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| Meeting | EIA Public Consultation in relation to the following proposal: PA 03012/20 – EA 00057/18: The outline application for the construction of a Waste to Energy Plant at Maghtab - Site at, Maghtab Land Fill Complex, Il-Maghtab, Naxxar. |
| Date | 27 th May 2021 |
| Duration | 16.30hrs – 18.00hrs |
| Location | Hexagon Hose, Spencer Hill, Marsa |
| ERA representatives | Mr. Kevin Mercieca, Ms. Josianne Abela Vassallo, Ms. Leonora D’Amato |
| Minutes taken by | Ms. Patricia Grima and Ms. Jade Caruana (ERA) |

Mr Kevin Mercieca opened the online meeting giving details about the proposed development which is currently subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (PA 03012/20 – EA 00057/18: The outline application for the construction of a Waste to Energy Plant at Maghtab - Site at, Maghtab Land Fill Complex, Il-Maghtab, Naxxar).

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 EIA findings and to gather feedback from the public in due time for any relevant considerations to be factored in during the process.

The public was also informed that proceedings shall be recorded and that comments can be put forward in an anonymous manner. There were no objections for the online meeting to be held in English.

D. Joe Doublet, the EIA coordinator, delivered a presentation explaining the studies and the findings carried out as part of the EIA Report.

Mr Kevin Mercieca opened the floor for comments after the presentation and reminded the participants that they can also leave comments in the chat being administered by ERA’s staff.

Mr. Joseph Spiteri (Public).

Mr. Spiteri questioned whether air monitoring is being undertaken in the area of Naxxar.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA).

Mr. Mercieca stated that air monitoring is undertaken in different localities in Malta as a standard practice and has been going on for a number of years. Mr. Mercieca remarked that this is not related to the case in discussion.

Ms. Vanya Veras (obo Regjun Tramuntana).

Ms. Veras explained that Regjun Tramuntana had submitted comments on the previous consultation on the Waste to Energy plant and also on the Wast Management Plan, however no written response was received. She commented on the plant having a capacity of two 96 tonnes (in separate lines) and that the second line will be rendered obsolete once the recycling targets at attained. She further enquired about the re-opening of the consultation, this consultation is an acknowledgement by the authorities that the 92,000 tonnes capacity are excessive.

Furthermore, she commented that further details are to be provided in terms of downscaling, specifically as to what was explored considering that there are few waste streams that will be incinerated. She continued by saying that in the EIA it was mentioned that there would be a major adverse impact of hot water going into the sea and that Regjun Tramuntana are not in agreement with this.

Dr Joe Doublet (EIA coordinator).

Dr. Doublet replied that studies (annexed to the EIA) calculated the necessary capacity of the plant, and that the one presented in the EIA is the most suitable one given that the amount of waste is always on the increase. In this regard, there should be enough capacity in the future for this increase in waste.

Perit Carmel Cacopardo (Public).

Perit Cacopardo commented that the Coordinated Assessment considers the possibilities of a decentralised process, and outlined that the EIA did not provide details on what led to the chosen process. He added that the Coordinated Assessment must also provide reasoning why a decentralised system has been discarded, be it for positive or negative reasons.

Perit Cacopardo also remarked that the Waste characterisation study which is included in the documentation available (Appendix 14), is obsolete and dates back to April 2015, given that many changes have occurred since then such as the organic waste separation. He commented that the sample of localities which were studied to reach the conclusion of this study are unrepresentative given that samples were taken on the population density. For example, Gozo and the North of Malta were not included in the sample and therefore a representative sample is required. Perit Cacopardo stated that the study needs to be up to date and representative of waste generated in the country.

Dr Joe Doublet (EIA coordinator).

Dr. Doublet replied that the decentralisation issue was analysed in one of the reports. He also commented that decentralisation increases costs and land take and is therefore not a feasible option.

Regarding the waste characterisation reports, Dr. Doublet commented that this study was undertaken in 2015 and other study were undertaken in 2017/2018. He commented that these took into account all waste characterisation that was available at the time. He further commented that the reports that led to this EIA have been ongoing for more than 5 years and therefore present a snapshot of the results.

