI and SPA (Żona fil-Baħar tal-Lbiċ) due to the importance of the area for rafting, breeding and foraging behaviour of seabirds. Therefore, due to the presence of seabird colonies, the project site is located in a highly sensitive area in terms of noise and light pollution. It is vital <b>to assess</b></p>



		<p><b><i>the impact of another source of light on avifauna</i></b> and work out the measures to reduce the glare, light spill and other types of light pollution to a minimum. An external lighting scheme should be assessed separately and should have the aim of reducing light pollution comparing to current levels.</p> <p>❖ Same importance should be given to <b><i>the assessment of noise</i></b> with a special attention given to comparison between the current and foreseen noise levels during the demolition/construction and operation of the complex.</p> <p>❖ Due to the potential of loggerhead turtles nesting at Golden Bay, we would also ask to include the <b><i>assessment of vibrations</i></b> on the beach area, both during the demolition/construction and the operational phase. Proper mitigation measures are to be proposed accordingly. An external lighting scheme should also be viewed in this regard, to not impact the potential for Golden Bay and Riviera Bay as potential nesting sites for these turtles.</p> <p>❖ The demolition and the excavation works on the site will generate approximately 70,000 m<sup>3</sup> of solid waste. The possibility to reuse such waste on site should be considered, especially when it comes to lime-stone blocks and other materials suitable for further use. For the waste not reused on the site the routes for its transportation with minimum environmental impact should be suggested. We also suggest that <b><i>the waste management plan</i></b> in force during the operation phase should be evaluated. It is important to pay special attention to sustainable organic waste management.</p> <p>❖ Although the PDS states the average height of the complex is 2 storeys, there are buildings which accommodate higher elements (such as on the drawing of Elevation E3). <b><i>We suggest evaluating whether such building height is appropriate within the surrounding rural and coastal context.</i></b></p> <p>❖ We would like to express our particular concern with regards to the proposed residential units zone, the fact that the villas and bungalows, being located in such an ecologically sensitive area, can be sold to individual owners creates a situation where the land use and the impact on the environment is difficult to monitor and control. There is a need to carefully analyse this issue. Alternative sites, as well as alternative designs should be presented and evaluated thoroughly given the scale of the development and rural nature of the coast.</p>
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### 3) Public

No feedback received.

## Section 2 – 30-day consultation on review and following the public hearing:

### a) Government Entities

No	From:	Comments:	EIA Coordinator response
1	Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (feedback received on 25 November 2024)	<p>Ref. Cultural Heritage Act 2002 (as amended) (CAP 445)</p> <p>Environmental Impact Assessment (EA/00021/21) i.c.w. PA/05420/21 Amended Application to PA/03134/19 – Construction of Corinthia Oasis – Works include amendments to previous permit – Construction of Hotel and 25 Residences.</p> <p><u>Review of results identified in the Environment Impact Assessment</u></p> <p>The Superintendence has assessed the data gathered and compiled in the technical reports entitled EIA Report Coordinator, EIA Consultants Report, Appropriate Assessments and Project Info (Final Versions).</p> <p><u>Proposal</u></p> <p>As outlined in the description of works, the proposal at PA/05420/21 is for amendments to permit PA/03134/19 (renewal of PA/04906/10), for the construction of the Corinthia Oasis project. The amended development is for the construction of a hotel and 25 residences over a site footprint that measures some 83,500 square metres, with the implementation of a degree of landscaping throughout the footprint.</p> <p>Submitted master plans indicate that the development will be separated into three distinct zones, namely the Hotel, Residential (villa), and Chapel (sports facilities) areas. The Car Park (referred to as 'Scouts' Car Park) area is already approved by PA/03134/19 and no further amendments are currently being proposed for this area in PA/05420/21.</p> <p>The project description statement refers that a gross floor area of 25,000 square metres will be allocated to buildings. Whilst this is relatively in line with the 24,724 square metres allocated in the previously approved development, a significant change is noted in the design, disposition, and volumes of the proposed development.</p> <p>The previously approved development consisted of attached blocks arranged in a serpentine manner (with the implementation of a degree of landscaping), which screened centrally located circular villas. The current development consists of distinct zones (with landscaping implemented throughout the total footprint), including a residential zone with blocks of units, and a hotel zone, with a central hotel structure and surrounding units. Both developments consist of the use of the 'Scouts' Car Park Area and include the restoration of the Ghajn Tuffieha Camp Military Chapel, approved to be used as a multi-use area in PA/03134/19</p> <p>(renewal of PA/04906/10) and proposed to be utilised as a sports facility in PA/05420/21.</p>	<p>Demolition works carried out on site permitted by PA/03134/19 – works being monitored by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>The chapel has already been fully restored.</p> <p>The landscaping consultants submit the following:</p> <p>There have been preservation of existing maquis species or compensated if being removed such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Prunus dulcis</i></li> <li>– <i>Olea europaea</i></li> <li>– <i>Pinus halepensis</i></li> <li>– <i>Ficus carica</i></li> </ul> <p>On top of the preservation and compensation, we also use below species as some of the main species across the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Laurus nobilis</i></li> <li>– <i>Ceratonia siliqua</i></li> <li>– <i>Pistacia lentiscus</i></li> <li>– <i>Punica granatum</i></li> <li>– <i>Tetraclinis articulata</i></li> </ul> <p>There have been species proposed to be used for Hotel Private Garden, Aromatic Garden near the spa, Botanical Garden, Fruit Garden near the kids play, Floral Garden near the</p>

