

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening (According to Schedule IB of LN 114/2007)

PA file no.:	PA 01254/09	GF/GFE File no.:	/
Case Officer:	Bernard Ferry	EA Officer:	Charlene Smith
Project Title:	Scuttling of Tugboat 'Tug 2' off Exiles Coast		
Location:	N 35 ° 55.270' & E 14 ° 29.930 off Coast of Exiles off, Triq It-Torri, Sliema		
Date/s of Screening:	28 th September 2010		

1. Brief History and Description of Proposal

A Project Description Statement (PDS) has been prepared for PA 01254/09 and was received by the Environmental Assessment Unit on 24th August 2010. The PDS describes a proposal for the scuttling of a sea craft off Exiles Point, Sliema, for the purpose of serving as an underwater attraction to divers. The proposed vessel to be scuttled is the TUG 2, which is 30m long and 9.5m high (excluding mast) which was originally built by the Malta Drydocks and is now lying out of service at the Bezzina Shipyard in Marsa.

The PDS states that the wreck site at Sliema was chosen as there are no other wrecks in the area. The nearest wrecks that are available for shore diving are those of the MAORI off Valletta and the CAROLITA off Manoel Island. Unfortunately, the former is considered to be in an abysmal condition and is ready to collapse and the latter will soon be lost due to the MIDI Manoel Island Project. The location that has been chosen, namely a spot off Exiles Coast, Sliema, is within easy reach from shore or by boat. It is sheltered from most winds except those from the North and the North-East. The wreck will however be positioned with its bow facing the North-East. The depth of the proposed site is 20 to 22 metres and with the removal of the tugboat's mast, clearance between water surface and top of wreck will be in excess of 6 metres. Once the tugboat is scuttled, it will immediately become an underwater attraction for scuba divers.

One of the objectives of placing it at the designated position is to enhance the dive site, thus providing an alternative destination offering elbow space for divers, in contrast to the other well-known but crowded wreck-sites.

Figure 1 below shows the location of the proposed wreck site:

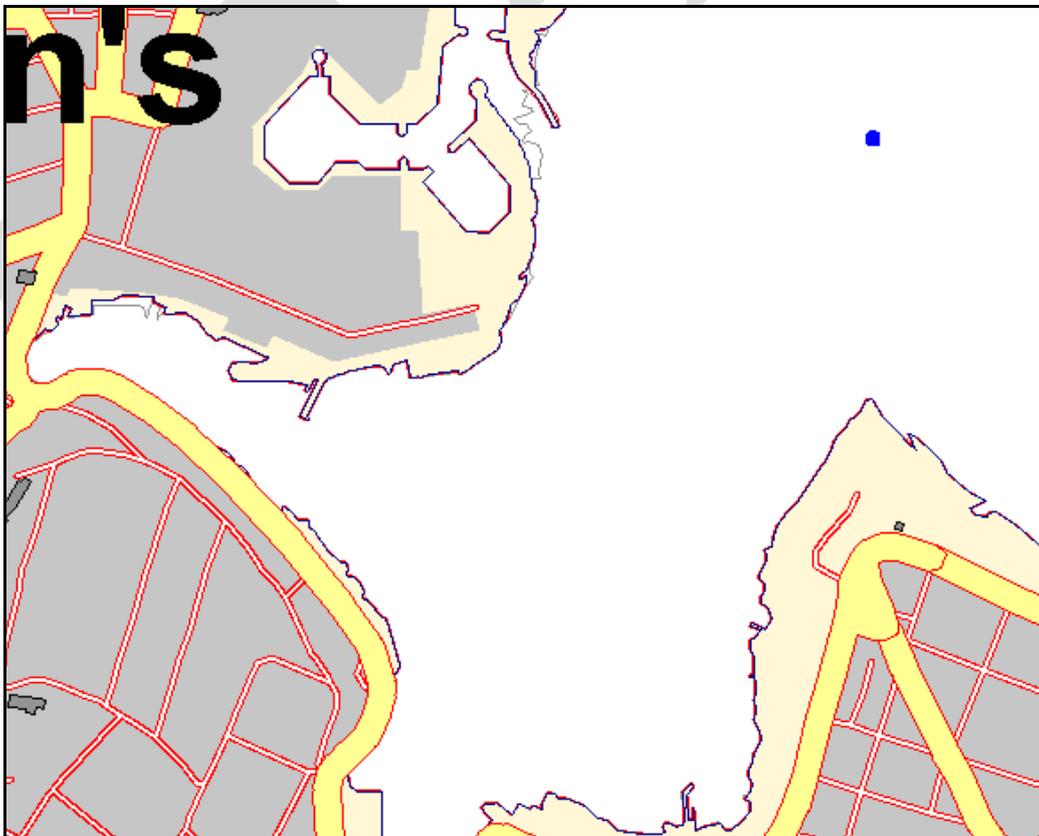


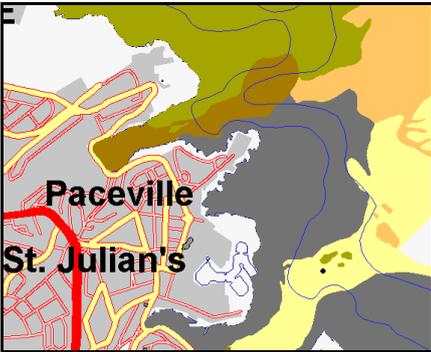
Figure 1: Location of proposed development (Source: MapServer)

