

Environmental Impact Assessment

Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

ERA Reference no.:	EA/00075/18
PA Reference no.:	PA/01103/18
Project Title:	Excavation of trenches for the laying of pipework and cables for the new water distribution system. To include the installation of water dispensers along the routes.
Location:	Various Roads at, Tal-Bidni, Habel I-Abjad, Tas-Silg, Xghajra, San Anard, Sant'Antnin, M'Xlokk, Zabbar Zabbar, Xghajra, San Anard, Sant'Antnin, Zabbar, M'Scala, Xghajra, M'Xlokk, Bulebel, Zejtun, Malta
Screening date:	December 2018

1. Description of Proposal

1.1 Outline of project/development

PA/01103/18 is a development permit application by the Water Services Corporation (WSC) to excavate trenches for the laying of pipework to distribute second class water through water dispensing points (**Figure 1**) installed at circa every 100metres. These will be located in various Roads at, Tal-Bidni, Habel I-Abjad, Tas-Silg, Xghajra, San Anard, Sant'Antnin, M'Xlokk, Zabbar, M'Scala, M'Xlokk, Bulebel, Zejtun, Malta (**Figure 2 and 3**).

The proposed project will cover an area of circa 0.25km² of roads and paths and trenching will occur in government owned roads and paths. Trenches will accommodate ductile iron pipes of 150mm, 250mm and in some instances 350mm diameter and will have an average depth of 1200mm. Some of the roads which are marked in black on the Block Plan (PA/01103/18/79a) are works that have been carried out by Transport Malta, where WSC placed only buried infrastructure in preparation of this proposal. The trenching works are divided into six distinct lots as follows:

- Lot 1 – Zabbar & Xghajra (San Leonardo Area)
- Lot 2 – Zabbar, Marsascula (Bidni Area)
- Lot 3 – Zejtun & Marsascula
- Lot 4 – Zejtun & Marsaxlokk
- Lot 5 – Marsaxlokk & Delimara
- Lot 6 – Kalkara & Rinella

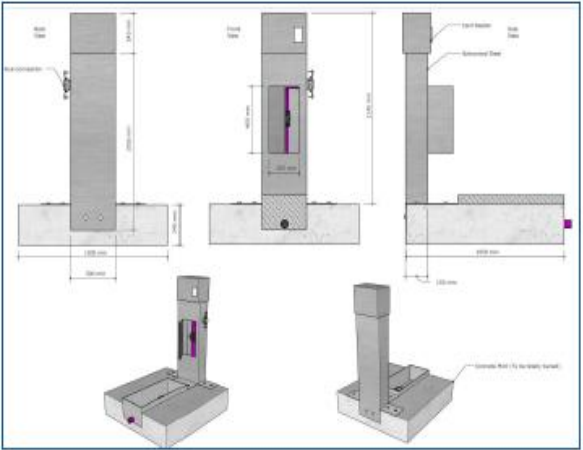


Figure 1: Diagram of Proposed 'New Water' Dispenser (Source: PDS pg 3)