	<p><u>Cultural Heritage Context</u></p> <p>The site footprint is situated within a significant landscape that has a considerable degree of scenic value, also being within the immediate vicinity of an Area of Ecological Importance (Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa; GN 400/96; Level 3 Protection) and an Area of High Landscape Value for the coastal cliffs (GN 400/96).</p> <p>The site and its surroundings are of historical significance, forming part of the Ghajn Tuffieha military camp that dates to the turn of the 20th Century. In reference to the structures that formed part of the Lower Camp, the Superintendence notes that the demolition and removal of these structures, other than the preservation and restoration of the Military Chapel, was approved by permit PA/04906/10 (and renewed in PA/03134/19).</p> <p>This office notes that the structures of the Lower Camp were considered to be compromised, in poor condition and not of such significant value to warrant preservation (as agreed by the HPU and the Superintendence). The above is in comparison to the Upper Camp and Lower Camp Military Chapel, considered to be of greater architectural value, in relatively good condition, and meriting conservation and restoration. The Superintendence notes that the above referred structures in the Lower Camp have already been demolished and restoration works are ongoing on the Military Chapel as per permit PA/03134/19.</p> <p>Considering the historical use of the site and noting the presence of recorded archaeological features in the surrounding landscape, including Classical Period tombs and Megalithic remains to the North-West, and the presence of a known Bronze Age Settlement to the South-East, the Superintendence notes that the site footprint has a considerable degree of archaeological potential. Notwithstanding the above, this office notes that the site in question is already subject to archaeological monitoring as per permit PA/03134/19.</p> <p>In addition to the above, several cultural heritage assets are located in the surrounding area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Ghajn Tuffieha Entrenchments (GN 729/95; scheduled at Grade 1) – 62 metres from the proposed ‘Scouts’ Car Park (north section of the entrenchment near existing hotel) and 85 metres from the proposed Hotel Zone (southern section of the entrenchment near decommissioned sewage plant).</li> <li>– It-Torri ta’ Ghajn Tuffieha (GN 729/95; scheduled Grade 1 – 322 metres from the proposed Residential Zone.</li> <li>– British Colonial Pillbox (overlooking Ghajn Tuffieha Bay) – 163 metres from the proposed Residential Zone.</li> </ul> <p><u>Report on Cultural Heritage</u></p> <p>The Superintendence notes the study’s report on cultural heritage, included in the EIA Report, the Non-technical Summary, and the Report on the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment for the Amended Application to PA 3134/19.</p>	<p>chef to table area as well as Private Villas, to name a few below which is not the extensive list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i></li> <li>– <i>Fumana spp</i></li> <li>– <i>Phlomis fruticosa</i></li> <li>– <i>Thymbra capitata</i></li> </ul> <p>Trees already have been planted as part of the Scouts carpark.</p> <p>The trees making up the proposed soft landscaping scheme have already been planted in a nursery area set up within the site. This commitment was made in the QP <i>Construction Management Plan</i> enclosed with the first draft of the EIA Report.</p>
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		<p><i>Report on the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment for the Amended Application to PA 3134/19</i></p> <p>The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment indicates that the study was conducted to focus on the visual impacts resulting from the development being proposed in PA/05420/21 (also noting that the structures of the Lower Camp, except for the Chapel, were already been deemed suitable for demolition), in view that the new proposal would not result in material impact beyond what was already approved by PA/04906/10 (renewed by PA/03134/19), but rather alter perceptions of the area and the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>The study refers to the previous EIA at GF/00117/10, which had already covered a cultural heritage baseline of the areas of Hal Ferh, including the structures of the Lower Camp, Upper Camp, as well as other known cultural heritage assets in the surroundings, including the scheduled Ghajn Tuffieha Entrenchments, the Torri ta' Ghajn Tuffieha, and the British Colonial Pillbox (referred above).</p> <p>Identification, assessment, and suggested mitigation measures are based on several photomontages provided by the developer, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– South-facing view of the site footprint.</li> <li>– North-west facing view of the site footprint, including the Military Chapel/theatre and Upper Camp.</li> <li>– West facing viewpoint, facing the Pwales Valley.</li> </ul> <p>The study correctly specifies that the site is situated within an area of high landscape value, noting that architectural and design interventions need to demonstrate a high degree of respect for the character of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>With reference to the above, the study considers the proposed structures to be designed in a manner that would be compatible within a rural landscape. Whilst noting that landscaping would reduce the overall visual impact of the proposed development, further mitigation could be achieved via the use of globigerina limestone in lieu of white-washing or painting of walls. The use of “fake rustication” (adopted by the British Period barracks in the Upper Camp), could also be made use of to further accentuate the design of the proposed structures.</p> <p>Furthermore, the study refers to the ‘Scouts’ Parking site, which is considered to have an adverse effect on the rural landscape. Whilst noting the difficulty of implementing landscaping in this area, the study recommends that soft landscaping be implemented to mitigate the visual impact of the parking area. Additional recommendations include the installation of solar car ports to provide an additional asset to the development.</p> <p>It is within the study’s consideration that the surrounding landscape of Ghajn Tuffieha has been altered by the construction of the Upper and Lower Camp, as well as the Radisson Blue Hotel. Considering that the structures of the Lower Camp (barring the Military Chapel) have been demolished, it is thought that the proposed development, with a detailed landscaping plan, would</p>	
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		<p>result in a positive impact on the landscape. Nevertheless, the above referred measures are thereby recommended to further mitigate the resulting visual impact.</p> <p>Despite the aforementioned, the context of the Military Chapel is deemed no longer extant due to the demolition of the Lower Camp. Thus, it is considered highly essential for the proposed development to respect the Military Chapel, thus respecting its uniqueness and cultural heritage value.</p> <p>The study's proposed mitigation measures are referred below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Integration of maquis and garigue vegetation.</li> <li>– Use of “fake rustication” and globigerina limestone to further imitate the landscape.</li> <li>– Landscaping be implemented within the ‘Scouts’ Car Park, which can be further enhanced with the installation of car ports.</li> <li>– Close monitoring of the landscaping process, which is to be maintained in the long-term.</li> <li>– Close monitoring of the restoration process of the Military Chapel.