

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening

(According to Schedule III of LN 412 of 2017)

PA file no.: PA 5909/17

EA file no.: EA 00035/17

Project Title: Proposed construction of mixed use complex, comprising a Class 3B Hotel including amenities, Class 4B retail shops, 120 no. residential units with underlying basements for vehicle garaging.

Location: Site at, Triq Halq ic-Cawl c/w Triq L-Izbark tal-Francizi c/w Triq in-Nases c/w, Triq il-Fortizza, Mellieha, Malta

Screening date: January 2018

1. Description of Proposal

1.1 Outline of project/development

PA 5909/17 is a full development application to construct a nine floor mixed use complex. The latter will include a 52 bedroom Class 3B hotel with ancillary facilities, 121 residential units in the form of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments and maisonettes, five Class 4B shops and a food and beverage retail outlet. Two basement levels will be allocated for parking facilities. The development will have a gross floor area of more than 30,000sqm between all levels.

1.2 Site description and related considerations

The site is located within the development zone boundary at the edge of the Mellieħa ridge close to the Mizieb-Mistra fault (see photo 1). The ridge is composed of terraced fields. The site is presently a vacant plot surrounded by streets on all sides: Triq il-Fortizza to the north, Triq l-Izbark tal-Francizi to the south, Triq Halq ic-Cawl to the east and Triq in-Nases to the west (see figures 1 & 2). The northern part of the site is used as a storage area for vehicles, bricks, large blocks, wooden pallets and other materials. The site has also been used for dumping of construction waste (see photo 2).

The site was previously subject to PA 2921/94 and PA 4699/94 to construct terraced houses respectively. The permits were granted however the said dwelling units were never built.

The site's environs are mainly occupied by residential units ranging from bungalows and villas to terraced houses and apartments. The main arterial road – Triq il-Kbira, is characterised by a number of commercial outlets such as a rent-a-car garage, a fuel station, a restaurant, a supermarket and a food and beverage outlet.



Photo 1: 2016 aerial image. Site outlined in blue.
Source: PA Geoserver



Figure 1: Proposed elevation on Triq Halq ic-Cawl and Triq in-Nases respectively.



Figure 2: Proposed elevation on Triq L-Izbark tal-Francizi and Triq il-Fortizza respectively.



Photo 2: Site as existing
Source: ERA site visit

2. EIA-relevant history

2.1 Relevant EIA/screening criteria (citations refer to L.N. 412 of 2017 except where otherwise specified):

The proposed urban development is deemed to qualify for an EIA as per Schedule I, Category II, Section 7.1.2.1: *Projects which have (ii) a gross floor area of 30,000m² or more* of the revised EIA Regulations, 2017.

2.2 Version of documents used for screening:

1. ERA Screening Document (doc. 83a) dated 4th September 2017.
2. Project Description Statement (PDS) (doc. 100b) referred on December 2017.
3. North West Local Plan, 2006.

3. Screening Matrix

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
1	Will construction, operation, decommissioning or demolition of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, landuse, changes in water bodies, etc)?	Yes. The site area is located within an area zoned for development, covering a footprint of approx. 3680sqm. The land use is degraded steppe similar to the predominant habitat of the neighbouring valley.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged given that the proposal lies within a site designated for development. In this regard, any concerns with regards to land uptake and land-use are best addressed directly through the development permitting process.	PDS p.6 & 7
2	Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water or materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes. The project will in its construction and operation make use of natural resources such as <i>franka</i> stone blocks, land, cement, steel, fuel, electricity and water which are non-renewable.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No. The use of such resources for this individual project <i>per se</i> is not likely to have a significant impact. The energy requirements of the proposal is expected to be minimal, thus no significant impact is envisaged. The PDS mentions the reuse of the excavated Upper Coralline Limestone material as an aggregate material and the adoption of sustainable energy and water consumption.	PDS p. 26