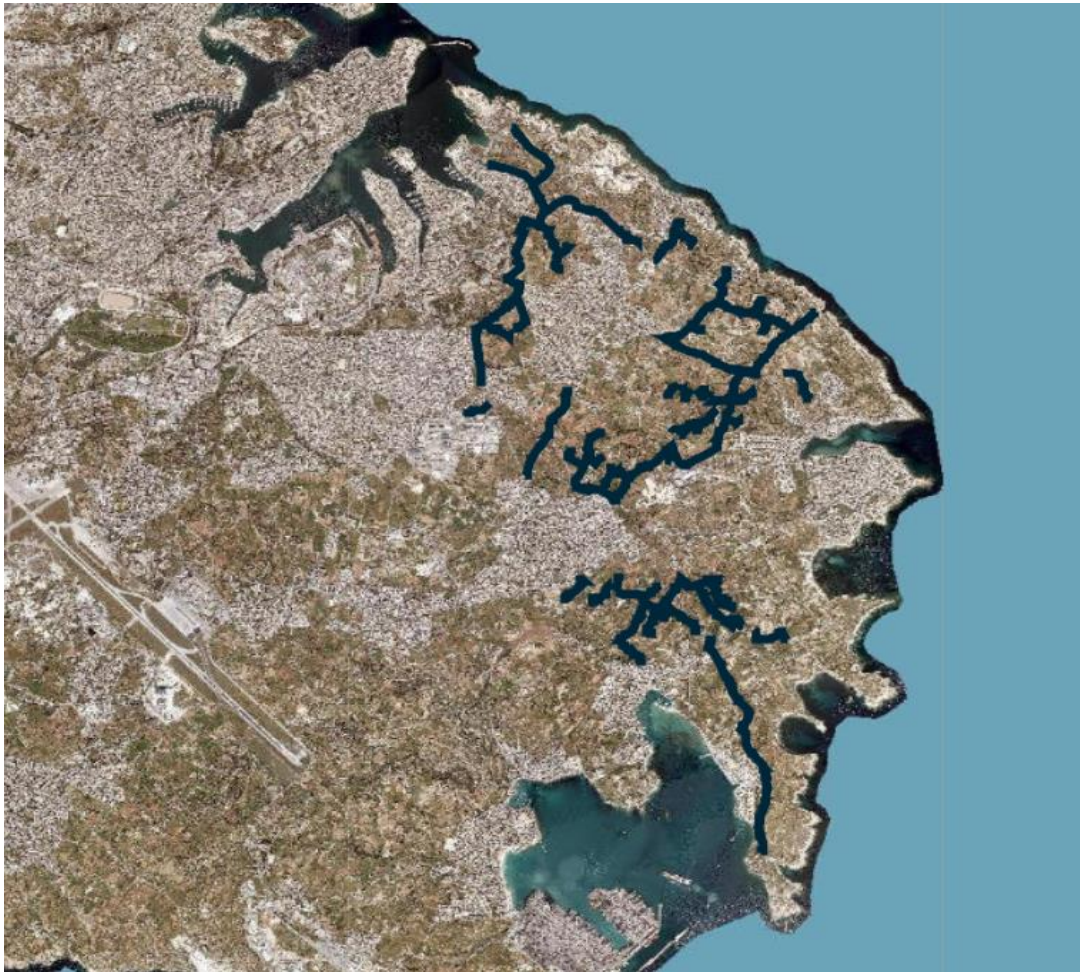


Figure 2: Aerial photo of site, 2016 (Source: PA Geoserver)

