

# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

**ERA Reference no.:** EA 00031/18

**PA Reference no.:** PA 08866/20

**Project Title:** Centre Parc - Phase 2 - proposed extension to approved commercial complex approved in PA5491/16. Construction of supermarket at level 2, retail outlets class 4B at level 3, car park on two levels, ramp to car park and leisure and sports area at roof level. Additional landscaping works at existing roof level. Change of use of approved car park at level 1 to class 4D establishments. Shifting of location of totem and proposed signage.

**Location:** Site at, Centre Parc, Triq it-Tigrija &, Triq Hal-Qormi, Qormi

**Screening date:** July 2021

## I. BACKGROUND

### 1. Outline of Proposal

1.1 The proposal is for the extension to the existing Centerparc shopping complex in Hal Qormi. An additional supermarket, retail and food and beverage floor-space, parking spaces, and a sports and leisure area on the roof, are proposed. As a result, the overall height of the building will increase by a further two floors.

1.2 The below table shows the footprints of the different proposed land uses.

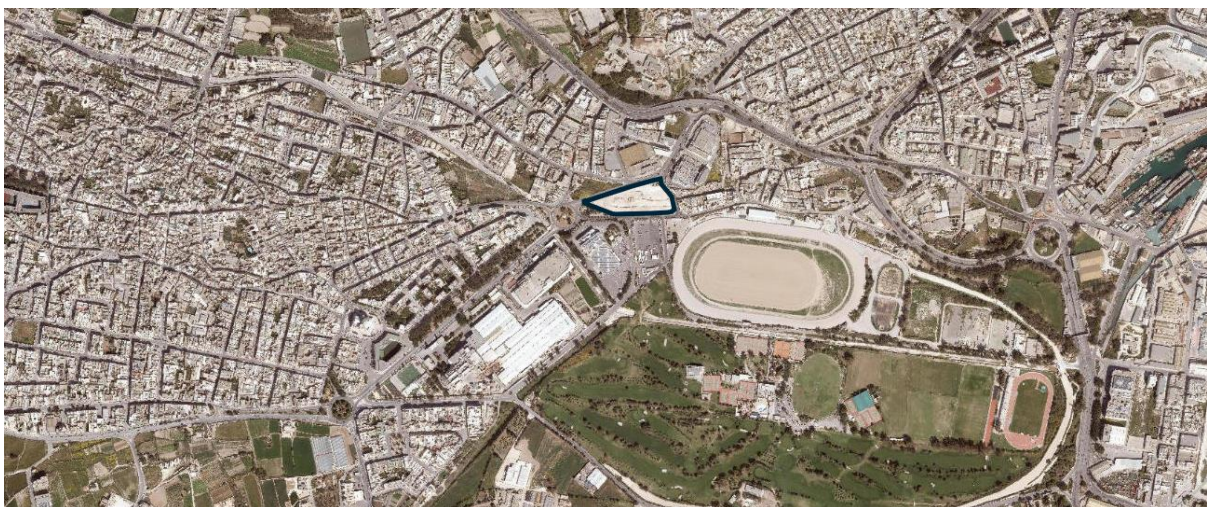
**Table 1:** Proposed land uses.

Proposed Land Use	Units
DIY Centre	5,400 cb.m
Outdoor Gym	231 cb.m
Restaurant (Drive thru)	615 cb.m
Restaurant (Indoor area)	127 cb.m
Restaurant (Outdoor area)	60 cb.m
Parking Spaces	56 + 4 car accessible spaces + 4 van accessible spaces