2. Screening Matrix

The following screening matrix is based on information in the Project Description Statement (PDS) provided by the developer and the European Commission Guidance on Screening (2001). Explanatory details on use of the matrix can be found in Appendix I:

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?			PDS reference.
			Briefly justify			
1	Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, landuse, changes in water bodies, etc)?	Yes. The proposed development shall involve the scuttling of a sea craft off Exiles Point, Sliema, for the purpose of serving as an underwater attraction to divers. Naturally, this will modify the seabed topography of the site.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
2	Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	No. No such raw materials will be required.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
3	Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials or energy, especially any resources which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No. No such uses will be required given the nature of the proposed development.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning?	No. No solid wastes shall be produced given the nature of the proposed development, save for waste that may be generated during decommissioning.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No. No emissions to air are expected.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.			
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	No. No such emissions are expected.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>No significant impacts are envisaged.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
7	Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	<p>Yes. The process of scuttling per se may lead to the release of hazardous/toxic substances if not carried out correctly.</p> <p>The cleaning operation to be carried out by Bezzina Shipyard will proceed prior to the scuttling operation and in a suitable location for said process. Old bulkheads, doors and mast will be discarded, the engine will be removed and replaced by rock/stone to render the vessel bottom-heavy and the surface of all metalwork will be rendered safe for divers.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>It is unclear as to what impacts the proposed scuttling shall have on the marine environment in terms of water quality, thus impact is being considered as unclear.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
8	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	No. No risks of accidents are envisaged, save for any accidents that may occur during operation of the site e.g. entrapment or injury during diving operations around the proposed site.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>No significant impacts are envisaged for EIA purposes.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
9	Will the Project result in social changes for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No such changes in demography, traditional lifestyles and employment in the area are envisaged. The proposal is being considered as an additional attraction for divers in the Sliema-San Ġiljan area, where such activities are already established.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>No significant changes are expected.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
10	Are there any such factors which should be considered such as the consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	No such factors are known of.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>No significant impacts are being envisaged.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
11	Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological,	Yes. Site lies within the coastal water body of Sliema-Għallis (MT 117) as designated as a Coastal Water Body in Legal Notice 194/04.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>It is unclear as to what impacts the proposed scuttling shall have on the marine environment in terms of water quality, benthos, hydrodynamics, including waves and currents, and thus impact is being considered as unclear.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.
	landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?			
12	Are there any areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	<p>Question 11 above refers.</p> <p>Furthermore, proposal also lies in close proximity of small patches of <i>Posidonia oceanica</i> to the north-east of the proposed site for scuttling and at approximately 700m from a Candidate Natura 2000 site (in black as per figure below).</p>  <p>On-shore, the site is surrounded by a densely populated coastal urban area and thus no such sites are present.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Question 11 above refers.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is not clear whether the proposal may have significant environmental impacts with respect to the marine ecology of the area and on the <i>Posidonia oceanica</i> found in the vicinity.</p> <p>Appropriate Assessment screening for the said application is also currently being carried out.</p>	/
13	Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Question 12 above refers. Breeding, nesting, and foraging of fish and other marine species may be relevant.	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Question 12 above refers.</p>	/
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The site lies at sea. Question 11 above refers.	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>As per Question 11.</p>	/
15	Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be effected by the project?	No such areas are present.	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant impacts are envisaged.</p>	/

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.
16	Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The land nearest to the wreck site is a rocky shore used for swimming, snorkelling and scuba diving. The location of the wreck also lies within a stretch of sea where boat traffic to/from Spinola boat harbour and Portomaso marina is a potential issue.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear. Impacts on the maritime traffic of the area, namely boat traffic and traffic to/from the Spinola boat harbour and Portomaso marina are unknown.	/
17	Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Refer to Question 16 above.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Question 16 above.	/
18	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	No. Proposed development is scuttling of a wreck, thus will only be visible underwater.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged in terms of landscape and visual impacts.	/
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No features of historic or cultural importance are present.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes. The dive site is composed of small to medium sized boulder shoals with outcrops of <i>Posidonia oceanica</i> descending gently from the shore down to approximately 20 m where the rock bottom ends abruptly and a plain of bare sand becomes the dominant feature.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is not clear as to whether the scuttling of the wreck per se, shall have a significant impact on the benthic environment and marine ecology of the site, the hydrodynamics and the water quality; thus more studies in this regard would be required making the impact unclear.	/
21	Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Yes – The site is located in close proximity to the coastal urban areas of St. Julian's and Sliema, however no on-shore facilities are being proposed. The land adjacent to the wreck site is a popular rocky shore used for swimming, snorkelling and scuba diving.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged, given that no impacts on any land-uses are envisaged.	/