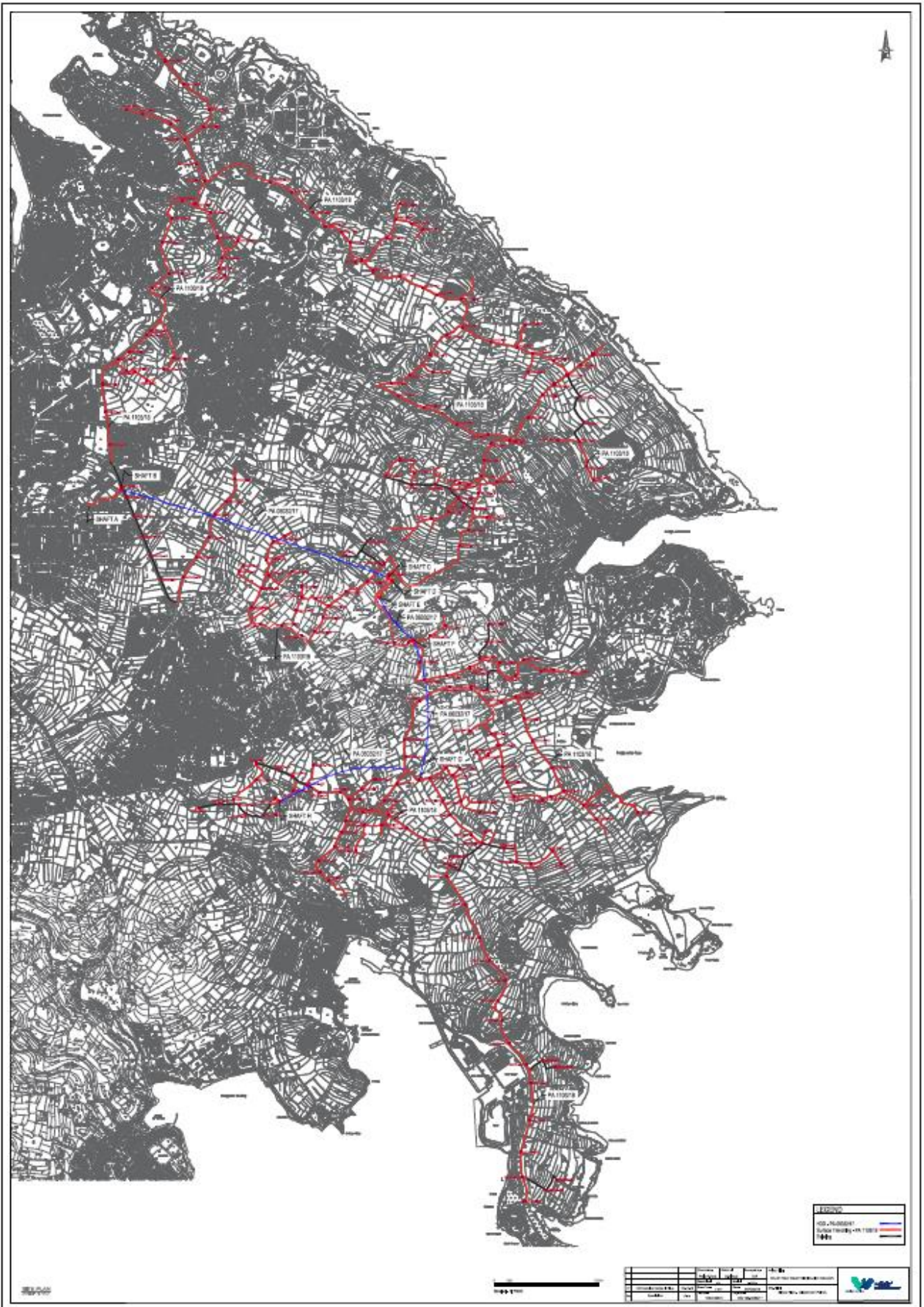


Figure 3: Block plan showing location of dispensers (Source: PA E-apps doc. PA/01103/18/79a)

1.2 Site description and related considerations

The project will cover an area of circa 0.25 square kilometres of roads and paths in the South of Malta as mentioned in Section 1.1. The six district networks will pass through or near:

- Scheduled areas such as:
 - Areas of High Landscape Value – for Harbour fortifications (G.N. 133 of 2001) and Natural Landscapes (G.N. 400 of 1996),
 - Areas of Ecological Importance (AEI) as per G.N. 400 of 1996 and G.N. 930 of 2002,
 - Architecture as per G.N. 133 of 2001,
 - Sites of Archaeological Importance (SAI) as per G.N. 829 of 1998 and G.N. 1082 of 2009,
 - Sites of Scientific Importance (SSI) as per G.N. 1082 of 2009

2. EIA- history

2.1 EIA screening criteria: (citations refer to EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46), except where otherwise specified):

The proposed project falls within the scope of Schedule I, Category II:

- *Section 4.1.2.4 – Water management projects for agriculture (including works for irrigation or use of treated water) or land drainage projects;*
- *Section 4.3.2.2 – Long-distance aqueducts or main sewers (5km or more), not located within an existing vehicular right of way of passing through a protected site.*

2.2 Documents used for screening:

1. ERA consultation reply dated 7th March 2018 (PA/01103/18/27a);
2. Updated PDS dated 18th December 2018 (PA/01103/18/78a);
3. Block Plan showing location of dispensers (PA/01103/18/79a).