</li> </ul> <p><u>EIA Report and Non-technical Summary (Report on Cultural Heritage)</u></p> <p>The EIA's report on cultural heritage refers to the structures located within the Ghajn Tuffieha Lower Camp, which are assigned as Site A (Lower Camp structures) and Site B (Lower Camp Military Chapel). The study correctly makes note of the approval for the demolition of all structures located within the Lower Camp at Site A (having already been carried out as per permit PA/03134/19). The above approval was based on positions taken by the Superintendence and HPU unit, where it was considered that the structures within the Lower Camp were not in a condition or of significant enough value to warrant preservation, unlike those existing within the Upper Camp. The above contrasts with the Military Chapel at Site B, considered of value and approved for conservation and restoration.</p> <p>In addition, the study refers to the previous EIA (GF/00117/10) carried out for the site, which at the time suggested the retention of several of the Lower Camp structures (those dating to the British Period) which was not agreed upon by the Superintendence and MEPA, thus earmarking them for demolition. Furthermore, the report refers to the mitigation measures proposed by the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment, noting that “there are changes that can be implemented to the current proposal to further mitigate the impact and extend the positive impact.”</p> <p><u>Additional Comments/Recommendations</u></p> <p>With reference to the above, the Superintendence notes that the Report on Cultural Heritage covers the current situation regarding heritage assets within the site footprint and the surrounding area, noting that the demolition, retention, and restoration of existing structures is already subject to permit PA/03134/19. In this effect, the above referred cultural heritage assets should not be subject to additional material impact from the development proposed in PA/05420/21, nor should additional material impact be caused to surrounding cultural heritage features.</p>	
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	<p>Whilst the Superintendence generally agrees with the above and takes cognisance of the proposed mitigation measures indicated to reduce visual impact, this office notes that no additional reference is made to archaeological monitoring. Noting the considerable archaeological sensitivity of the area, the Superintendence recommends that any additional ground disturbance that may be carried out be archaeologically monitored (as already imposed as per PA/03134/19).</p> <p><u>Report on Visual Impact</u></p> <p>The Superintendence has reviewed the study's landscape and visual impact assessment, based on a total of 14 photomontages taken from long, medium, and short distance viewpoints. In addition, this office acknowledges that many of the viewpoints in this study were also included in the study for the previous EIA (GF/00117/10). Visual impact is being considered on the level of significance that the proposed development's visual effect will have from a relative viewpoint.</p> <p>Moreover, the impact's significance is also assessed based on the timeline of the proposed landscaping plan. Proposed by the Corinthia Oasis Company Limited (COCL), a landscaping nursery is proposed to be planted during the period of construction works, which will be grown for once operations commence, ultimately contributing to the screening of the proposed development. Conversely, this landscaping plan is illustrated and emphasised in the submitted photomontages, which are divided between the proposed development with basic landscaping, landscaping in Year 1, and landscaping in Year 10.</p> <p>The following viewpoints have been selected for the above referred photomontages:</p> <table> <tr> <th>Photomontage</th><th>Location</th><th>Distance from Site</th></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 1</td><td>Upper Camp</td><td>Short Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 2</td><td>Il-Fawwara</td><td>Short Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 3</td><td>Triq tal-Wilga</td><td>Short Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 4</td><td>South of il-Manikata West</td><td>Medium Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 5</td><td>South of il-Manikata</td><td>Medium Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 6</td><td>Ta' Gannaru</td><td>Long Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 7</td><td>Il-Mizieb Woodland</td><td>Long Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 8</td><td>Hamlet West of il-Ballut</td><td>Long Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 9</td><td>Triq Ghajn Tuffieha, to the West of Viewpoint 8</td><td>Long Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 10</td><td>Triq tal-Wilga, to the NorthEast of Viewpoint 02</td><td>Short Distance</td></tr> <tr> <td>Viewpoint 11</td><td>Il-Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieha</td><td>Medium Distance</td></tr> </table>	Photomontage	Location	Distance from Site	Viewpoint 1	Upper Camp	Short Distance	Viewpoint 2	Il-Fawwara	Short Distance	Viewpoint 3	Triq tal-Wilga	Short Distance	Viewpoint 4	South of il-Manikata West	Medium Distance	Viewpoint 5	South of il-Manikata	Medium Distance	Viewpoint 6	Ta' Gannaru	Long Distance	Viewpoint 7	Il-Mizieb Woodland	Long Distance	Viewpoint 8	Hamlet West of il-Ballut	Long Distance	Viewpoint 9	Triq Ghajn Tuffieha, to the West of Viewpoint 8	Long Distance	Viewpoint 10	Triq tal-Wilga, to the NorthEast of Viewpoint 02	Short Distance	Viewpoint 11	Il-Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieha	Medium Distance	
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		Viewpoint 12	Il-Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieha	Medium Distance	
		Viewpoint 13	Riviera Martinique Car Park	Short Distance	
		Viewpoint 14	Il-Moxa ta' Ghajn Tuffieha, to the West of il-Manikata	Medium Distance	
		<p><u>Viewpoint 1: Upper Camp</u></p> <p>Taken from the Ghajn Tuffieha Upper Camp, Viewpoint 1 (Upper Camp) is situated at a point of relative lower elevation and is in close proximity to the site footprint. Whilst the proposed development is noted as having a low profile, the study indicates that the substantial footprint would result in an impact of high significance. Nevertheless, whilst it is noted that the impact is evident from all photomontages, the importance of the landscaping design is considered of high significance, as it contributes to a substantial transformation of the development, its overall footprint, and its impact on the surrounding area.</p> <p>In the previous EIA, the study had concluded that the approved development at PA/03134/19 appeared substantial, due to the low elevation of the viewpoint and the proximity of the development. To mitigate this impact, the study had recommended higher density planting, particularly along the perimeter of the site.</p> <p>In reference to the above, the Superintendence is in agreement with the study's consideration that the proposed development at PA/05420/21 would have a high significance of impact. Notwithstanding the above, it may also be considered that the development approved by PA/03134/19 would result in structures that are more impactful both in massing and volumes from this viewpoint. Additionally, it is evident that the landscaping plan (particularly by Year 10) as proposed would eventually add a degree of screening that would aid in mitigating the above referred impact.</p> <p><u>Viewpoint 2: Il-Fawwara</u></p> <p>Viewpoint 2 (Il-Fawwara) is conditioned by the Radisson Blue Hotel, which takes centre stage in the referred photomontage. Taken at the intersection of Triq Ghajn Tuffieha and Triq tal-Wilga, the proposed development is only partially visible from this viewpoint. However, the study considered the visual impact as highly significant with only basic landscaping. Conversely, with mature landscaping (incrementally between Year 1 and 10), this level of impact would be reduced to moderate.</p> <p>Whilst a nearby viewpoint was considered in the previous EIA, the photomontage in question focused on views of the Ghajn Tuffieha Upper Camp, further towards the East of the Radisson Blue Hotel. The impact of this viewpoint was considered as moderate, as the approved development was not considered as significantly different between existing structures. Recommendations were given for additional landscaping along the perimeter to mitigate impact.</p>			