1.3 The development is proposed to be constructed in two phases, with an estimated total duration of 9 months.

## 2. Site context

- 2.1 The proposed development covers a site area of approximately 5,363 sq.m whereas the entire site measures approximately 10,000 sq.m, this is due to the extensions proposed under PA 08866/20 occur on the north-eastern flank of the development. The site is triangular in shape, having the two longest sides located along Triq Ħal Qormi and Triq it-Tigrija.
- 2.2 In addition, the site is located immediately opposite the Marsa Park and Ride and other large commercial establishments on the north-eastern side of Qormi, within the boundaries of Qormi Local Council administrative area. Commercial, residential and industrial development flank the site on the eastern, northern and western sides, as well as a large area dedicated for sports and leisure activities is situated on the southern side. Refer to **Figures 1-5**.
- 2.3 In May 2018, the ERA had carried out EIA screening for PA 05491/16; for which the PA permit was granted in November 2018 for the excavation and construction phases along with the widening of roads and demolition of the existing farmhouse. The ERA had determined that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment to the point of warranting an EIA (doc PA/05491/16/227a), however, in view of the envisaged increase in traffic, an Air Quality Study was requested to assess the extent of the impact. In view of the moderate adverse impacts, a green travel plan was submitted (doc PA/05491/16/289a) to address the said Air Quality impacts.
- 2.4 The proposal lies to the north-west from the designated Bird Sanctuary (Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations, S.L. 549.42), 'Marsa Sports Ground' designated under Legal Notice 41/03. The said Bird Sanctuary is only a nominal environmental constraint and is not really related to environmental protection. It is related to the establishment of a no-shooting zone for the purpose of public safety.