3. Impact Assessment

3.1. The proposed project will require the excavation of trenches and pipelaying for the distribution of second class water through water dispensing points. Trenching will limit itself in roads and paths which are government owned and there will be no encroachment in cultivated land.

3.2. Airborne dust and emissions from heavy machinery is expected during excavation phase. However, no significant impacts are envisaged as these will be short term and temporary. In addition, mitigation measures such as spraying or wetting the areas prior excavation and fencing covered with agro will be used if necessary.

3.3. In relation to waste, it is estimated that during construction phase, 0.67 cubic metres of excavated material per running metre will be generated and disposed of in approved ways as stipulated by law. Reclaimed crushed excavation material mixed with concrete will also be used to close off the trench. During the operational phase, no waste is expected to be generated.

3.4. Noise and vibration will only be generated during the excavation phase hence no significant impacts are being envisaged as these will take place along rural roads which are very little inhabited and not very much frequented and will be temporary and of short term.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Screening Conclusion and recommended way forward

The above detailed EIA screening concludes that impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA, in accordance with Regulation 15(3b) of the EIA Regulations 2017 (S.L. 549.46). After an inspection carried out on 18th December 2018, ERA has concerns about the location of some of the proposed dispensers and their ancillary trenching as these are located in agricultural areas with no existing access or narrow paths, such that localised adverse impact is expected to accommodate the proposed interventions and the subsequent use and maintenance of the installed infrastructure. There are environmental reservations that still need to be addressed with regard to the below:

Area 1

The below area is scheduled as Level 2, Area of Ecological Importance (AEI) and as Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) for coastal/cliffs as per G.N 400 of 1996 and the surrounding area is garrigue. In addition, the area where Dispenser 56004 – 31 will be located has a series of enforcement such as: construction of rooms / structures without permit (EC/00072/16) and dumping of rock spoil on 'waste land' without permit (EC/00072/01). ERA has concerns and is not convinced that the placement of these two dispensers will not be conducive to any adverse impact on the site environment, in relation to the facilities being served by such infrastructure as well as due to the envisaged impacts of the infrastructural intervention within a beaten earth track that should remain as such without any trenching, concreting or hard surfacing.





Figure 4: Showing the area where dispensers Dispensers 56004 – 30 and 56004 – 31 will be located. Source: PA Geoserver 2016 (top left side), Google maps 2018 (top right side), Block Plan (PA/01103/18/79a) (bottom left side), Site inspection photo 18/12/2018 (bottom right side)

Area 2

The below area is scheduled as Class A, Site of Archaeology Importance (SAI) for Hal Ginwi Temple as per G.N 1082 of 2009. ERA has its reserve on Dispenser 56005 – 27 and manhole M48 and is not convinced that the proposed installation and its ancillary infrastructure will not cause any damage to the environment especially when there is no existing path. With regard to the other two dispensers (56005 – 28, 56005 – 29) and manhole M47, these are located along a narrow and beaten path, which should remain as such without any trenching, concreting or hard surfacing. A clarification is being requested as to how the intervention will be carried out in a manner to avoid such adverse impacts so that the acceptability or otherwise of these specific works can be determined.