		<p>Taking cognisance of the variations in focus between the above referred viewpoints, the Superintendence notes that the approved development and the proposed development are only comparable to a certain degree. Nevertheless, impact resulting from the proposed development on views of the Upper Camp is not considered to be significantly increased from that approved. Notwithstanding the above, this office has reservations on the study's consideration that the mature landscaping plan reduces the impact from high significance to moderate. Whilst noting a reasonable degree of screening by Year 10, much of the proposed development will still evidently be visible and notable from this viewpoint.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 3: Triq tal-Wilga</i></u></p> <p>Situated along Triq tal-Wilga, Viewpoint 3 is also dominated by the Radisson Blue Hotel, set towards the far right of the viewpoint. Currently considered flat, somewhat arid, and unremarkable, the proposed structures would result in a visual impact that is considered highly significant. The above is being considered both in terms of basic landscaping and with mature landscaping (Year 1 and 10), noting that the inappropriate urban development in a rural context would be particularly evident with the basic landscaping scheme, and that even the dense landscaping of later stages of operation would be of significant contrast between the existing degree of aridity. Nevertheless, mature landscaping is considered to have the potential to soften the visual impact of the Radisson Blue Hotel.</p> <p>With reference to the above, it should be noted that current views at this location are also characterised by the lack of structures pertaining to the Ghajn Tuffieha Lower Camp, which have been demolished as approved. The previous EIA study had considered impact of the approved development from this viewpoint to be of high significance, creating the appearance of a single long wall. Additional landscaping was recommended to enhance visual amenity at this location.</p> <p>The Superintendence agrees with the study's view that the impact at the location is significant in all scenarios. Notwithstanding the above and taking into consideration the removal of the Lower Camp structures, this office notes that the approved development, especially in terms of its singular massing, would be more impactful than the proposed development from this viewpoint.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 4: South of il-Manikata West</i></u></p> <p>Taken from the villa area of Manikata, Viewpoint 4 is characterised by significant and scenic views of the rural and cultural landscape of Ghajn Tuffieha, albeit being somewhat marred by the accumulated rubble from the demolished structures of the Lower Camp. The study considers the proposed development's impact to views at this location to be of high significance in all scenarios, including with basic landscaping and more mature landscaping in Year 1 and 10.</p> <p>The above was similarly noted during the previous EIA's study, which considered that the approved development would result in an impact of high significance from this viewpoint, thus recommending a higher density of trees both along the perimeter and internal areas. Whilst noting that the previously existing Ghajn Tuffieha Lower Camp structures constituted significantly less</p>	
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	<p>impact that than either the proposed or the approved development, the Superintendence notes that both developments result in similar degrees of impact from this viewpoint (with particular reference to the basic landscaping scheme for the proposed development). Additionally, the existing rubble currently deposited within the site footprint results in its own impact on the surrounding landscape. Notwithstanding the above, this office is in agreement with the study's considerations regarding this viewpoint.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 5: South of Il-Manikata</i></u></p> <p>Situated at a lower elevation than the previous viewpoint, Viewpoint 5 is situated at the Eastern side of the thoroughfare leading towards Manikata (from South to North). Views at this location are also somewhat marred by accumulated rubble from the demolition of the Lower Camp structures. The study considers the impact at this location to be similar to that of Viewpoint 4, noting a high degree of significance from all scenarios.</p> <p>The above contrasts with the considerations of the previous EIA, which considered the impact to be of moderate significance, noting that views of the Ghajn Tuffieha Tower would not be impacted by the approved development, but rather the most significant change would be the replacement of existing greenery with new construction. Recommendations for mitigation included higher density landscaping as before.</p> <p>With reference to the above, the Superintendence agrees with the consideration that the impact of the proposed development has a high degree of significance from this viewpoint. Nevertheless, and whilst having some reservations to the previous study's considerations of the impact of the approved development (considered moderate), this office notes that the visual intensity of construction is seemingly more evident in the proposed development when comparing it with that approved (this will be somewhat mitigated through mature landscaping at later stages of operation).</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 6: Ta' Gannaru</i></u></p> <p>Captured at a considerable distance from the site footprint, Viewpoint 6 is located in the Pwales Valley floor. Seen as a visually unappealing view (due to poor maintenance of the area), the study considers the visual impact from this viewpoint to be of low to moderate significance. Nevertheless, and similarly as above, visual impacts are considered in terms of inappropriate urban development in a rural context with the basic landscaping scheme and denser landscaping in Year 1 and 10.</p> <p>The Superintendence notes that no comparable long-distance viewpoint was included in the previous EIA study. Whilst noting that the Radisson Blue Hotel takes the main focus in this viewpoint, this office would consider the impact to be of moderate significance with basic landscaping, noting the lack of mature landscaping being visually evident (compared to the existing scenario), which can be considered of lower significance as landscaping matures during the later stages of operation (Year 1 and 10).</p>	
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		<p><u><i>Viewpoint 7: Il-Mizieb Woodland</i></u></p> <p>Situated on the Bajda Ridge at the edge of the Mizieb Woodland, Viewpoint 7 is also dominated by the Radisson Blue Hotel. The study considers the above referred view to be only moderately interesting, with minor views of the Ghajn Tuffieha Tower and the Riviera Martinique being visible, but also being marred by the presence of greenhouses and poorly maintained rubble walls. Visual impact from the view is considered to be of moderate to high significance.</p> <p>Similarly to Viewpoint 6, the Superintendence notes that no comparable long-distance viewpoint was included in the previous EIA study. This office takes cognisance that the Radisson Blue Hotel is the predominant focus in this viewpoint and would agree that the impact of the proposed development is particularly significant with basic landscaping, noting that the existing greenspace will be completely absorbed. The above will only be mitigated adequately to a degree by Year 10, following adequate maturing of the proposed landscaping.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 8: Hamlet west of il-Ballut</i></u></p> <p>Located near an area known as il-Ballut, Viewpoint 8 is captured along a thoroughfare which connects the area of Ghajn Tuffieha with San Pawl il-Bahar. Dominated by existing greenhouses and the Radisson Blue Hotel, the study considers this long-distance view to be less appealing due to the predominance of man-made structures, which mar the overall vista. Visual impact is considered to be of low to moderate significance from this viewpoint.</p> <p>In terms of the similar viewpoint submitted for the previous EIA, the study considered the approved development to be of moderate impact from this viewpoint, essentially removing the green band of trees with new development, but not significantly altering the visual scenario.</p> <p>With reference to the above, the Superintendence considers the visual impact of the proposed development to be of higher significance than that already approved, in particular when considering the development with basic landscaping. Whilst taking cognisance that the existing view is already impacted to a degree by man-made development, without adequate landscaping, the proposed development can be seen as a visual extension to the Radisson Blue Hotel, which will only be mitigated with mature landscaping by Year 10.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 9: Triq Ghajn Tuffieha to the west of Viewpoint 8</i></u></p> <p>Whilst being located along the same thoroughfare as Viewpoint 8, Viewpoint 9 is considered to be of higher visual value as the foreground is relatively free of man-made structures. From this viewpoint, the study considers the impact of the proposed development to be of moderate to high significance.</p> <p>With regards to the previous EIA, the study had considered the approved development to be of moderate impact from this viewpoint, noting that the development would be clearly visible but would not dominate the visual scene, which would remain predominantly rural in nature.</p>	
