PUBLIC SCOPING

Introduction

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted to address concerns about federal actions and their effects on the environment. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a public document prepared under NEPA that provides a detailed environmental effects analysis of a proposed federal action to support informed decision making.

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) has published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the proposed Training and Exercises at Airfields in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Specifically, the CNMI Airfields Training and Exercises (CATE) proposal is to conduct aircraft training and exercises at Saipan International Airport (GSN), Tinian International Airport (TNI), Tinian North Field (North Field), and Rota International Airport (GRO) (see **Figure 1**). DAF is the lead agency for the EIS, and DAF intends to invite the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) to be cooperating agencies.

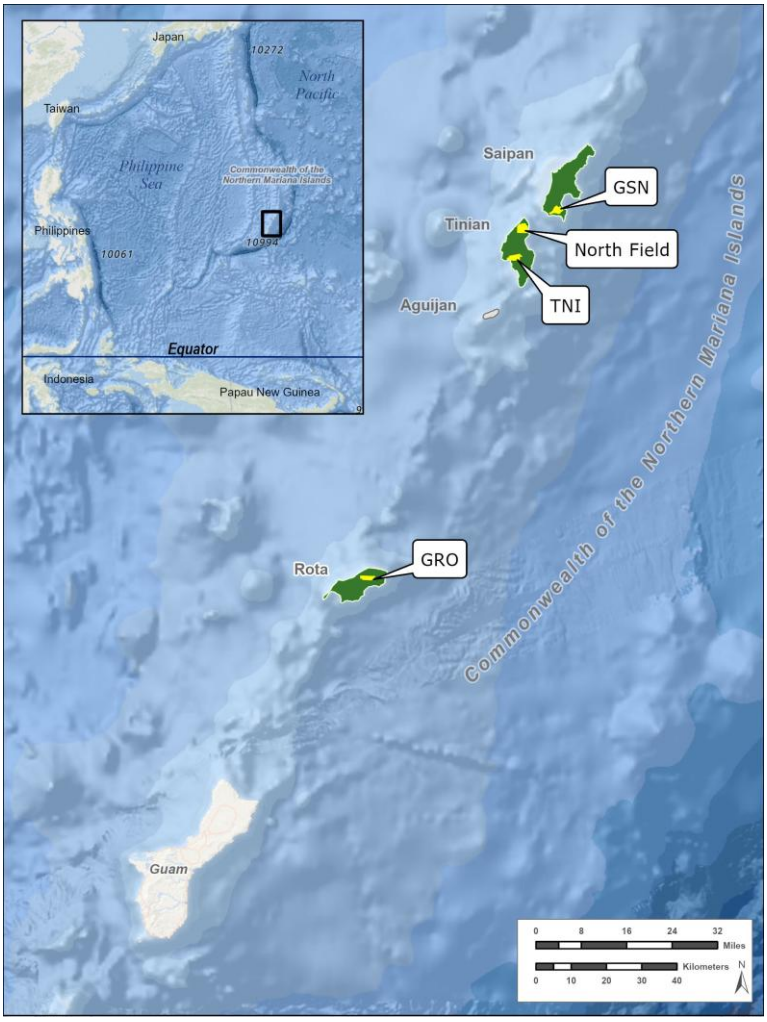


Figure 1: Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, CNMI Location Map

What is the Public Scoping Process?

Public scoping is an early and open process for identifying issues and alternatives to be addressed in an EIS and determining who (e.g., public and government agencies) is interested in the Proposed Action. Public outreach is conducted as a part of the public scoping process to provide information to interested parties and to receive comments on the Proposed Action, alternatives, and potential impacts. Comments received during the public scoping period are considered during preparation of the Draft EIS. The public scoping process began with publication of the NOI in the Federal Register stating DAF's intent to prepare an EIS.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR

TRAINING AND EXERCISES

AT AIRFIELDS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

What are Training and Exercises?

Examples of training that would be conducted at CNMI airfields include continuation training for pilots and technicians to maintain proficiency, mandatory ancillary training for compliance in a skillset, and readiness training to prepare for deployment. Military exercises build upon individual training by integrating personnel, units, equipment, and mission systems. Exercises are designed to validate operational readiness, improve interoperability, and rehearse operational concepts. To effectively develop both individual servicemember and military units, training and exercises may involve military aircraft, ground vehicles, fuel systems, communications equipment, and munitions.



Figure 2: F-22 Takeoff from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam



Figure 3: A forklift staged for loading onto a C-17 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, HI



Figure 4: PACAF personnel attaching a fuel pipeline to an expeditionary fuel bladder

Project Background

Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) must continuously adapt its training and operational concepts to ensure forces can operate effectively across the Indo-Pacific region. DAF's *Agile Combat Employment (ACE)* concept of operations employs a distributed approach that enables forces to maneuver between multiple locations, sustain operations from dispersed sites, and continue generating combat capability under a range of conditions. ACE emphasizes resilience, flexibility, speed, agility, and adaptability through the use of distributed locations, tailorable force packages, integrated logistics, and multi-capable personnel.

Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to conduct aircraft training and exercises at operable airfields in the CNMI to enhance DAF operational readiness and resiliency by conducting distributed operations across multiple locations within a single U.S. territory. The Proposed Action is needed to improve DAF's ability to conduct distributed operations across multiple locations in a compressed U.S. geographic area in support of the ACE concept and to maintain operational readiness and responsiveness in the Indo-Pacific.

www.CATEEIS.com

Please ensure DAF receives your comments by November 29, 2026.
Visit the project website for more information.

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TRAINING AND EXERCISES

AT AIRFIELDS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action includes conducting small, medium, and large training and exercise events at CNMI airfields (see **Figures 5 through 8**), consisting of up to 1,200 fixed-wing operations and 320 rotary-wing operations (e.g., takeoffs and landings) per airfield annually. Training/exercise events would include:

- Up to 550,000 gallons of fuel per airfield, including fuel receipt, storage and distribution;
- Up to 1,000 personnel per airfield;
- Temporary installation of expeditionary infrastructure and utilities
- Munitions handling including chaff and flare;
- Support services; and
- Pre-and post- training and exercise activities.

This proposal is based on DAF requirements but could also support training and exercises involving other Department of War services, allies, or partner nations. The Proposed Action does not include construction, creation or modification of airspace, or an increase or change in munitions expenditures beyond those analyzed in previous NEPA documentation.



Figure 5: Saipan International Airport (GSN)



Figure 6: Tinian International Airport (TNI)



Figure 7: Tinian North Field (North Field)



Figure 8: Rota International Airport (GRO)

Alternatives

DAF focused on operational alternatives capable of accomplishing the Purpose and Need to conduct distributed aircraft training and exercises across the network of CNMI airfields. Alternatives that did not support complex, distributed operations in the CNMI or otherwise satisfy the criteria for consideration were dismissed from further review. In addition to the Proposed Action, the EIS will analyze Alternative 1 which consists of conducting aircraft operations at an intensity 20 percent greater than the Proposed Action, and the No Action Alternative.

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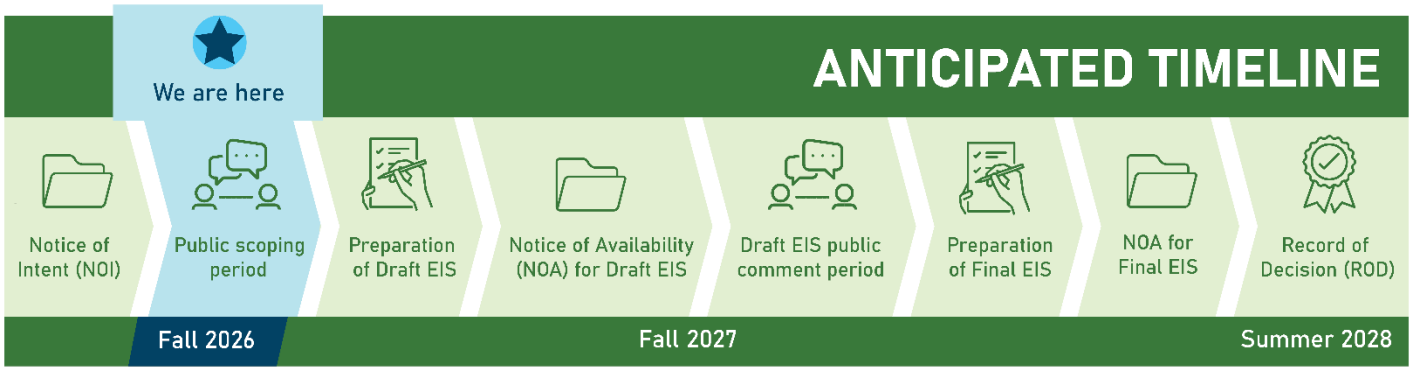
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Effects Analysis

Resource areas to be analyzed in the Draft EIS include noise, air quality, biological and natural resources, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources, land use, socioeconomics, hazardous materials/waste, infrastructure and utilities, transportation and aircraft parking, public health and safety, recreation, and aesthetics. DAF will pursue all required consultations, permits, and licenses for the project. Additional analysis will be provided in the Draft EIS which is anticipated in Fall 2027, and the Final EIS which is anticipated in Summer 2028 (see anticipated timeline below).



Participate and Provide Your Comments

DAF invites interested parties to participate in the public scoping process and provide comments on alternatives, impacts, relevant information, studies, or analyses in English using the following methods:

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Attend the public meetings and make a written comment:

- **Saipan**: November 18, 2026, 5:00pm to 8:00pm ChST – Pacific Islands Club (Charley's Room), San Antonio
- **Tinian**: November 19, 2026, 5:00pm to 8:00pm ChST – Tinian Western Lodge, Marpo Heights
- **Rota**: November 21, 2026, 12:00pm to 3:00pm ChST – Rota Mayor's Office, Tatachok (Alternate: Courthouse or Round House)

POSTAL MAIL

Write a letter or download a written comment form and mail to:

AFIMSC Det 2/CEV
ATTN: CATE EIS
25 E ST STE C-310
JBPHH, HI 96853

EMAIL

Send an email to the project point of contact at: **PACAF.NEPA.CATEEIS@us.af.mil**

PROJECT WEBSITE

Learn about the proposal and provide a comment on the "Comment" tab: ***www.CATEEIS.com***

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