If another study was undertaken today, there would be still slight difference and therefore Dr. Doublet

stated that the operator must determine whether another waste characterisation survey should be done to better assess the situation.

Perit Carmel Cacopardo (Public).

Perit Cacopardo requested the EIA coordinator to clarify on which reports he is basing his results on.

Dr Joe Doublet (EIA coordinator).

Dr. Doublet replied that results were based on the SLR and/or COWI reports.

Swieqi Local Council.

The Deputy Mayor requested information regarding the alternative sites and the reason for selecting the currently proposed site. She also requested information about the availability of the presentation.

Kevin Mercieca (ERA).

Mr. Mercieca replied that presentation will be available on ERA's website and any comments in writing should be referred to ERA until 3 June 2021.

Dr Joe Doublet (EIA coordinator).

Dr. Doublet explained that a number of alternative sites were considered and information is available in the reports which are available to the public. He added that 9 sites were originally studied in 2015 and more recently, another 4 sites around the Maghtab area near the ECOHIVE complex were studied.

Swieqi Local Council.

The Deputy Mayor remarked that waste generation is always on the increase and that there are targets to be met by the EU at certain dates, including recycling targets. She commented whether or not waste will be reduced given the stipulated targets, and whether this was taken into consideration.

Dr Joe Doublet (EIA coordinator).

Dr Doublet commented that targets involve recycling of different waste streams, waste which is landfilled and which is generated by the population. He stated that targets have been taken into consideration in the plant.

Swieqi Local Council.

The Deputy Mayor asked about garden waste and compost, and whether there are plans for such facility.

Dr. Joe Doublet (EIA coordinator).

Dr Doublet replied that garden waste to compost is not part of the Waste to Energy facility and that other facilities are being studied within the same area.

Kevin Mercieca (ERA).

Mr. Mercieca replied that there are two existing plants that can process green garden waste, one at Maghtab and one at Sant Antnin Facility which both include an anaerobic digester.

Swieqi Local Council.

The Deputy Mayor asked whether any studies of CO² emissions were undertaken, and whether methane gas on residential areas compared.

Dr Joe Doublet (EIA coordinator).

Dr. Doublet replied that the study shows that the amount of CO² emissions will be decreased as a result of the facility and when compared to the current landfilling emission levels. He commented that the impact is minor on most pollutants such as PM10 and mercury etc. Such pollutants are expected to decrease because of the waste to energy facility and even if the heat is also recovered.

Ms. Vanya Veras (obo Regjun Tramuntana).

Ms. Veras commented with regards to the issue of food waste and green waste. She stated that everyone knows that the Sant Antnin plant is not operational and the one at Maghtab is a Mechanical Biological Treatment plant where the mixing organic waste with general house waste is taking place. If treated correctly, biogas can be produced as other EU member states are currently doing.

She added that there needs to be a study on food waste generated on the islands, not only for households, but which also covers the food industry etc. Garden waste cannot be anaerobically digested and will have to be composted generally. A feedstock study as part of the Waste Management Plan is required in order to provide enough information on what can be feed to the Waste to Energy plant. Ms. Veras stated that these will have a direct impact on the waste to energy plant.

She also commented on composting which takes 4 to 6 weeks to create high quality enough to use with organic farming and regeneration. This can use existing surface area of closed cells on the landfill. She concluded by asking when these studies will be carried out.

Kevin Mercieca (ERA).

Mr. Mercieca replied that these points are valid and need to be tackled in the upcoming review of the National Waste Management Plan for Malta, which is in the process of being reviewed. For this specific discussion we are focusing on the EIA of the Waste to Energy Facility.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca (ERA).

Mr. Mercieca closed the meeting by confirming that the points raised have been noted. He also thanked the participants and invited them to send any further comments, preferably by email to eia.malta@era.org.mt, or by post to 'The Director, Environment and Resources Authority, Hexagon House, Spencer Hill, Marsa', by not later than 3rd June, 2021.