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		<p>Noting the high visibility of the proposed development with the basic landscaping scheme, the Superintendence considers the impact from this viewpoint to be of high significance. From this view, this office would consider the impact of the proposed development to be of higher significance than that of the approved development, which will only be mitigated to an adequate degree with mature landscaping by Year 10.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 10: Triq tal-Wilga to north-east of Viewpoint 2</i></u></p> <p>Located along the Triq tal-Wilga, the existing landscape is considered somewhat flat and arid, with the Radisson Blue Hotel taken centre stage. Similarly, as in Viewpoint 3 (which is located along the same road as Viewpoint 10), the study considers the impact of the proposed development to be of high significance, noting the inappropriate urban development in a rural context with only basic landscaping, and taking cognisance that the mature dense landscaping by Year 10 would be of significant contrast between the existing degree of aridity.</p> <p>Nevertheless, mature landscaping would be considered to potentially soften the visual impact of the Radisson Blue Hotel.</p> <p>In contrast to the above, the previous EIA's study considered the impact of the approved development from this viewpoint to be of moderate significance, noting that the mass of the development would not be visible but rather the visual effect would be similar to a high perimeter wall.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the Superintendence agrees with the study's considerations regarding the proposed development from this viewpoint, noting an impact of high significance that will only be mitigated to a degree via mature landscaping by Year 10.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoints 11 and 12: Il-Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieha</i></u></p> <p>Captured at the edge of Triq Ghajn Tuffieha, along the section that traverses the Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieha area, Viewpoints 11 and 12 highlight the existing greenery surrounding the site footprint, with views being dominated by the Radisson Blue Hotel, and the areas of Ix-Xaghra tal-Majjiesa, Ix-Xaghra tal-Qorin, and Il-Moxa ta' Ghajn Tuffieha. The study considers the impact from these viewpoints to be of high significance.</p> <p>With regards to the previous EIA, the study also considered the impact of the approved development to be of high significance, noting that the approved development would result in the reduction of existing greenery, replacing it with a built footprint. Additional landscaping, including larger and denser trees was recommended to mitigate the above referred impact.</p> <p>The Superintendence is in agreement with the study's considerations, noting that the proposed development would result in an impact of high significance from the above referred viewpoints, which will only be mitigated to an adequate degree via later stage mature landscaping by Year 10. Notwithstanding the above, this office notes that the proposed development may be</p>	
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		<p>considered more compatible with the surrounding rural context, when considering and contrasting the design of the approved development.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 13: Riviera Martinique Car Park</i></u></p> <p>Located at the car park near the Riviera Martinique building, Viewpoint 13 captures the dense development that exists in Manikata and provides a slight glimmer of Mellieha in the distance. Additionally, the view's foreground is dominated by trees and greenery. Whilst noting the above, the study takes cognisance of the considerable development that exists in Manikata and further notes that its poor architectural design has led to an unattractive profile from this viewpoint. Nevertheless, the study considers the impact of the proposed development to be of high significance from this viewpoint.</p> <p>A comparable viewpoint was included in the previous EIA (albeit closer toward the site footprint), which also highlighted views of Manikata. The study had considered the impact of the approved development from this viewpoint to be of high significance, noting that whilst the development would not obscure views of Manikata, it would result in a massive single coherent unit, rather than the segmented individual blocks that were present within the footprint. As in other viewpoints, the study at the time had recommended the implementation of landscaping to mitigate the impact.</p> <p>Whilst noting that background views are dominated by existing development in Manikata, the Superintendence notes that the contrast between the existing greenery in the foreground and its removal via the construction of the proposed development would result in a significant impact on the perception of views from this vantage point. Therefore, the Superintendence is in agreement with the study's considerations regarding this viewpoint, noting that a degree of adequate mitigation will only be achieved by later stage mature landscaping by Year 10.</p> <p><u><i>Viewpoint 14: Il-Moxa ta' Ghajn Tuffieha to the West of Il-Manikata</i></u></p> <p>Taken towards the West of Manikata, Viewpoint 14 provides views of the undeveloped areas of Il-Moxa ta' Ghajn Tuffieha and Ix-Xaghra l-Hamra. Taking cognisance that the view in question allows for a vista of a captivating landscaping, the study considers the impact of the proposed development from this viewpoint to be of high significance.</p> <p>The Superintendence notes that no comparable viewpoint was included in the previous EIA study. Whilst noting that the accumulated rubble from the demolished Lower Camp structures results in its own impact on the surrounding landscape, this office is in agreement with the study, noting that the proposed development would significantly impact this viewpoint.</p> <p>Taking cognisance that views from this vista highlight a predominantly undeveloped landscape, the Superintendence notes that the proposed development would create built volumes that will significantly alter perceptions. Additionally, this office notes that whilst mature landscaping may provide a degree of mitigation by Year 10, the resultant impact from the proposed development will, nonetheless, remain significant.</p>	
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		<p><u>Conclusion and Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Superintendence takes cognisance of the study held in relation to EIA (GF/00117/10), noting that the material considerations and values of existing cultural heritage assets are already subject to existing permits and conditions. Considering the above, this office notes that much of the current EIA study (EA/00021/21) relates to differing impacts on visual receptors in comparison to the approved development. Notwithstanding the above, the Superintendence refers that any approved conditions, including restoration and archaeological monitoring, are to remain valid and imposed in the connected Planning Application at PA/05420/21.</p> <p>With regards to the review of visual impact, and whilst having some reservations to the study's considerations (particularly in relation to Viewpoints 2 and 8), the Superintendence is generally in agreement with the study's assessment. Despite the anticipated impacts of the proposed development, this office acknowledges the commitment demonstrated by the approved development. It is also noted that the impacts of both developments can be considered comparable, and in some cases, the proposed development has lesser impacts.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the Superintendence recommends that the study's mitigation measures be integrated into the proposed development, including the integration of maquis and garigue vegetation for landscaping measures (which is to be maintained and closely monitored in the long-term), the incorporation of rustication and use of franka stone to be more compatible with the surrounding rural landscape, the implementation of landscaping for the Scouts' Car Park, and the close monitoring of the restoration process of the Military Chapel (as already referred above).</p>	
2	Department for Health Regulation (feedback received on 28 November 2024)	<p>With reference to the environmental impact assessment dated November 2024 regarding subject indicated in caption, please be informed that the Environmental Health Directorate (EHD) has the following comments/recommendations:</p> <p><u>Construction Phase</u></p> <p>Should this proposal be accepted, the applicant is to adopt best practices to ensure compliance with Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations during the construction phase. Moreover, applicant is to implement all proposed mitigation measures so as to reduce any nuisances and mitigate adverse air, noise and vibration (from dust dispersal and emissions from vehicles and machinery) impacts on sensitive receptors in the Area of Influence and on the general public. It is important to draw up and implement a Construction Management Plan to ensure adherence to proper site management practices which address ground-water, surface water and sea water pollution, to mitigate other adverse construction impacts (including construction traffic impacts) and to ensure safety measures. Monitoring of construction works is also highly recommended so as to ensure implementation of all necessary mitigation measures and adherence to work practices throughout all the phases of the project.</p>	Comments noted and have been passed on to the architects and building services engineers for their consideration and to ensure compliance with the cited regulations.