**Figure 1:** Aerial ortho-photo (2016) showing the location of the site (Source: PA Geoserver).





**Figure 2:** Close-up aerial ortho-photo (2016) showing the location of the site (Source: PA Geoserver).



**Figure 3:** Photos showing extent of proposal (dated 04.12.2020). Source: E-Apps PA 08866/20/Doc 16t.

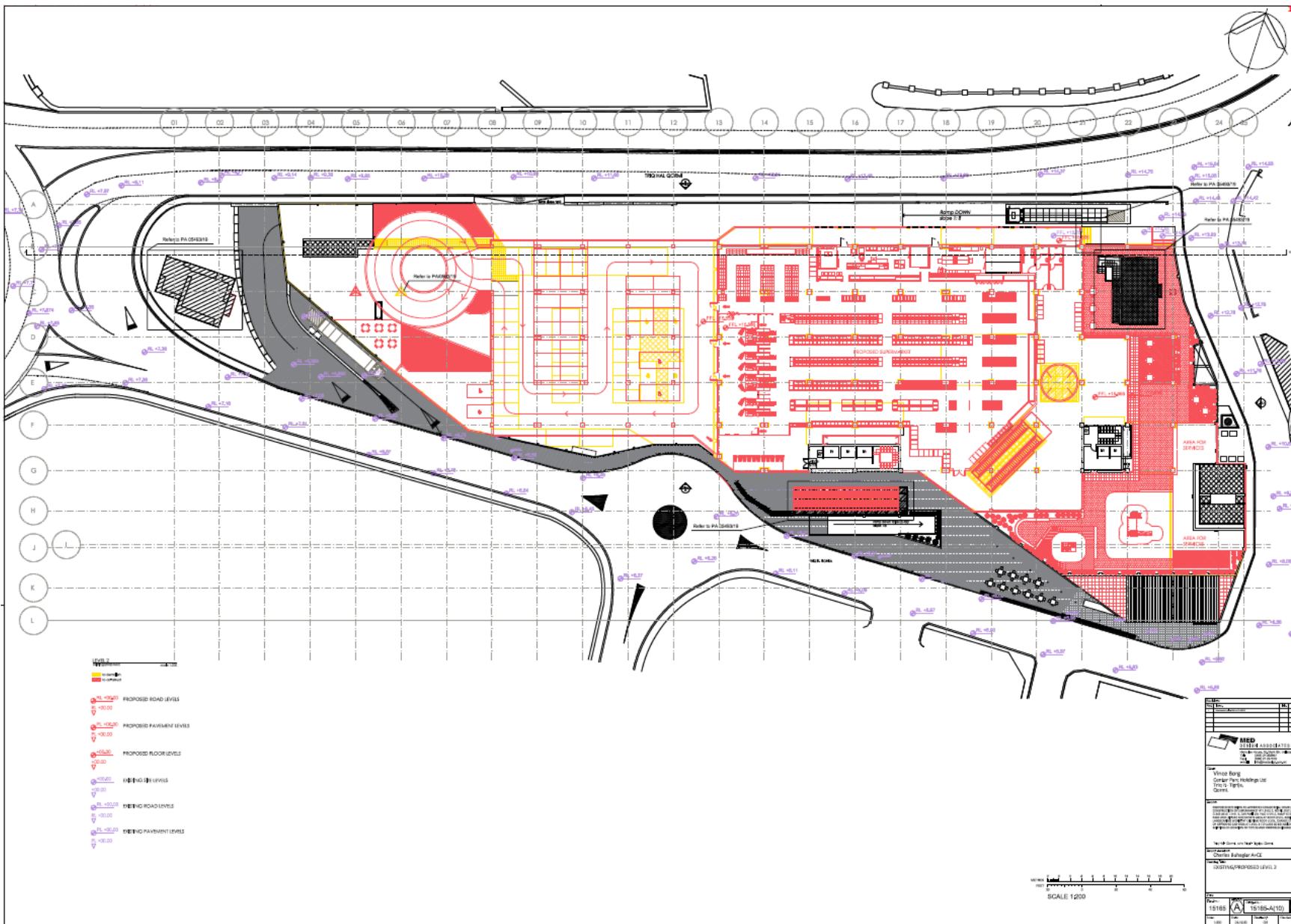


Figure 4: Plan showing the existing and proposed at level 2. Source: E-Apps PA 08866/20/Doc 16k.

