

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

Distributed Common Ground Station Pacific Hub at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Wahiawa Annex, Oahu, Hawaii

Pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code Section 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) NEPA-implementing regulations¹ (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500 through 1508), United States Air Force (USAF) NEPA-implementing regulations (32 CFR 989), and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 4715.9, *Environmental Planning and Analysis*, the USAF assessed the potential environmental consequences associated with constructing and operating a permanent Distributed Common Ground Station Pacific Hub (DCGS Pacific Hub) located at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), Wahiawa Annex, Oahu, Hawaii. The proposed project site is located within the JBPHH Wahiawa Annex, a U.S. Navy (Navy) installation; therefore, the USAF has also prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the Navy NEPA-implementing regulation (32 CFR 775) and Office of the Chief of Naval Operations M-5090.1, *Environmental Readiness Program Manual*.

Background

The project is a USAF 480th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Wing project. The 692nd ISR Group (692nd ISRG), a subordinate unit of the 480th ISR Wing, is headquartered at JBPHH. The proposed DCGS Pacific Hub at Wahiawa Annex would support 692nd ISRG operations by providing secure and resilient communications supporting Pacific region ISR operations. The project also would consolidate squadron leadership, training, and administration functions for units on JBPHH currently supporting USAF delegated missions at the National Security Agency-Central Security Service – Hawaii. This EA, as incorporated by reference into this finding and attached hereto, analyzed the potential environmental consequences of activities associated with constructing and operating DCGS Pacific Hub.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to construct the necessary facility for the 480th ISR Wing and 692 ISRG to provide secure communications support for Pacific region ISR operations. The Proposed Action is needed because current facilities at JBPHH used by the 692 ISRG were not designed or constructed to support technology-intensive systems equipment or enable modernization efforts needed by the 692 ISRG.

Existing facilities on JBPHH are World War II-era buildings currently at capacity on occupancy, power, cooling, and data center capability. These facilities, designed as aircraft hangars and administrative offices, have been modified numerous times to support operations of past generations. The facilities now struggle to adequately meet current mission loads and cannot support an increase in steady-state missions, wartime and surge operations tempo, or evolving ISR data architecture.

Alternatives Considered

Per 32 CFR 989.8, the USAF developed written selection standards to narrow the range of alternatives analyzed in the EA. One action alternative and a No Action Alternative were fully analyzed in the EA. Section 2 of the EA presents a detailed discussion of the selection standards and the alternatives.

Preferred Alternative

The Proposed Action is the Preferred Alternative. Under the Proposed Action, the USAF would construct and operate a DCGS Pacific Hub on the Wahiawa Annex, Oahu, Hawaii. The Proposed Action, including the DCGS Pacific Hub and associated infrastructure, areas to accommodate construction staging and

¹ The USAF made the decision to prepare the EA in July 2020 prior to the CEQ update to the NEPA-implementing regulations effective date of September 14, 2020; therefore, the original NEPA-implementing regulations were used for this EA.

laydown, and utility connections, comprises approximately 811,640 square feet (18.6 acres). Activities under the Proposed Action include demolishing existing warehouse structures, concrete pads, and access roads; constructing a two-story (partially below grade) DCGS Pacific Hub with approximately 100,000 square feet of floor space; constructing approximately 189,000 square feet (4.3 acres) of new paved areas to include sidewalks, two parking areas, and access roads; constructing utility connections to include a sanitary sewer system and electrical system; and constructing stormwater management systems to comply with low-impact development requirements. Stormwater management would include vegetated filter strips, bioretention basins, and bioswales.

The 480th ISR Wing would provide the military personnel, contractors, and civilians to operate and maintain the DCGS Pacific Hub. Approximately 180 to 200 personnel are expected to work at the hub, and most of these personnel already currently live or work in the project vicinity. The remaining approximately 50 contractors and civilians needed to work at the hub are anticipated to come from the local workforce. No increase in military personnel would be assigned to the 480th ISR Wing as part of this Proposed Action, and additional personnel hired to work at the hub would be from the local workforce. No additional housing on Oahu would be required under the Proposed Action.