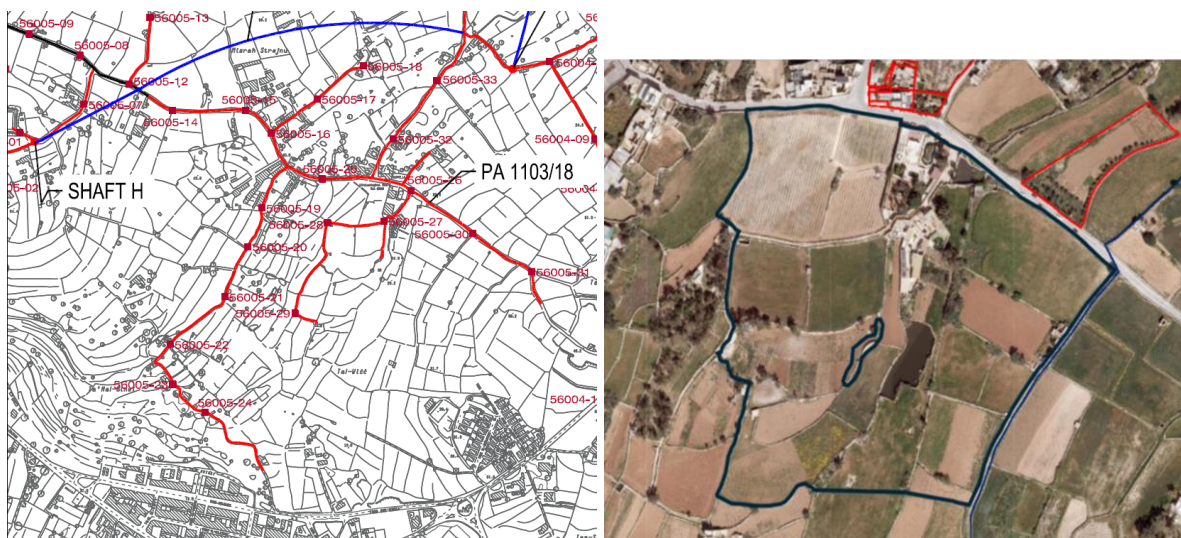




Figure 5: Shows the area where Dispensers 56005 – 27 and 56005 – 28, 56005 – 29 will be located

Source: Block Plan (PA/01103/18/79a (top left side), PA Geoserver 2016 (top right side), Site inspection photo 18/12/2018 (bottom left and right side)

Area 3

Both the Orthophoto 2016 and the Block Plan shows that trenching will occur on agricultural land and not within an already existing access. Hence ERA suggests the removal or relocation of Dispenser 56006 – 40 and the surrounding trenching in the yellow circle so that trenching is limited only to existing tracks.

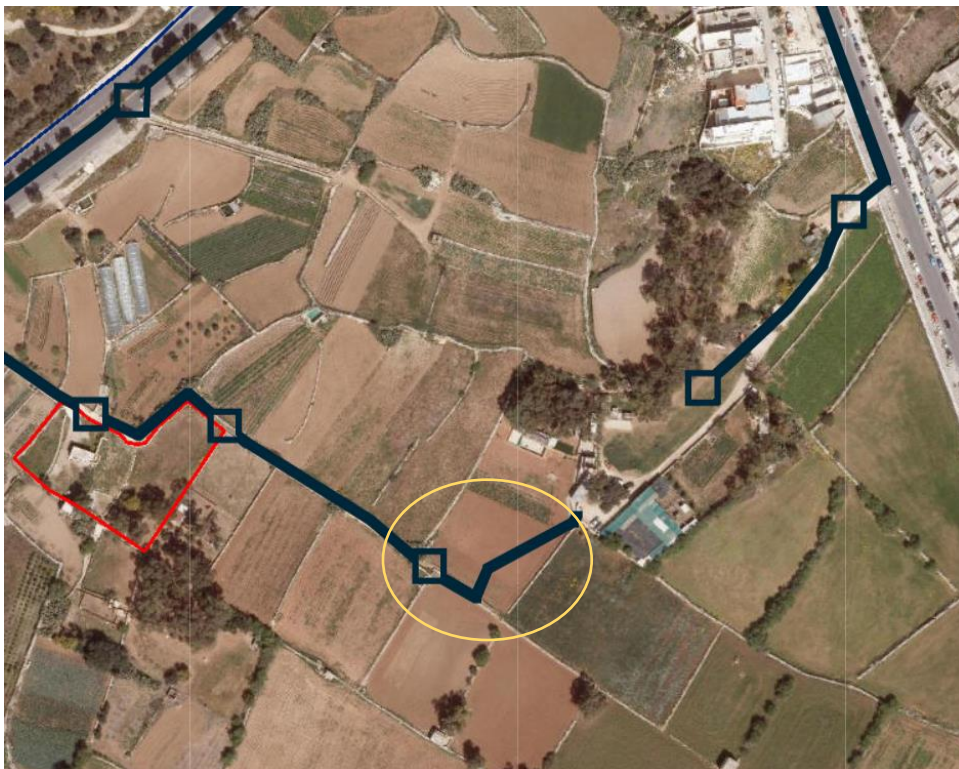


Figure 6 Shows Dispenser 56006 – 40
Source: PA Geoportal (Ortophoto 2016)