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
3	Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health to the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	<p>Yes. Given its scale, the proposal will generate fugitive dust emissions during construction and NO_x and PM₁₀ from the operational traffic. If not properly managed, such emissions have the potential to impact adjoining residential neighbours.</p> <p>During operation, the proposal is expected to generate over 1000 AADT. As a result, NO_x and PM₁₀ from operational traffic to and from the residences, offices, and commercial outlets is envisaged.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Dust impacts during construction are short-term and temporary and can be mitigated through the Construction Site Management Regulations (S.L. 552.09) and through additional conditions to be included in the mainstream development process mechanism.</p> <p>Waste management during operation will consist in normal municipal waste generated by domestic uses.</p> <p>Given that the proposal will generate over 1000 AADT, during operation, the impact is unclear and therefore an air quality study is required.</p>	PDS pg. 26
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning ?	<p>Yes. Solid waste will be generated during both construction and operation.</p> <p>Waste arising during construction will consist of demolition, excavation and construction waste in the form of inert material and rock (28,100m³).</p> <p>During operation, the proposal will mostly generate municipal waste.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No. Given the nature of the development, the amount of waste to be generated during construction and operation is not considered to be significant.</p> <p>The development should be in line with the Waste Management Plan for the Maltese Islands 2014-2020 particularly with Section 3.8.5 on Urban Design for Waste Management.</p>	PDS pg. 26
5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air or lead to exceeding Ambient Air Quality standards in Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC?	<p>Yes. During construction fugitive dust emissions from site clearance and excavation and exhaust (including NO_x and PM₁₀) from construction vehicles are expected.</p> <p>During operation, the proposal is expected to generate over 1000 AADT. As a result, NO_x and PM₁₀ from operational traffic to and from the residences, offices, and commercial outlets is envisaged.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>During construction, emissions of dust and NO_x are temporary and can be sufficiently mitigated through the application of measures identified in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L.552.09). In this regard, the impact is not considered to be significant.</p> <p>Given that the proposal will generate over 1000 AADT, during operation, the impact is unclear and therefore an air quality study is required.</p>	PDS pg. 26

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	<p>Yes. The construction phase is likely to give rise to noise and vibration affecting the nearby residential units. This impact is temporary and of a short term.</p> <p>During the operational phase, noise is envisaged to be generated mainly through the commercial outlets, hotel and the car park, namely from traffic generation.</p> <p>The increase in traffic in the area may also contribute to an increase in noise.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>During construction the applicant must:</p> <p>(i) Adopt mitigation measures that reduce noise emissions at source; and</p> <p>(ii) Comply with the requirements of the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09).</p> <p>Road traffic induced noise emissions during operation are expected to increase from the existing baseline, however the extent of the impact is unclear and can be defined through a noise impact study.</p>	PDS pg. 26
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.</p> <p>During excavation and construction, there is potential risk of oil leaks and contaminated runoff from vehicle access routes on the site, or runoff from the proposed landscaped area. Given the close proximity of the site to the watercourse, potential contamination of surface water can take place if not properly mitigated.</p> <p>Furthermore dust emissions which might settle on land and subsequently form part of water run-off into the sea, may contribute to potential contamination of the coastal waters.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No. The proposal is not likely to lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, as long as the requirements of the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L.552.09) are duly followed.</p>	PDS pg. 26
8	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	<p>No increase in the risk of accidents is envisaged, other than 'normal' occupational risks typically associated with construction activity and commercial operation.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant environmentally-relevant impacts are envisaged.</p>	PDS pg. 26

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
9	Will the Project result in environmentally related social changes for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	<p>Yes. The project will increase the housing stock and residential capacity in the area. The project will also increase vehicular traffic in the area.</p> <p>Map 25 of the North West Local Plan, 2006 (NWLP) designates the site as a Residential Area.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No. This increase in the number of residential units will not have a significant impact on the surrounding locality which is a well developed residential zone.</p>	North West Local Plan 2006 - Policy NWUS 3
10	Are there any such factors which should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental impacts or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	<p>The site and its surroundings area already extensively developed and the proposed development will not encroach beyond the delineated site boundaries. No factors are envisaged which could lead to consequential development, which could exacerbate environmental effects.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant impacts are being envisaged given that no potential consequential development is identified.</p>	/
11	Is the project located within or close to any areas which are protected under international, EU, or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value which could be affected by the project?	<p>Yes. To the south of the site, circa 40m measured from its closes point lies the valley system of Wied il-Mizieb, Il-Wied tax-Xaqrani and environs scheduled as an Area of Ecological Importance and Site of Scientific Importance and an Area of High Landscape Value (G.N. 715/10).</p> <p>The site also lies c. 340m South West to a Tree Protection Area (Legal Notice 200 of 2011 & Government Notice 473 of 2011) and approximately 360m from a designated Special Area of Conservation – Site of International Importance via G.N 112 of 2007, as declared</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the protected areas in as these are found at a considerable distance from the earmarked site.</p>	PDS pg. 17

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
		<p>through the provisions of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Regulations of 2006 (Legal Notice 311 of 2006).</p> <p>To the north east of the site, c. 500m, there is Rdum tal-Griebeg to Qala tal-Mistra coastal cliffs which are scheduled as an Area of Ecological Importance and an Area of High Landscape Value through G.N 400 of 1996 and a Special Area of Conservation by Legal Notice 257/03 and Government Notice 223/05.</p> <p>A Class B heritage site is located approximately 300m from the site.</p>		
12	<p>Are there any areas on or around the location that 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>	<p>No such designated areas are known of, on or around the site of the proposed development.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>No significant impacts are being envisaged.</p>	
13	<p>Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species</p>	<p>Reply to question 11 refers.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>Reply to question 11 refers.</p>	

