

Meeting	EIA Public Consultation for EIS in relation to the following development permit application: PA 03782/16 - The proposed development consists of a 125 bedroom hotel Class 3B, amenities and semi-basement parking / service level inline with the brief guidelines stated in "Marsaxlokk inner harbour area environment and development brief" public consultation draft 2014. Site at Hunters Tower Restaurant, Triq il-Wilga, Marsaxlokk, Malta.
Date	Tuesday 17 th April 2018
Duration	6.00pm – 7.30pm
Location	Pompei Church hall, Marsaxlokk
ERA representatives	Kevin Mercieca (Deputy Director), Josianne Abela Vassallo (Team Manager), Stephanie Farrugia (Senior Officer)
Minutes taken by	Stephanie Farrugia (ERA)

Mr. Kevin Mercieca opened the meeting giving details about the proposed development which is currently subject to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (*PA 03782/16 - The proposed development consists of a 125 bedroom hotel Class 3B, amenities and semi-basement parking / service level inline with the brief guidelines stated in "Marsaxlokk inner harbour area environment and development brief" public consultation draft 2014. Site at Hunters Tower Restaurant, Triq il-Wilga, Marsaxlokk, Malta*) and explained the agenda of the public hearing.

Details vis-à-vis the purpose of the meeting were provided, in particular that the meeting was part of the EIA process. It was also clarified that this was not the decision-taking meeting but was being held to present the EIS findings and to gather feedback from the public in due time for any relevant considerations to be factored in during the process.

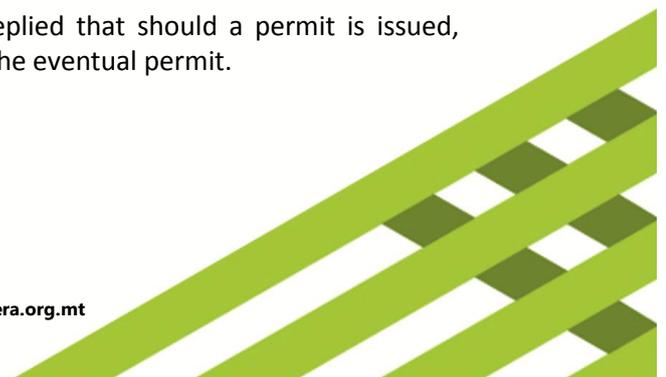
Mr. Sacha Dunlop on behalf of AIS Environment Ltd., the EIA Coordinator delivered a presentation explaining the aim and objectives of the development and provided details on the studies and findings carried out as part of the EIS.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca opened the floor for comments after the presentation.

Comments:

1. Mr. Leonard Incorvaja (Marsaxlokk resident) obo Henry Caruana, Rita Gafa, Frida Barbara nee Caruana, Doris Scicluna nee Caruana, Domenica Bugeja nee Caruana enquired on the identity and address of the developer.

2. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) clarified the scope of the public hearing and reminded the attendees of a week deadline from the public hearing to submit written comments to ERA. He also stated that issues which are not environmental should be referred directly to the Planning Authority.
3. Mr. Leonard Incorvaja (Marsaxlokk resident) introduced himself and stated that he was speaking on behalf of four families that own the land of the Hunters Tower. He presented a document dated 1730 and mentioned that he is going to take the developer to court.
4. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) reiterated that the scope of the meeting is to focus on whether there are concerns regarding the impacts of the development on the environment.
5. Mr. Leonard Incovraja (Marsaxlokk resident) stated that they were not against the project, however they want it to be undertaken by the owners. He emphasized that the developer has the goodwill of the property only.
6. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) clarified that Mr. Incorvaja was referring to issues relating to land ownership. Therefore the concerns raised by Mr. Incovraja are not relevant to ERA and so these will be passed on to the relevant, competent authorities.
7. Ms. Anastasia Caruana Seychell (Marsaxlokk resident) stated that her main concern is that the hotel will expand towards and will be facing the Natura 2000 site. She asked the EIA Coordinator how ERA will be working with the developer to manage the Natura 2000 site and if there are any management plans in place.
8. Mr. Sacha Dunlop (EIA Consultant) stated that meetings with ERA representatives and the applicant were held last year to discuss ways in which the marshland can be safeguarded further. Mr. Dunlop mentioned that there are concerns regarding erosion that is occurring on the borders of the marshland and in the past artificial embankments were installed to stop the erosion. He pointed out that they are trying to find measures to try to protect the marshland as much as possible.
9. Ms. Anastasia Caruana Seychell (Marsaxlokk resident) further questioned if there is anything which has been decided upon.
10. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) remarked that the formulated management plans will be in compliance with ERA guidelines. At this stage, ERA is assessing the impact of the proposal on the environment.
11. Ms. Anastasia Caruana Seychell (Marsaxlokk resident) questioned how dust pollution and particulate matter will be enforced.
12. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) replied that should a permit is issued, enforceable conditions would be included in the eventual permit.



13. Mr. Jean Claude Micallef (Labour Party candidate) commented that the development has impacts on the following four main aspects in Marsaxlokk – the residential, fishing, commercial and historical. The proposal will have a positive impact on the commercial element as it will generate tourism for the establishments in the area as the visitors will stay within the hotel itself. From this historic perspective, the chosen location will give more prominence to the salt marsh.
14. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) emphasized that comments should focus on the environmental impacts of the proposed development.
15. Mr. Horace Gauci (Mayor of Marsaxlokk but commenting independently as a resident) mentioned that comments on behalf of the Local Council will be submitted when the documents are made public. He questioned whether the project will have an impact on the existing playing field. Mr. Gauci indicated that the said playing field is the only one in Marsaxlokk and should not be removed. He further asked whether the proposal lies within an Urban Conservation Area (UCA). If yes, there will be issues with respect to the proposed height of the hotel. He raised another issue with respect to the use of glass and enquired whether this will cause reflection and thus have an impact on navigation within the port.
16. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) replied that the first two points raised by Mr. Gauci relate to land use and there are planning policies which are applicable for the area and are regulated by the Planning Authority. The third point will be answered by Mr. Mario Schembri obo AIS.
17. Mr. Mario Schembri (EIA Consultant) stated that the playing field is separate from the project and will not be affected. With respect to the impact of light reflection on the fishing vessels that would be navigating in the port, AIS does not know whether this issue was considered by the architect in the design plans, however this is an exercise which can be carried out so as that AIS would be able to determine if there will be any impact.
18. Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA Deputy Director) pointed out that the issue which was raised will be investigated further by AIS and clarified that the EIA documents are already public on ERA's webpage and a copy can be viewed at the Marsaxlokk Local Council.
19. Mr. Horace Gauci (Marsaxlokk resident) clarified that what he meant with documents being public, referred to the public hearing meeting minutes.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca closed the hearing by confirming that the points raised have been noted and recorded. He also thanked the participants and invited them to send any further comments, preferably by email to eia.malta@era.org.mt by 24th April 2018.

