Environmental Impact Assessment

Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

ERA Reference no.:	EA 00054/18
PA Reference no.:	PA 10589/17
Project Title:	Quarry HM 29, Triq l-Imgarr, Mgarr, Malta
Location:	Erection of Solar Panels
Screening date:	December 2018

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1. Description of Proposal

1.1 Outline of project/development

PA 10589/17 is a proposal to repurpose an infilled and disused quarry (HM29) into a 5MW solar farm. It will cover a site area of about 76,800 m^2 with a façade of approx. 365m overlooking the main road. This will allow the installation of 17,420 photovoltaic panels.

1.2 Site description and related considerations

The site in question is located on Triq Sir Temi Zammit in Imgarr. The surrounding area is dominated by agricultural activity with a number of isolated farmhouses located across the road. Two schools (San Andrea and San Anton) are also relatively close to the site.

Furthermore, the site is located;

- within a Groundwater Safeguard Zone;
- 300m from the Victoria Lines, a Grade 1 scheduled Fortification and an Area of High Landscape Value (G.N. 85/01);
- 350m from the Wied ta' Sejkla Watercourse, a Grade 4 Area of Ecological Importance (G.N. 226/06); and
- 350m from the Wied ta' Ghajn Rihana, an Area of Ecological Importance and Site of Scientific Importance (G.N. 226/06).

Figure 1. Location of the site (**Source**: PA Geoserver)

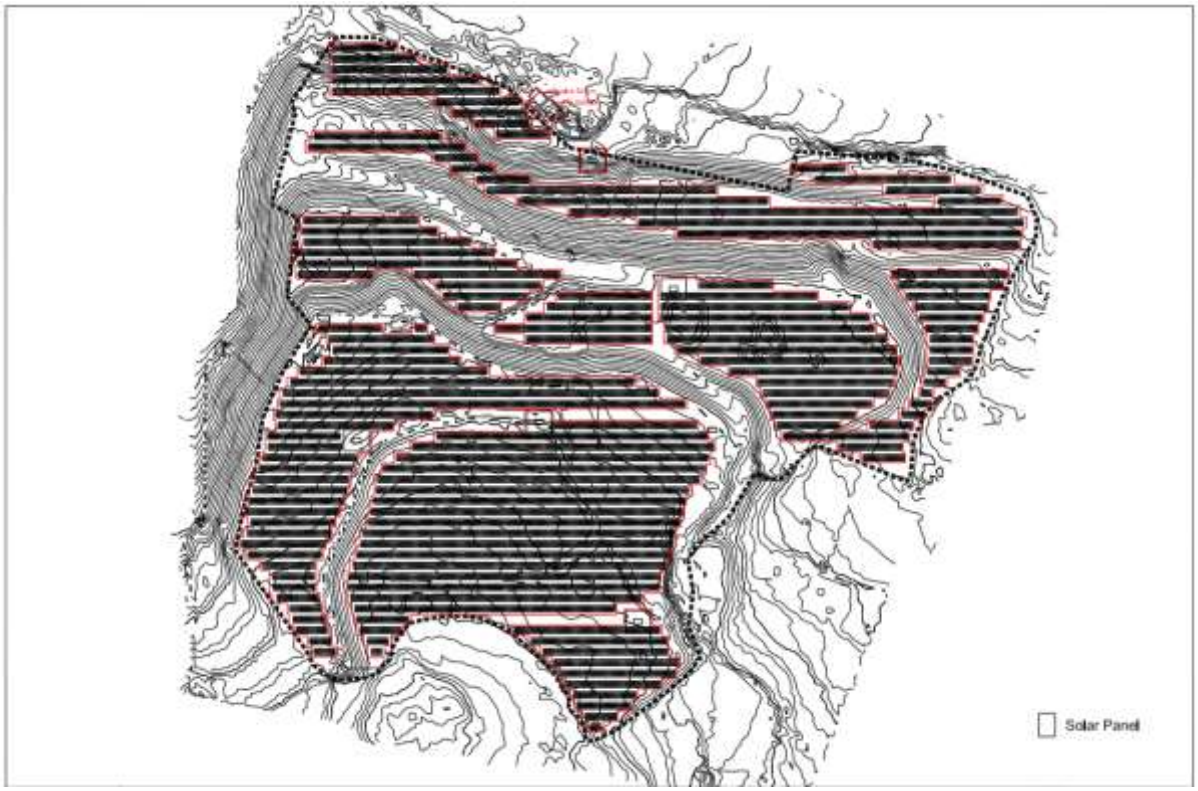

Figure 2. Block Plan (**Source**: PA/10589/17/Doc.1f)