5. Permit conditions

Subject to the above, the following permit conditions should be inserted in the development permit:

- 5.1. Any undeveloped [or un-built] land on site shall be retained as such in perpetuity. Neither this development permit nor any details that are shown, omitted or unclearly indicated in the approved plans/documents shall be construed as in any way implying any entitlement or in-principle commitment for additional future development, even if ancillary to the approved development or required in connection with its operation.
- 5.2. This development permit does not grant permission for: the removal of or damage to natural habitats or vegetation; cutting, excavation or covering of any exposed rocky surface, modification of site topography, land cover, land form; damage to natural features; and interventions in, watercourses and their immediate banks. Works shall not result in the demolition and/or carrying out of significant alterations (including also the increase in height of rubble walls) of any random rubble boundary walls or any non-habitable rural structures.
- 5.3. Access to all sites shall be exclusively from existing tracks. No hard surfacing, widening or modification of access roads and pathways nor the opening or modification of access points, are permitted. Access tracks shall remain in beaten earth and shall not be surfaced with concrete/cement, asphalt, tarmac, gravel/spalls (zrar), stone dust (torba or xařx) or rock waste rubble (terrapien), inert or other waste, or other extraneous material or flooring. Moreover, this permit shall not be construed as an approval, sanctioning or commitment in favour of any other access point, existing unofficial roads, or route to the site, or any additional physical interventions or modifications to the site and its surroundings.
- 5.4. The installation of underground services and their ducts/ trenches shall be confined to the already-existing legal footprint of the access roads and/or land that is approved for development in line with this permit. The depth of trenches shall be kept to a minimum. All works are to be carefully managed so as to avoid scarring of the landscape and other damage to any adjoining land, habitats or features. No works, over spills, storage of material/machinery or vehicular trampling/manoeuvring/parking beyond the permitted area are allowed. This applies to both the construction/site preparation phase and the operational use of the site. All land surfaces affected by trenching are to be immediately reinstated to their pristine condition once the works have been completed and thereafter retained as such in perpetuity.
- 5.5. No interventions on any existing trees are being permitted and the works shall not result in the uprooting of and/ or major damage to any existing trees.
- 5.6. There shall be no permanent lighting on site and no external lighting shall be installed. This development shall not constitute an entitlement and/or justification for the installation of street lighting or lighting of access ways. New, extended or replacement of infrastructure services (including any required connections to the already existing public supply as well as any extension of the public supply to serve the site) shall be located underground in appropriate ducts or trenches. This condition covers all infrastructural services including those related to water, electricity, telecommunications and other services to be installed on the site or on other land to service the site. No new poles or overhead wiring or cables are to be erected.
- 5.7. Waste material shall not be stored on site. Such waste shall be immediately carted away from the site and shall be transported in accordance with all the relevant waste management regulations and disposed of at facilities duly permitted by the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) to accept such waste.

- 5.8.** Surplus soil from the construction site shall be removed from the site for re-use. This condition does not exonerate the applicant, contractor and, or any other relevant party from obtaining the necessary authorisations, permits or clearances from other relevant authorities, and complying with the terms and conditions of their requirements as may be applicable, for the removal of surplus soil from the site. Any deposition of soil and inert material on any open or undeveloped land Outside the Development Zone or within any legally protected site, including the use of such soil or material for land reclamation or for the modification of site topography or landform, shall require prior clearance from the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA).

Screening Disclaimer

The above screening results, the ensuing conclusions and recommendations are without prejudice to any required changes or updates should the development proposal be eventually modified or should the information/assumptions provided turn out to be incorrect. Any deviations of the proposal from this submission would need to be re-assessed and the merits of this screening would need to be re-opened.