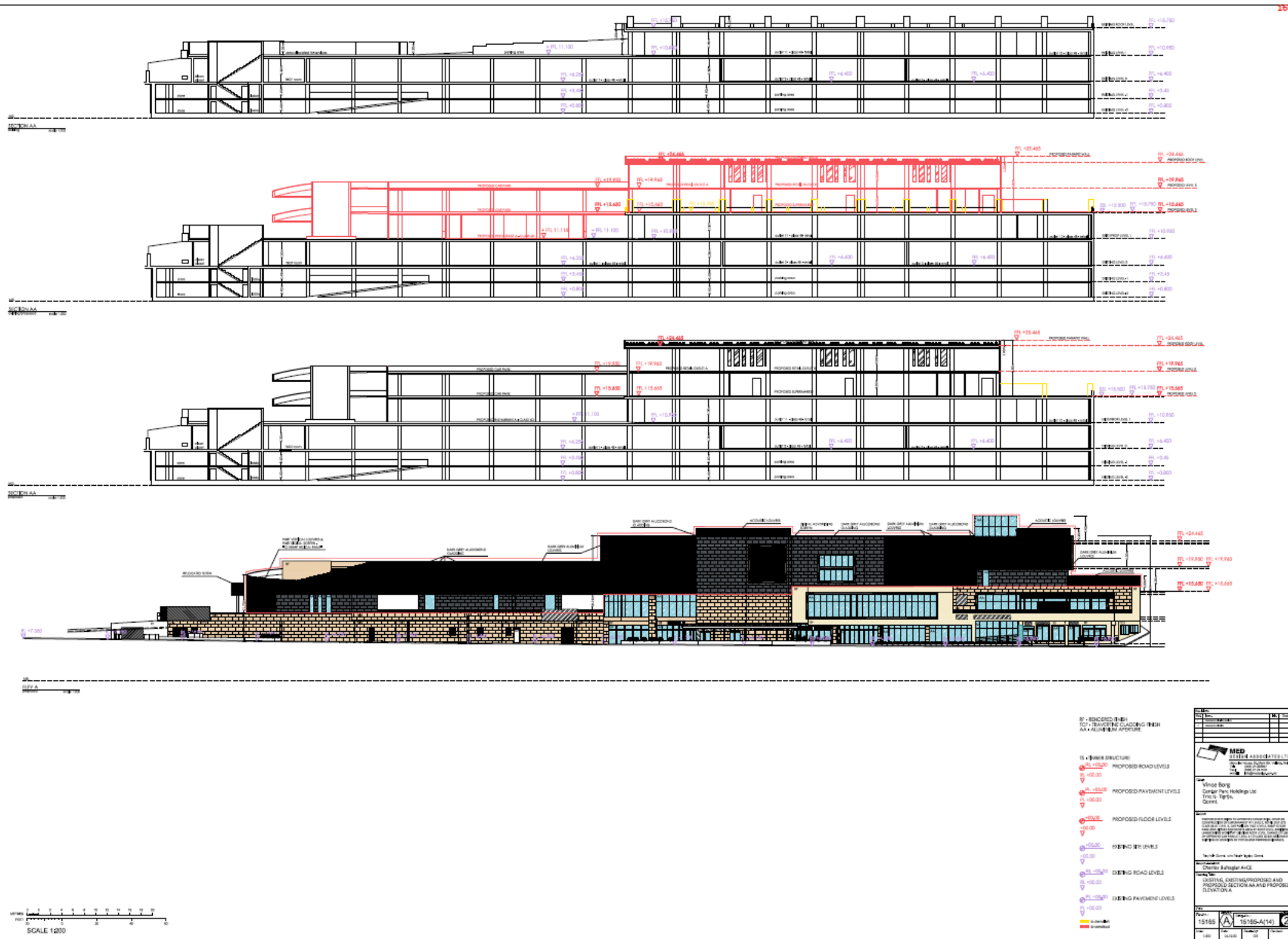


Figure 3: Sections and elevations of the existing and proposed development. Source: E-Apps PA 08866/20/Doc 16o.



### 3. Case history

3.1 The site was previously subject to the following planning applications:

- PA 01898/08: Proposed warehousing development (withdrawn by applicant).
- PA 02900/16: To sanction removal of existing soil for archaeological investigation as per terms condition 12 of PCF 15/09 whilst retaining the farmhouse and deposit of soil at National Agricultural Research and Development Centre, Ghammieri, Marsa (withdrawn by applicant).
- PA 05444/16: To sanction removal of existing soil for archaeological investigation as per terms of conditions 12 of PC 15/09. Proposed demolition of existing rubble walls and accretions to farmhouse, excavation of site, dismantling and relocation of historical structure and construction of temporary boundary wall (Approved).
- PA/05491/16: To excavate site, construct 2 levels of underground parking, construct level of retail and DIY space with ancillary facilities and construct receded first floor of retail space and offices (Class 4A & 4B). The proposal includes road widening works as instructed by Transport Malta as well as demolition of existing farmhouse affected by road widening works, conservation of archaeological remains and relocation of historic building as instructed by SCH. To sanction extra excavations from that approved in PA 5444/16 (appeal against forfeiture of bank guarantee pending).
- PA/05493/19: To carry out modifications to permit PA 5491/16 as follows:- Level -2 - proposed alterations and part sanctioning of floor, Level -1 - proposed alterations and part sanctioning of floor, Level 0 - proposed alterations to facade and internal walls and part sanctioning of floor, Level 1 - proposed internal and facade alterations, erection of screens to conceal services and proposed re-configuration of parking area, Level 2 - proposed extension of lifts and staircases, proposed erection of screens to conceal services, proposed minor shifting of location of farmhouse and erection of signs on facade. Proposed gaming parlour at Level 0 and offices at Level 1 (screening).

3.2 In addition, the site has been subject to the following Planning Control Applications:

- PC/00015/09: Change of use to retirement complex, sports facilities, and parking area. Proposal changed from original submission (Approved).
- PC 00051/16: Amendments to PC 15/09 (Approved).

### 4. Screening Criteria

**4.1 EIA Screening** (citations refer to S.L. 549.46, except where otherwise specified):

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46), notably in terms of the following Category II criteria in Schedule I: Section 7.1.2.1 (iii) (*Projects which have a gross floor area of 10,000 sq.m or more for commercial use, including shops, shopping centres, offices or other business*) and Section 13.0.2.1 (*Any change to, or extension of, projects (even if the project is already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed), particularly projects covered by Category I or Category II, where the change or extension itself does not fall under Category I but: (i) meets the thresholds or criteria set out in Category II; or (ii) may have significant adverse effects on the environment*). Therefore, the proposal was screened in terms of the EIA Regulations.