Figure 3. Photomontages

1.3 Site history

- **PA 01935/93:** Quarry Extension **(Approved)**
- **PA 06525/98:** Excavation of existing quarry 10 metres from lowest point **(Approved)**
- **PA 00388/99:** Renewal of quarry extension **(Approved)**
- **PA 06084/01:** Rock cutting to existing quarry **(Approved)**
- **PA 07372/03:** Quarrying of hardrocks spalls from existing quarry **(Approved)**
- **PA 07422/03:** Sanctioning of temporary access road, site office & weigh bridge outside licensed area at hardstone quarry No 29-Torri Falka l/o Mgarr **(Approved)**
- **PA 01151/04:** Extension to quarry **(Approved)**
- **PA 01870/05:** Extension to quarry **(Approved)**
- **PA 00712/07:** Formation of a substation for Quarry No 29, Torri Falka **(Refused)**
- **PA 01831/08:** Extension to existing quarry with additional area of 5,728m^2 **(Withdrawn)**
- **PA 04317/17:** Sanctioning of collection of soil off field, putting this aside on same site, levelling out fields to consolidate same. and relaying collected soil over larger area than originally in order to coordinate with landscaping of adjoining refilled quarry and proposed rubble walls **(Withdrawn)**
- **DN 00192/17:** To hold an outdoor activity **(Approved)**
- **PA 01384/18:** Current Application

2. EIA-relevant History

2.1 Relevant EIA/screening criteria: (citations refer to EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L 549.46), except where otherwise specified):

The proposed development falls within the scope of Schedule I Category II Section 1.0.2.1 (*Development with a site area of 2ha or more*) and Section 9.0.2.3 (*Restoration and after-use of existing or disused quarries or mines, other than for restoration of the site back to its pristine state*) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46).

2.2 Documents used for screening:

1. Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA by architect to ERA on 07/09/18; and
2. Clarifications requested by ERA (photomontages) received from architect on 05/12/2018.

3. EIA Screening

3.1. The proposal will change the current land use from an infilled quarry to a solar farm. Around 17,320 panels will be mounted on different sections of the quarry as seen in Figure 2. No relevelling or reorganisation of the site's topography will be undertaken. Thus, given the nature of the project and the site context, as well as the reversibility in the long term, the proposal is not expected to have a significant impact on the land use in this regard.

3.2. Waste generated during construction will be minimal as on-site development largely consists of assembly of pre-constructed parts. Any waste generated can be dealt with through the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 552.09).

3.3. The project will be highly visible by many people, and may have an impact on the visual amenity and landscape of the area, given the rural nature of the site. However, such an impact is unlikely to be significant relative to the current baseline which is dominated by the prominent landfill. In addition, photomontages provided by the architect confirm such (see Figure 3).

3.4. The development is also in line with the Solar Farms Policy of 2017 and its environmental considerations. Specifically, an infilled quarry, is one of the preferred site listed in the said Policy, and which does not have any agricultural land or have a negative impact on its surroundings.

4. *Conclusion*

4.1. Screening Conclusion and recommended way forward

The above detailed EIA screening concludes that impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA, in accordance with Regulation 15(3b) of the EIA Regulations 2017 (S.L. 549.46), as long as various mitigation measures are duly incorporated into the mainstream development consent mechanism and mitigated by means of conditions and specifications (e.g. approved documents) in the development permit. This is without prejudice to the adoption of the required environmental operational requirements, and the implementation of environmental registration or permit, as relevant.

4.2. Conditions

1. Surface runoff water
The development shall not result in any intended or unintended discharge of surface water (other than clean overflow from runoff-collection reservoirs) or wash waters from the development site onto any surrounding lands including roads and paths.

2. Installation of infrastructural services underground
New, extended or replacement of infrastructure services (including any required connections to the already existing public supply as well as any extension of the public supply to serve the site) shall be located underground in appropriate ducts or trenches. This condition covers all infrastructural services including those related to water, electricity, telecommunications and other services to be installed on the site or on other land to service the site. No poles or overhead wiring or cables are to be erected. Also, any ancillary infrastructural development (e.g. substations) should be confined to the development site, such that there is no future requirement to commit any other land for consequential development.

3. Avoiding damage to the landscape and its features
All works are to be carefully managed so as to avoid damage to any adjoining land, natural habitats or features as well as to the landscape. No works, overspills, storage of material/machinery or vehicular trampling/manoeuvring/parking beyond the permitted area are allowed. This applies to both the construction/site preparation phase and the operational use of the site.

4. Light pollution
The permitted development shall not be a source of light pollution, especially at night. To this effect, the following specifications shall be adhered to:

(i) lighting shall be strictly limited to within the developed part of the site, and its height and orientation shall be designed in a manner that does not cause illumination beyond the developed site;

(ii) there shall be no lighting of ancillary access roads, tracks and paths or other lighting beyond the site boundary;
(iii) the exterior lighting fittings and their supports shall be installed on the inner side of any peripheral landscaping, so as to be screened from the surrounding environment by means of the landscaping itself;
(iv) all exterior lighting installed on site shall be horizontally aligned, downward-pointing, fully-shielded and full cut-off. No luminaire globes, uplighters and/or high-level floodlighting are allowed;
(v) all exterior lighting shall be of low-intensity 'warm light' colour with a temperature not exceeding 3000K; and
(vi) intruder-triggered or motion-sensor lighting, shall be installed so as to avoid continuous nocturnal lighting.

5. Waste Management

Any waste management, including the management and disposal of material currently on site shall follow the provisions of the Waste Regulations (S.L.549.63), the Waste Management (Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Regulations (S.L.549.89) and any other relevant regulations, including any required compositional analysis to identify the most suitable disposal option.

4.3 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.