		<p>The necessary mitigation measures are to be taken to prevent contamination of the water course passing through the scheme that leads to the bathing water. Furthermore, the use of water sprays to maintain dampness of the construction material can cause surface runoff which may end in the water course or in the bathing area within the scheme and thus this has to be avoided. The creation of water aerosols from such activity should also be minimized as these cause a public health risk to employees and public in area of influence. Hence it is recommended that said water is treated with an appropriate biocide prior use.</p> <p>Safe and proper handling of raw materials on site should also be ensured to reduce the risk of spillage that might lead to contamination of the area of influence. Good practices and adequate preventive measures are to be taken for any accidental spillage of construction material and/or excavation waste, hazardous fluids, fuel and lubricants which are also to be well managed and adequately stored.</p> <p><u>Waste Management</u></p> <p>Waste management strategy should be adopted and implemented during the construction phases so that all generated waste streams will be contained, separated, and disposed of safely through the appropriate facilities and according to the necessary permits/licences. With regards to removal and disposal of any hazardous/ and non-hazardous waste, adherence to regulatory codes and procedures and due diligence is important in view of health and safety and any adverse impacts on nearby sensitive receptors.</p> <p>Generated waste, cleaning chemicals, etc. from any temporary sanitary facilities for on-site workers should be also properly disposed of.</p> <p>Any waste generated during the operation phase is to be disposed according to the local laws and regulations.</p> <p><u>Air, Noise &amp; Vibration Pollution</u></p> <p>All necessary mitigation measures are to be implemented during the construction phase to reduce the level of air pollution. Moreover, all mitigation measures to control dust must also be carried out with to prevent that any runoff ends outside the scheme and into the bathing area. Identified measures to ensure that surface run-off, water used for dust control, water used for wheel washing and general cleaning are to be adopted and maintained during construction and operational phase. It is also pertinent that during the operation of the scheme all proposed mitigation measures are strictly implemented to mitigate all environmental risks than can cause underground, surface, and airborne pollution.</p> <p>All the necessary mitigation measures during the construction and operation phase of the project are to be implemented to prevent and/or reduce the level of noise and vibration pollution in the surrounding area.</p> <p><u>Traffic Pollution</u></p>	
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		<p>It is recommended that traffic of construction vehicles follows established specific routes and adequate site management together with other measures such as storing or transporting of creed sand and other loose building materials in containers with suitable covers. Washing of wheels and other dust control measures are to be taken to mitigate adverse dust impacts and nuisances from heavy vehicles during transportation. All other mitigation measures which may be necessary to minimise nuisances and adverse health impacts from construction traffic are to be implemented.</p> <p><u>Fuel Storage</u></p> <p>Any fuel stored must be placed in a sealed and leak-proof containers to minimise the risk of contamination through leakages into the underlying surface. The area where the chemicals and fuels containers will be stored should be sealed with an impermeable material.</p> <p><u>Operation Phase</u></p> <p><u>Pools</u></p> <p>Pools are to be registered with the Environmental Health Directorate as per Swimming Pools Regulations, 2005 (L.N. 129 of 2005) as amended by (LN 135 of 2008) and the operator is to abide with requirements mentioned in these regulations. Discharge of water from pools, must not reach the street or sea water. In such cases, the necessary discharge permits are to be obtained from the relevant authorities.</p> <p>The applicant must take the necessary preventive measures to avoid any water from the washing of decks, pool back wash, water of pre-swim showers and other equipment to end up into the street.</p> <p><u>Restrooms</u></p> <p>Every restroom present on the premises should be supplied with a wash hand basin and adequate source of ventilation and light. The wash hand basin should be supplied with potable hot and cold water connected to a wastewater pipe that discharges on a gully trap situated in an open area and connected with regular drains. All drains are to be constructed and connected as per obligations mentioned in the Chapter 10, Code of Police Laws.</p> <p>Sump is to be to be registered with the Superintendent of Public Health, made leak proof and to abide to any other conditions set by the Superintendent of Public Health.</p> <p><u>Second-class Water</u></p> <p>The rainwater reservoir must not be used as water for human consumption. However, the said water may be used for irrigation or flushing of toilets once treated with a biocide. The rainwater overflow must not be connected to the drainage system. Rainwater from or in the vicinity of parking areas or areas used for vehicles within the scheme must pass through an oil-water separator prior it reaches the reservoir and/or street.</p>	
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		<p>The grey water system is to be registered with the Superintended of Public Health. At no time the treated water is to be used as water for human consumption. However, this may be used for irrigation or flushing apparatus if treated with a biocide. The EIA states that the treated grey water will be used for washing. The applicant is to ensure that the use of this water for washing is not used in areas used for food and beverage, pool areas and patrooms rooms including bathrooms. At no time treated grey water must overflow into the street and or ground outside the scheme which this may end into the bathing water. It is highly recommended that the reservoir to collect rainwater is not used to store treated grey water.</p> <p>The necessary mitigation measures are to be taken to prevent water runoff from irrigation of landscape. The use of pesticides and fertilizers is to be contained to prevent its residual reaches the water course within the scheme.</p> <p><u>Legionella</u></p> <p>A risk assessment manual and other requirements indicated in LN 5 of 2006 Control of Legionella, amended by LN 262 of 2006 must be carried out prior operational phase starts. It is being recommended that the applicant should discuss the plan for distribution of water systems of the proposed project and pool with the EHD at the initial stage of the project. The requirements of LN 297 of 2023 Water Intended for Human Consumption should also be adhered to.</p> <p><u>Light</u></p> <p>The necessary mitigation measures are to be adopted to avoid undesirable light pollution that may have an effect on the neighbouring environment.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>All proposed mitigation measures regarding adverse impacts arising from this development during the construction and operation phases are to be implemented by the applicant to mitigate any significant adverse health effects and nuisances on sensitive receptors in the Area of Influence and to the general public. The possible health effects of any residual impacts that cannot be mitigated and the overall cumulative impacts should also be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Consultation with the Health Certification Consultation Unit within the EHD regarding the operation of any food and beverage commercial facilities, is to be carried out prior opening of any food business.</p> <p>Moreover, any other unpredicted impacts and nuisances which may arise from this development and that may have a significant adverse effect on public health are to be immediately addressed by the applicant and the necessary mitigation measures taken.</p> <p>Complaints lodged by the public regarding any adverse impacts/nuisances should be immediately addressed by the applicant. All complaints lodged and actions taken are to be recorded and such records are to be readily available to the Competent Authorities when requested.</p>	
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3	Energy and Water Agency (feedback received on 28 November 2024)	<p>The following are comments for The Energy and Water Agency divided by considerations which relate to specifically and solely to energy and water management.</p> <p><u>Energy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To minimize the project's heating/cooling electricity consumption, it is being suggested that the project developers consider the installation of renewable technologies such as ground source heat pumps, provided that these obtain the necessary clearance from the respective authorities.</li> <li>– The applicants are suggested to integrate PV systems into the available roof space and the covering of the car park to reduce their dependency on the electricity grid.</li> </ul> <p><u>Water:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The use of treated greywater on the site is a positive initiative that EWA agrees upon.</li> <li>– It is recommended to use efficient water fixtures whenever possible, especially in bathrooms, kitchenettes, and other relevant areas.</li> <li>– Landscaping should respect the Mediterranean character of the Maltese islands and be compatible with the surrounding environment by utilising native species of trees, shrubs and plants which do not require excess amounts of irrigation water.</li> <li>– It is noted that reservoirs will be replenished with other Non-Conventional Water Sources (NCWS) when they are empty. However, it is essential to ensure that these reservoirs are not full as rainy weather approaches, to maximize the capture and utilization of rainwater.</li> <li>– For the villa Zone it is mentioned that "a manual/automated diverter valves to allow for excess rainwater to be diverted directly to the proposed storm water pipework". If possible, this should be diverted to the hotels reservoir to capture any excess.</li> <li>– An estimated water consumption for all the areas (Hotel complex, villa areas, irrigations areas and the tourism zone) should be included.</li> </ul> <p>This should include the 39-signature water and garden suites and any features that these will have.</p>	<p>The project building services engineers and architects have informed the EIA coordinator that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The project makes use of highly efficient mechanical and electrical systems, which comprise heat pumps for hot water production, heat recovery systems, highly efficient chiller systems, grey water treatment plants, harvesting and re-utilisation of rainwater.</li> <li>– Any consideration of photovoltaic panels at roof level would need to be assessed from a visual impact point of view.</li> <li>– Following a geotechnical investigation carried out (boreholes), the possibility of using ground source heat pumps was deemed to be unfeasible due to the lack of access to sea water from within the site perimeter.</li> <li>– efficient water fixtures will be applied wherever possible.</li> </ul>