## 5. Documents used for screening

- Project Description Statement (PDS) including AADT report (Appendix 1), referred to ERA on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

## II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

### 6. Assessment of Impacts and Ancillary Considerations

*(Screening in terms of Schedule III of the EIA Regulations, S.L. 549.46)*

#### General

- 6.1 In view that the site is already committed for such use, no significant impact in this regard is being envisaged. Similarly, no significant impacts are envisaged in terms of resource use and waste given that the resources required, and waste generated for the construction and operation phases are considered adequate and proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal.
- 6.2 On the other hand, the increased massing of the development in terms of landscape and visual impact is being regarded as minor adverse. Such an impact is cumulative to the already-existing developments on site and in the surrounding area.
- 6.3 It is being noted that PDS states that the mill room dating to the Knights' period, previously located at the centre of the site was dismantled and will be reconstructed in the corner facing the roundabout at Level 0; and the farmhouse, located in the north-eastern corner of the site which was demolished and will be relocated within the site. In this regard, the applicant should liaise with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage for further guidance.

#### Air Quality and Noise Emissions

- 6.4 During the construction phase, dust generation and noise are envisaged to generate temporary adverse impacts to the surrounding area. Such impacts are not expected to be significant, however a number of good site management practices outlined in the PDS in line with the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007 (S.L. 552.09) should be adhered to at all times.
- 6.5 The EIA screening carried out for PA 05491/16 had determined that the proposal is envisaged to increase traffic in the area. In this regard, an Air Quality Study was carried out to assess the extent of the impact (doc PA/05491/16/265a). In view of the findings of the said study, a Green Travel Plan (GTP) was submitted (doc PA/05491/16/289a) to address Air Quality impacts. ERA reiterated its assessment for PA 05493/19.

6.6 From an operational point of view, the current proposal under assessment (Phase 2) i.e. PA 08866/20 will generate an additional 1,377 trips as reported in the AADT (Appendix I of PDS), which is considered significant. In this regard, and in view of the considerations outlined in the previous paragraph, further assessment on traffic emissions is required. Such assessment should take into account the cumulative impacts of the two phases of the development. The outcome of the requested study, will define the necessary updates to the GTP that would need to be made or otherwise.

## 7. Screening Outcome

### 7.1 Screening in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46)

In view of the above it has been determined that the proposal is expected to have significant impacts on the environment in terms of Air Quality. In this regard, further information is being requested in relation to potential air quality impacts, for which terms of reference can be accessed through the following link: <https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/TORs-Air-Quality-Study.pdf>. In this regard, the proposal does not require the submission of an EIA in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46).

## III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

The above detailed EIA screening concludes that the proposed development does not require an EIA in accordance with Regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46). However further assessment on the Air Quality front is considered appropriate.

Additionally, the below request for further information is being referred for the Applicant's attention since the proposal may qualify for a Medium Combustion Plant (MCP) registration and an Environmental Permit.

- Details and specifications of any proposed medium combustion plants such as generators and boilers, including their rated thermal input in MWth to determine any registration requirements as per S.L.549.122, are to be provided. Applicant shall also specify the type, quantity and location of fuel storage associated with the generator/boiler and provide further information showing how all bulk oil/ liquid fuel storage tanks (including those built-in) shall be provided with an adequately designed bund system with an impermeable base and walls. The capacity of the bund shall be a minimum of 110% of the largest tank within the bund or 25% of the total capacity of all the tanks within the bund, whichever is greater. All filling and off-take points shall be located within the bund.

In this regard, the ERA's Final Assessment and Recommendation along with the environmental conditions can then be concluded once the requested Air Quality Study taking into consideration the context of its surroundings; along with the requested further information are submitted.



### **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.*