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.			
22	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No. None that are known of, given that the site is off-shore.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> No significant impacts are envisaged.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
23	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built up, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The site is located in close proximity to the coastal areas of St. Julian's and Sliema, however no on-shore facilities are being proposed.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> No significant impacts are envisaged in view of the distance from the said areas and since site lies off-shore. The activity generated by this type of intervention/attraction is not expected to be of such scale as to have a significant effect on the nearby urban areas.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
24	Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities which could be affected by the project?	No. No such areas are known of, given that the site is off-shore.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> Not relevant.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
25	Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – The site is located in close proximity to the coastal urban areas of St. Julian's and Sliema, however no on-shore facilities are being proposed. The land adjacent to the wreck site is a rocky shore used for swimming, snorkelling and scuba diving.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> No significant impacts on these areas in envisaged.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					
26	Are there any areas on or around the location which have already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No. No such areas are known of.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> No significant impacts are envisaged.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>					

	Questions to be Considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	PDS reference.			
27	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, or subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	Yes. The area in question may be susceptible to adverse weather situations, such as extreme sea-storm conditions and sea currents. In the case of <i>some</i> other scuttled wrecks, such conditions (prevalent either during scuttling or on a long-term basis after scuttling) have actually resulted in significant alteration of the precise wreck position, capsizing of the wreck [thereby rendering it hazardous or defeating the purpose of scuttling], or breaking apart of the wreck. Some currents may also result in a degree of localised scouring of the seabed around the wreck.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p>Given the nature of the proposal, it is not clear as to whether any significant impacts may occur in relation to the said conditions.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
<p>Summary of features of the Project and of its location indicating the need for EIA.</p> <p>Proposal falls under the remit of Schedule IA, Category II Section 4.2.2.4 of the EIA Regulations 2007 (Legal Notice 114 of 2007), and would thus require the submission of an Environmental Planning Statement (EPS).</p> <p>Furthermore, detailed screening was undertaken, as per matrix above, in accordance with Schedule IB of the EIA Regulations, whereby the following impacts were identified as unclear and requiring detailed assessment of the following issues, amongst others:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marine ecology; 2. Quality of the marine environment; and, 3. Waves, currents and hydrodynamics. <p>In this regard, scoping in order to compile the required Terms of Reference for the EPS is to be carried out.</p>							

Appendix I: Explanatory notes on the Screening matrix

The matrix is designed to help users decide whether Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for a project, based on the characteristics of the project, its environment, and any other relevant information. Essentially, it consists of 2 complementary sets of criteria, as follows:

Checklist A (Screening Criteria)

Each question in Column 2 should be answered as **YES**, **NO** or **UNCLEAR** (as relevant) and a concise explanation for the answer should be provided. An indication as to whether the factor in question is expected to result in any significant effect should then be entered into Column 3 with a note of the reasons why. Should difficulty be encountered in evaluating significance, Checklist B below should be used for guidance.

Checklist B (Criteria for Evaluating Significance)

A useful simple check to help determine significance is to ask whether the effect is one that ought to be addressed in the development consent decision or in any permit conditions. At the early stage of Screening there may be little information on which to base this decision but the following list of questions may be helpful. The questions are designed so that a "Yes" or "Unclear" answer in Column 3 will generally point towards the need for EIA (and/or other appropriate measures in line with EIA regulations) and a "No" answer to EIA not being required.

Questions to be Considered.

- 1 Will there be a large change in environmental conditions?
- 2 Will new features be out-of-scale with the existing environment?
- 3 Will the effect be unusual in the area or particularly complex?
- 4 Will the effect extend over a large area?
- 5 Will there be any potential for transfrontier impact?
- 6 Will many people be affected?
- 7 Will many receptors of other types (fauna and flora, businesses, facilities) be affected?
- 8 Will valuable or scarce features or resources be affected?
- 9 Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached?
- 10 Is there a risk that protected sites, areas, and features will be affected?
- 11 Is there a high probability of the effect occurring?
- 12 Will the effect continue for a long time?
- 13 Will the effect be permanent rather than temporary?
- 14 Will the impact be continuous rather than intermittent?
- 15 If it is intermittent will it be frequent rather than rare?
- 16 Will the impact be irreversible?
- 17 Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effect?