**b) NGOs**

No:	From:	Comments:	EIA Coordinator response
1	Light Pollution Awareness Group (The Astronomical Society of Malta) (feedback received on 6 November 2024)	<p>The development is not to be a source of light pollution. To this effect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lighting should be strictly limited to within the developed part of the site.</li> <li>2. The development hereby being permitted should not be considered as a justification for the lighting of the access roads, tracks and paths leading to the site or other lighting beyond the site boundary.</li> <li>3. The lighting has to be from any peripheral landscaping inward, so as to be screened as much as possible by the landscaping itself. Moreover, the Planning Authority should request that as part of the works, should the present permit application be granted, ALL existing exterior lighting on site be changed to conform with the above conditions.</li> <li>4. To mitigate light pollution, any external lighting should have a correlated colour temperature (CCT) lower than 2300 Kelvin, or G-index (Green Index) <math>\geq 1.5</math>, and employ lighting fixtures that are downward facing and full cut-off.</li> <li>5. Lighting fixtures should illuminate only where needed to prevent light trespass.</li> <li>6. Any illumination that is employed should take into account the reflectivity of the surrounding surface to mitigate skyglow as well as glare.</li> <li>7. Any lighting that is not strictly necessary or in a less traveled area should be installed with a motion sensor to power off or dimmed when not required.</li> </ol> <p>Adequate checks before and after the works should take place.</p>	<p>The architects confirm that the design of exteriors lighting system will be designed with reference to the guidelines issued by public agencies (ERA &amp; PA, 2020) and NGOs (Crymble, 2020; LPAG, 2000), and the standards/principles (bsi.knowledge, 2024; CIBSE, 2016; CIE, 2017; ILP, 2021) on which the guidelines are based.</p> <p>The references to the documents mentioned:</p> <p>bsi.knowledge. (2024, November 30). BS EN 12464-2:2024: Light and lighting. Lighting of work places Outdoor workplaces. Retrieved February 15, 2025, from British Standards Institute (BSI): <a href="https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/light-and-lighting-lighting-of-work-places-outdoor-work-places-1?version=standard">https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/light-and-lighting-lighting-of-work-places-outdoor-work-places-1?version=standard</a></p> <p>CIBSE. (2016, May). Lighting Guide 6: The exterior environment. Retrieved February 14, 2025, from Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE): <a href="https://www.cibse.org/knowledge-research/knowledge-portal/lighting-guide-06-the-exterior-environment-2016">https://www.cibse.org/knowledge-research/knowledge-portal/lighting-guide-06-the-exterior-environment-2016</a></p> <p>CIE. (2017). CIE 150:2017: Guide on the Limitation of the Effects of Obtrusive Light from Outdoor Lighting Installations, 2nd Edition. doi:10.25039/TR.150.2017</p> <p>Crymble, J. (2020, July). Guidelines for Ecologically Responsible Lighting. Retrieved February 15, 2025, from BirdLife Malta: <a href="https://birdlifemalta.org/arcipelagugarnija/">https://birdlifemalta.org/arcipelagugarnija/</a> &amp; <a href="https://birdlifemalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guidelines-for-Ecologically-Responsible-Lighting.pdf">https://birdlifemalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guidelines-for-Ecologically-Responsible-Lighting.pdf</a></p> <p>ERA &amp; PA. (23 ta' June 2020). Guidelines for the Reduction of Light Pollution in the Maltese Islands Public Consultation Document. Irkupra 15 ta' February 2025, minn Environment &amp; Resources Authority (ERA): <a href="https://era.org.mt/topic/public-consultation-guidelines-for-the-reduction-of-light-pollution-in-the-maltese-islands/">https://era.org.mt/topic/public-consultation-guidelines-for-the-reduction-of-light-pollution-in-the-maltese-islands/</a></p> <p>ILP. (2021, May 26). ILP Guidance Note 1: the reduction of obtrusive light has been updated. Retrieved February 15, 2025, from Institution of Lighting</p>



			<p>Professionals: <a href="https://theilp.org.uk/ilp-guidance-note-1-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-has-been-updated/">https://theilp.org.uk/ilp-guidance-note-1-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-has-been-updated/</a></p> <p>LPAG. (2000, September). Guidelines for the reduction of <i>light pollution</i>. Retrieved February 15, 2025, from L-Għaqda Maltija tal-Astronomija: <a href="https://www.maltastro.org/committee/guidelines-for-the-reduction-of-light-pollution/">https://www.maltastro.org/committee/guidelines-for-the-reduction-of-light-pollution/</a></p>
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2	BirdLife Malta (feedback received on 3 December 2024)	<p>BirdLife Malta submits the following comments and recommendations in response to the public consultation for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) concerning Corinthia Oasis (formerly Hal Ferh Complex).</p> <p>The Hal Ferh complex has been abandoned and undisturbed for a considerable period, leading to its habitation by vertebrate fauna, including several breeding bird species. Both the Appropriate Assessment (AA) of Vertebrate Fauna and the EIA list the breeding birds present onsite, but discrepancies exist between the two. For instance, the AA mentions the Common Quail (<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>), Eurasian Chaffinch (<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>) and Cetti's Warbler (<i>Cettia cetti</i>) as present, while the EIA omits these species. These lists require revision to ensure consistency with the AA findings.</p> <p>While the AA provides a thorough assessment of the vertebrate fauna on-site, the EIA fails to propose adequate mitigation and compensatory measures for potential habitat and species loss. For instance, the financial support of restoration and/or management of nearby protected areas including the Majjistral Park, may be incorporated within the EIA as a compensatory measure. Although the EIA identifies that dismantling and demolition will result in the destruction of flora, it neglects to address how fauna might also be impacted during this phase. The only proposed measure involves erecting impermeable hoarding to restrict species movement, with no plans to mitigate habitat destruction or bird displacement.</p> <p>To address this oversight, we recommend that dismantling and demolition, scheduled to last two months as per the Construction Management Plan, be carried out outside the birds' breeding season (March to June). This will prevent the destruction of active nests within the site itself. Furthermore, incorporating nesting spaces within the new construction design could compensate for displaced breeding birds, alongside setting up bird boxes suitable for species observed on-site. We would like to take this opportunity to inform the developers of our availability to provide guidance and recommendations on integrating these features into the new premises of the Corinthia Oasis project.</p> <p>The EIA includes mitigation measures for the operational phase, such as using specific fertilisers and pesticides, landscaping with approved plant species, and installing downward-facing, low-intensity lighting. However, it lacks provisions for monitoring the operational phase. Given the site's sensitive location, adjacent to protected areas of national significance, a robust monitoring plan is essential to ensure the implementation of</p>	<p>The landscape designers have informed this EIA coordinator that:</p> <p>The landscaping scheme is intended to allow movement of present taxa and to provide refuge areas. The proposed rubble walls will create natural corridors to promote movement. The scheme also introduces a plant and tree palette, which is native to the Island and with the density of planting proposed, this will create a more consistent tree canopy cover than is currently on the site, for a more suitable environment for birds.</p> <p>Furthermore, architectural features may be provided for nesting.</p> <p>In respect to the comments on light pollution, reference is made to the response in in Row <b>Error! Reference source not found. (Error! Bookmark not defined.)</b>.</p> <p>This EIA coordinator is informed by IHI Malta Hotel Limited (The Oasis developer's mother company) that:</p> <p>"An operational rules and procedures manual shall be prepared for both standard day-to-day operations (in the hotel, the landscaped area and the villas) and emergencies (mainly fire). The management of the private villas shall be addressed in this manual, including procedures for noise and lighting"</p> <p>Please refer to the Operations section 5.1.2 (on pages to 249) of the second draft of the EIA Report, submitted with this document).</p>
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		<p><sup>1</sup> Syposz, M., Padget, O., Willis, J., Van Doren, B. M., Gillies, N., Fayet, A. L., ... &amp; Guilford, T. (2021). Avoidance of different durations, colours and intensities of artificial light by adult seabirds. Scientific Reports, 11(1), 18941.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> Rodríguez, A., Rodríguez, B., &amp; Negro, J. J. (2015). GPS tracking for mapping seabird mortality induced by light pollution. Scientific reports, 5(1), 10670.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Austad, M., Oppel, S., Cymble, J., Greetham, H. R., Sahin, D., Lago, P., ...&amp; Quillfeldt, P. (2023). The effects of temporally distinct light pollution from ships on nocturnal colony attendance in a threatened seabird. Journal of Ornithology, 164(3), 527-536.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> Stanley, T. R., White, J. M., Teel, S., &amp; Nicholas, M. (2020). Brightness of the night sky affects loggerhead (<i>Caretta caretta</i>) sea turtle hatchling misorientation but not nest site selection. Frontiers in Marine Science, 7, 221.</p>	