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
	of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over wintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?			
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment) on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes the site is located close to the the valley system of Wied il- Miżieb, Il-Wied tax-Xaqrani Reply to question 11 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to question 11 refers.	
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?	Yes. The site lies in close proximity to an Area of High Landscape Value (G.N. 715/10). The proposed development will likely be visible from parts of Il-Miżieb / L-Imbordin and Ix-Xemxija, due to the Scheme's location on the Mellieħa Ridge. Landscape impacts are also likely to result as the area is currently undeveloped.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> The development proposed on nine floors will have a certain degree of visual impact on the present skyline as the buildings closest to the site in question respect the three floor height limitation designated by the North West Local Plan for the area. Furthermore as reported in the PDS, the development has the potential to affect the visual integrity of the ridge. However, this concern is best addressed through the mainstream development mechanism.	PDS pgs. 6 & 17
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?	Potentially yes since the main road next to the site (Triq il-Kbira) is an important traffic route and from which the Mellieħa family park located to the opposite of the site is accessed.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No. The proposed development is not envisaged to significantly impact the said routes, given that any potential impact during the demolition, excavation and construction phase can be sufficiently mitigated through the proper application of the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09).	/

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
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?	The road adjacent the location of the proposed development - Triq Il-Kbira, is an arterial road used by commuters and visitors of the area, and therefore already very susceptible to congestions, especially during rush hours and weekends.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reply to question 5 refers.	/
18	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes. The proposal is located within the Mellieħa Residential Area and at the edge of the scheme adjacent to an arterial road - Triq il-Kbira and thus will be visible to most of the people travelling along this road. The development will likely be visible from parts of Il-Miżieb / L-Imbordin and ix-Xemxija due to the site's location on the Mellieħa Ridge.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Significant impacts are envisaged given the proposal's scale and height vis-a-vis the existing 3 storey development and in view of its location at the edge of the scheme adjacent to a rural area and close to Mellieħa Ridge. However, this concern is best addressed through the mainstream development mechanism.	PDS pg. 6
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the project?	Yes a Class B heritage site is located approximately 300m from the site.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> The proposed development will not impact the existing cultural heritage feature.	PDS pg. 17
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes. The project lies within an area zoned for development, and is mostly already committed.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No. Although the proposal will result in a change in land use from an undeveloped to a built-up area, the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact given that the earmarked site is located within a committed development zone within an urban area.	PDS pg. 6

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
21	Are there existing land uses within 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 situated within the urban area of Mellieħa which is extensively developed, built-up and densely populated. The area is also characterised by residential, tourism and commercial uses. Several public open spaces are present within the immediate surroundings of the site of the proposed development.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No. Impacts during construction being temporary, may occur, however the proposed development is not considered significant as long as the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007 are duly followed.	PDS pg. 6
22	Are there any plans for future land uses within or around the location that could be affected by the project?	No such plans are known of for the area of influence of the proposed development.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant environmental impacts are being envisaged given that the proposed development and the development projects in the surrounding area are of similar nature.	/
23	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built up, that could be affected by the project?	Yes. The area surrounding the site (Mellieħa) is characterised primarily by residential uses; some ancillary, small-scale commercial premises, religious, community facilities, commercial outlets, and open space community facilities.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is unclear whether the proposal is expected to affect the densely populated area of Western Mellieħa, given that the proposal may lead to potential cumulative air quality/noise issues when considering the current and expected the envisaged increase in traffic flows in the area.	PDS pgs. 6 & 7
24	Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship,	The site is located near the Mellieħa Family Park which includes a basketball/volleyball/tennis court, a racing track, an outdoor gym and skateboard/BMX facilities.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are being envisaged.	PDS pgs.6 & 7

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
	community facilities which could be affected by the project?			
25	Are there any areas within 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?	Reply to question 7 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to question 7 refers.	PDS pgs.6 & 7
26	Are there any areas within or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, that could be affected by the project?	Yes the proposal is located within an area which is already subject to heavy traffic flow, with consequent air quality implications.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The proposal may lead to further intensification of the area thus resulting in further exceedance of legal environmental standards in relation to air quality and noise from the increase in traffic. In this regard, a joint air quality and noise impact study is required.	PDS pg. 26
27	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, or subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic	No. The area is not particularly susceptible to such extreme events.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant environmental impacts are envisaged.	/

Question Number:	Questions to be considered	Identified potential impacts Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Briefly justify	Document reference
	conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?			

4.1 EIA screening conclusion

The above detailed EIA screening concludes that impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA, as long as various mitigation measures are duly incorporated into the mainstream development consent mechanism and further information is provided in relation to potential air quality impacts, for which terms of reference have been provided. Any impacts are to be mitigated by means of conditions and specifications (e.g. approved documents) in the development permit.

In this regard, the proposal does not require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment in line with the revised EIA Regulations (L.N. 412/2017).

4.2 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.