Typical Proposed Action operations would include vehicle traffic for personnel and visitors traveling to and from the DCGS Pacific Hub and truck traffic for deliveries. Operations also would include routine maintenance of the building and outside facilities, including parking lots, access roads, stormwater management infrastructure, and landscaping. Section 2.2 of the EA provides a detailed discussion of the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, a new DCGS Pacific Hub would not be constructed, and existing facilities occupied by the 692 ISRG at JBPHH would continue to lack the flexibility to support the infrastructure and equipment required for evolving ISR missions; this lack of a hub would prevent dissemination of ISR information and data. Further, under the No Action Alternative the lack of a purpose-built hub for the Pacific region would prevent mission system upgrades and impair operations during periods of degraded communications. The No Action Alternative would not achieve the project purpose and need.

Summary of Findings

The resources analyzed in detail in this EA are air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, water resources and water quality, geology and soils, utilities and infrastructure, hazardous materials and wastes, socioeconomics, and traffic.

The Proposed Action would have no impact on land use, visual resources, floodplains, environmental justice, protection of children, or coastal zones. Negligible to short-term minor impacts would occur on air quality, ambient noise levels, biological resources, wetlands, cultural resources, water resources and quality, geology and soils, and hazardous materials and wastes. Minor long-term impacts would occur on utilities, infrastructure, and traffic. A minor short-term economic benefit would result from an increase in total annual regional labor income. The Proposed Action would not result in any significant adverse impacts on these resources; therefore, no mitigation measures are required. Best management practices and conservation measures are described and recommended in the EA where applicable. Further, no significant cumulative impacts would result from the Proposed Action when combined with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Finding of No Practicable Alternative

Executive Order (EO) 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, (24 May 1977) directs agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with destroying or modifying

wetlands and direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever a practicable alternative is available. EO 11990 directs each agency to provide for early public review of plans for construction in wetlands. In accordance with EO 11990 and 32 CFR 989, a Finding of No Practicable Alternative (FONPA) must accompany the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) stating why no practicable alternatives to development within or affecting wetland areas exist. The Proposed Action would result in impacts in a wetland; therefore, the following FONPA is presented with the FONSI, pursuant to EO 11990.

The Proposed Action would result in temporary impacts on approximately 6,750 square feet (0.15 acre) of a wetland feature during installation of an electrical conduit. Installing the electrical conduit would involve constructing a trench to underground the utility, which would affect the wetland feature. This work would be temporary in nature, and the area would be returned to original contours after construction. Impacts to the wetland feature would be reduced by minimizing the disturbance area to install the electrical conduit to the maximum extent possible. The wetland feature is located below an outlet of an existing retention basin and lacks a surface water connectivity (nexus) or adjacency to any jurisdictional tributary and, therefore, is not considered a federally jurisdictional water regulated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

No other practicable alternative exists to avoid impacts in the wetland feature. An alternative was considered to route the electrical conduit west of its proposed location; however, this alternative route would have resulted in construction in an area of native vegetation with the potential for adverse impacts on biological resources. Alternatives to locate the electrical conduit northwest or east of the proposed location is limited by an existing antenna array and an existing upslope retention basin. Due to site topography, presence of existing structures, and the potential adverse impacts on biological resources that could result when realigning the electrical corridor these alternative locations for installation of the electrical conduit were dismissed. Therefore, based on the facts and analyses contained in the EA, I find that there is no practicable alternative that avoids impacts on the wetland feature, and the Proposed Action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to the wetland feature.

Finding of No Significant Impact

I have carefully and thoroughly considered the environmental analyses contained in the attached EA. Based on that information, I found that the Proposed Action will not significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment. Accordingly, NEPA and CEQ requirements, USAF NEPA-implementing regulations, and DoD instructions have been fulfilled and the EA prepared in accordance with Navy NEPA-implementing regulations and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations *Environmental Readiness Program Manual*; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be required, and the Proposed Action will be implemented.

SIGNATORY NAME, Rank/Title

Date