		<p>This concern is heightened by the cumulative impacts of ongoing touristic activities present within the Aol. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the premises do not become an additional source of disruptive outdoor activities during the breeding season of species within the Aol.</p> <p>In addition to the above, whilst we acknowledge that a comprehensive lighting scheme is being presented together with the EIA, we would like to add that any outdoor lighting should not only be downwards facing but also of a full cut-off type, to ensure that there is no light spillage in the surrounding environment. Only full cut-off fixture guarantees that light is directed only to where it is needed. They are the only fixture type to have a ULOR of 0%<sup>5</sup>. With regards to increased illuminance by cars within the premises, even though this is recognised as an impact by the EIA, it does not account how this will be mitigated for.</p> <p>Lastly, we are concerned about monitoring and controlling impacts from the private villas. The Hal Ferh development brief states the land is government-owned, yet it remains unclear how this status will change upon the villas' privatisation. The EIA does not account for potential impacts arising from these properties, making it challenging to mitigate them. Impacts from the 'villa neighborhood' must fall within the EIA's scope, as the site could be exposed to unknown future developments and impacts once privatised. If the development shall result in privatised land parcels which will be open to future speculation, changes in land use or changes in the actual use of the individual villas, then the impact from such developments cannot be truly determined. The development permit should seal the possibilities of diversified use of these sites, should this project go ahead.</p>	
		<p><sup>5</sup> <a href="https://birdlifemalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guidelines-for-Ecologically-Responsible-Lighting.pdf">https://birdlifemalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Guidelines-for-Ecologically-Responsible-Lighting.pdf</a></p>	



c) **General public**

No:	From:	Comments:	EIA Coordinator response
1	[Member of the public] (email dated 21 November 2024)	<p>The development is not to be a source of light pollution. To this effect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lighting should be strictly limited to within the developed part of the site.</li> <li>2. The development hereby being permitted should not justify the lighting of access roads, tracks, and paths leading to the site or other lighting beyond the site boundary.</li> <li>3. Lighting must be directed inward from any peripheral landscaping and screened by the landscaping itself. As part of the works, should the present permit application be granted, all existing exterior lighting on site must be modified to align with these conditions.</li> <li>4. To mitigate light pollution, any external lighting should have a correlated color temperature (CCT) lower than 2300 Kelvin or a Green Index (G-index) <math>\geq 1.5</math> and must employ downward-facing, full cut-off fixtures.</li> <li>5. Lighting fixtures should only illuminate necessary areas to prevent light trespass.</li> <li>6. Illumination should account for the reflectivity of surrounding surfaces to minimize skyglow and glare.</li> <li>7. Any lighting that is not essential or located in low-traffic areas should be equipped with motion sensors to dim or power off when not required.</li> <li>8. Adequate checks must take place before and after works to ensure compliance with these measures.</li> </ol> <p>Additionally, we would like to highlight the following concerns specific to this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The hotel already poses significant problems for the nearby environment, as newborn turtles have been observed heading inland due to disorienting artificial lighting. It is essential that the management takes proactive measures to significantly reduce lighting during turtle hatching periods to avoid exacerbating this issue.</li> <li>– While the project may claim that it will be "hidden by trees in 10 years," such mitigation is delayed and insufficient. We suggest that the trees required for screening be planted now. If the screening is deemed critical, the development permit could be deferred until 2034, once the trees are mature enough to provide the promised coverage.</li> </ul> <p>We urge the Planning Authority to enforce these conditions rigorously and consider the ecological impact of this project on the surrounding area.</p>	<p>The above response to comment 1 of Table 2 (NGOs) was reiterated in relation to lighting.</p> <p>Corinthia Oasis have informed the [EIA Coordinator] that the trees making up the proposed soft landscaping scheme have already been planted in a nursery area in the Site. This commitment was made in the Construction Management Plan enclosed with the first draft of the EIA Report.</p>

2	[Member of the public] (feedback received via the Online Public Consultations Platform on 25 November 2024)	<p><u>Feedback on PA/05420/21 – Corinthia Oasis Development Proposal</u></p> <p>I am writing to provide feedback on the Corinthia Oasis development proposal (PA/05420/21) as part of the ongoing consultation. While I acknowledge the potential economic benefits of this project, I believe there is significant scope for Corinthia Group to set an example of environmental leadership. Below are my recommendations for consideration to ensure this project becomes a benchmark for sustainable development, while protecting and enhancing Malta's natural heritage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Establish a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Plan; The developer should commit to a Biodiversity Net Gain approach by creating habitats on-site that improve biodiversity compared to the pre-development condition. Measures could include: Incorporating green roofs and living walls into the design, providing urban habitats and mitigating the urban heat island effect.</li> <li>10. Energy Innovation and Carbon Neutrality; To make this development a model for future projects in Malta, the Corinthia Group should pursue a zero-carbon goal by: Installing renewable energy systems, such as solar panels and geothermal heating, to meet on-site energy demands. Implementing a smart grid for optimized energy use. Ensuring energy-efficient building designs using sustainable materials.</li> <li>11. Community Co-Benefits; The development should provide benefits to the local community, such as: Creating public access to observation decks in restored areas. Funding local conservation programs, such as dune restoration or native plant nurseries.</li> <li>12. Establishment of a Review Mechanism by ERA, Last but NOT least. To ensure transparency and accountability, I strongly propose that ERA establishes a mechanism to evaluate its own effectiveness in monitoring and enforcing the project's environmental commitments. This mechanism could involve external experts or NGOs who conduct regular reviews of the project's compliance with environmental obligations and share findings with the public.</li> </ol> <p>By implementing these recommendations, the Corinthia Oasis project can go beyond mitigating harm and instead become a model for sustainable development, regenerative tourism, and environmental stewardship in Malta. I believe these measures are both attainable and aligned with Corinthia Group's resources and reputation.</p>	<p>Whilst there are currently no legal requirements for the preparation of BNGs in Malta, it needs to be noted that the landscaping proposal proposes a broad suite of trees and shrubs, both deciduous and evergreen, as well as nectaring sources, it is envisaged that the area will attract a host of wildlife species ranging from micro mammals, avifauna (mainly but not exclusively passerines), reptiles, and a large variety of invertebrates, including pollinators such as butterflies and moths, bees and hoverflies, in significant number. The area is thus envisaged to act as a refuge and an attraction to migrant species across different seasons.</p> <p>The project building services engineers and architects have informed the EIA coordinator that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The project makes use of highly efficient mechanical and electrical systems, which comprise heat pumps for hot water production, heat recovery systems, highly efficient chiller systems, grey water treatment plants, harvesting and re-utilisation of rainwater.</li> <li>– Any consideration of photovoltaic panels at roof level would need to be assessed from a visual impact point of view.</li> </ul>
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