

# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

<b>ERA Reference no.:</b>	EA/0053/18
<b>PA Reference no.:</b>	PA 01384/18
<b>Project Title:</b>	Proposed Development of a 5 MW PV Farm overlying the Maghtab Landfill including related surface culverts and Four (4) new Substations
<b>Location:</b>	Maghtab Landfill, Triq ir-Ramla, Il-Maghtab, Naxxar, Malta
<b>Screening date:</b>	September 2018

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### 1. Description of Proposal

#### 1.1 Outline of project/development

PA 01384/18 is a proposal by Enemalta Plc for the construction of a 5MegaWatt photovoltaic (PV) farm on top of the capped, former municipal landfill located at Triq ir-Ramla, Maghtab limits of Naxxar. The project will cover a site area of about 73,843 m<sup>2</sup> within the Ta' Zwejra engineered landfill and will involve the installation of circa. 18,000 PV panels (using Crystalline Photovoltaic cells) mounted in clusters on different sections around the circumference of the landfill on the slopes; this will power 1,515 homes for a year. The PDS mentions that PV panels with Anti-Reflective coating are better suited to the site in question. Four substations are also being proposed within the site.

The renewable electricity generated from the project will feed into the national grid and cater for the 10% renewable energy target Malta is expected to reach by 2020.

#### 1.2 Site description and related considerations

The site in question is located outside the development zone (ODZ) within the Maghtab valley along Triq il-Kosta, Naxxar and forms part of the Ta' Zwejra Landfill located within the wider area of Maghtab Landfill. The latter has been closed since 2004 and has been earmarked for rehabilitation including a landscaping project with indigenous shrubs and trees which however was unsuccessful due to the presence of toxic substances within the site. Whilst the site contains sporadic vegetation, a number of rubble walls have been constructed through the rehabilitation project approved in PA 6149/08. Access to the site is gained from an internal road within the Maghtab Environmental Complex just off Triq ir-Ramla which is a secondary road linking Triq is-Salini to Triq il-Kosta. The surrounding area is dominated by this landfill and interspersed with industrial activity; agricultural areas and activity including livestock farms are also present farther away from the site.

Furthermore, the site is located about 400m from;

- L-Ghadira s-Safra (MT0000008), designated as a Site of Scientific Importance, an Area of Ecological Importance, and a Special Area of Conservation of International Importance (G.N. 288/95);

- Is-Salini (MT0000007), designated as a Special Area of Conservation of International Importance (G.N. 288/95); and
- A Buffer Zone for Dolmens, designated as a Site of Archaeological Importance (G.N 574/64).



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

### 1.3 Site history

The site has been subject to the following planning applications and enforcement notices, namely:

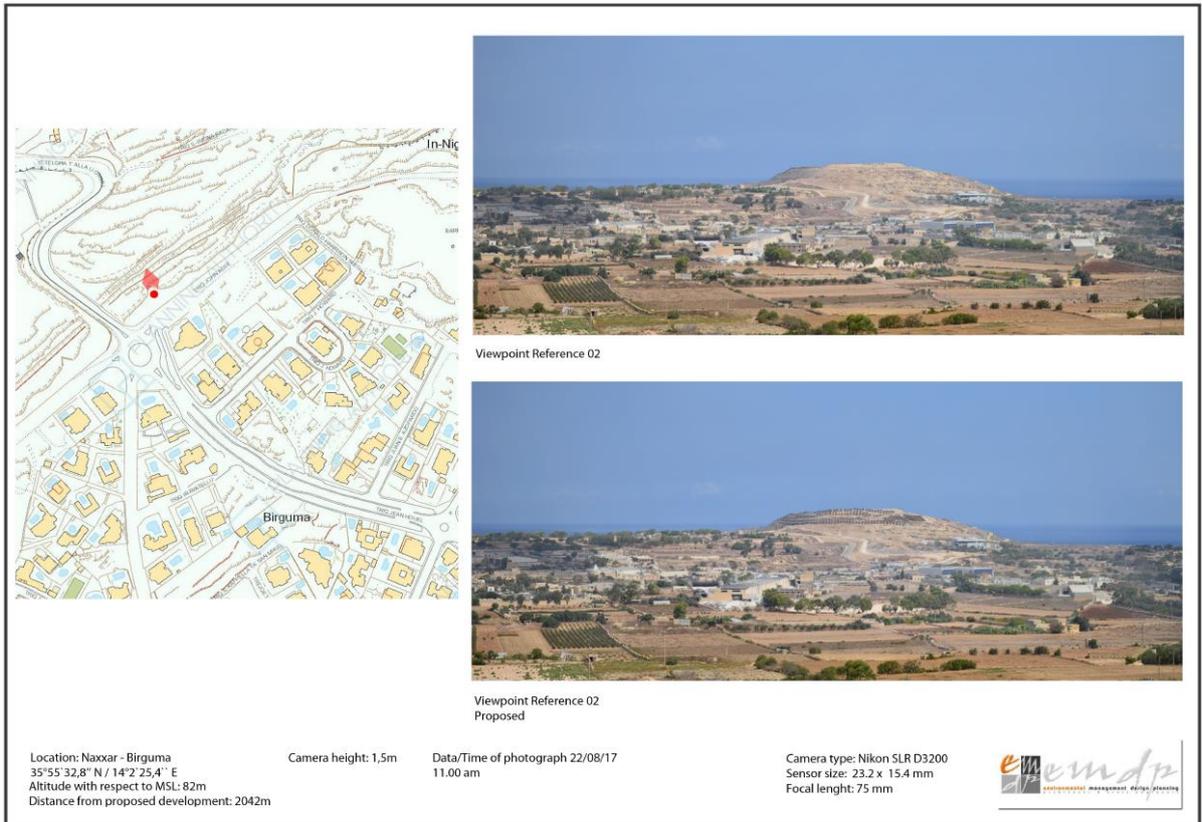
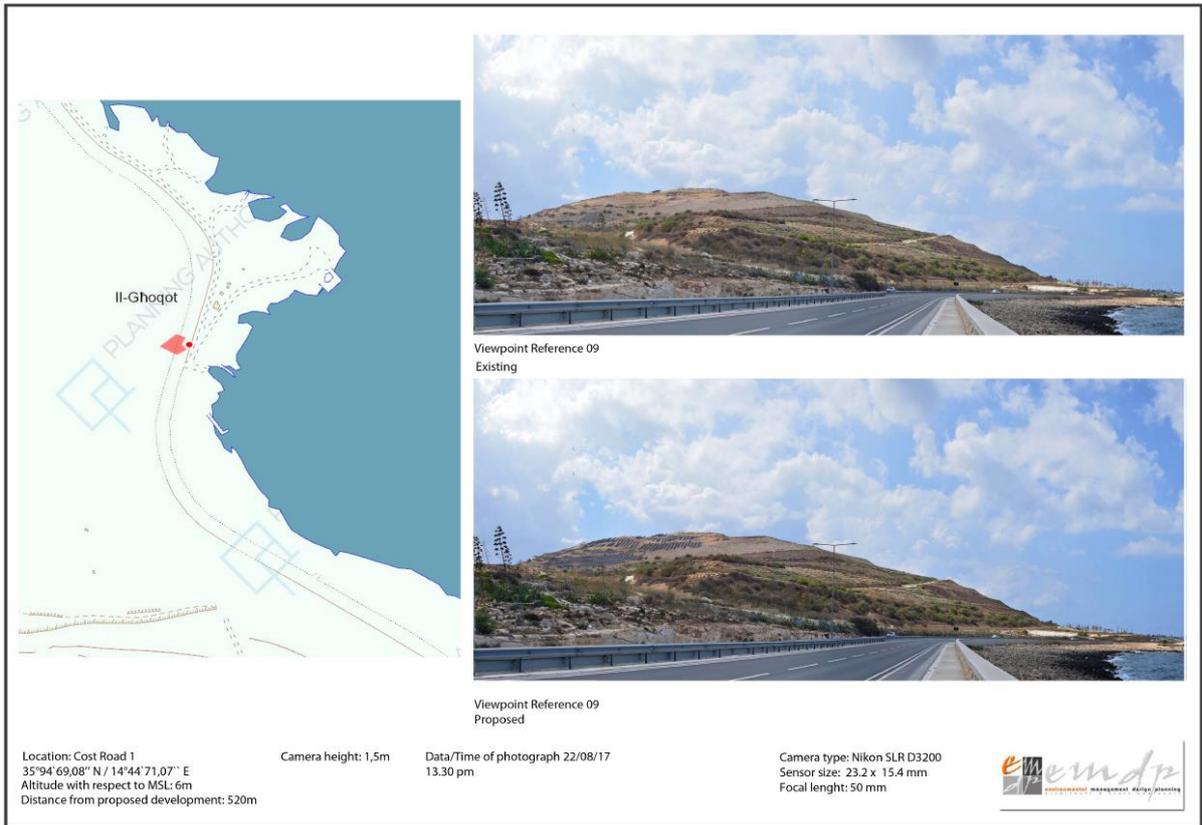
- **PA 06136/03:** Control of air emissions by means of the installation of steel wells and /or horizontal abstraction pipes, conducting gases to high temperature flares- detailed project description statement attached at Maghtab Landfill, Il-Maghtab, Naxxar (**Approved**)
- **PA 04834/04:** Development of controlled landfill and ancillary facilities at Site at, Il-Ghallies ta' Gewwa, Naxxar (**Approved**)
- **EC 00453/06:** Breach of conditions 2 and 3 in permit PA 6136/03 at Maghtab Landfill, Il-Maghtab, Naxxar, Malta (**Closed**)
- **PA 06149/08:** Proposed rehabilitation of former Maghtab Landfill at Maghtab Landfill, Triq ir-Ramla, Il-Maghtab, Naxxar (**Approved**)
- **PA 01293/12:** Construction of a mechanical waste treatment plant including weigh-bridge station, administration building, car-parking spaces, external storage spaces, sub-station, wheel wash facility and circulation roads at Site at, Ta' Hammud, Naxxar, Malta (**Approved**)
- **PA 01294/12:** Construction of biological treatment plant and manure (animal husbandry) treatment plant , including site offices / control rooms and circulation roads at Site at, Ta' Hammud, Naxxar, Malta (**Approved**)
- **PA 03447/14:** Construction of circulation road within landfills complex Sites at, Ghallies / Zejra Landfills, Triq Il- Kosta, Bahar Ic-Caghaq, Naxxar, Malta (**Approved**)
- **PA 06753/17:** Erection of 1st floor (Class 4A, Offices) over existing Ground Floor at Operations Building, Ta' Zwejra, Mghatab Complex, Il-Maghtab, Naxxar, Malta (**Approved**)
- **PA 01384/18:** Current Application.

### 1.4 Version of documents used for screening

- PDS, referred to ERA on 28/08/2018

### **3. EIA Screening**

- 3.1.** The proposal will change of the current land use from a landfill into a solar farm. The panels will be mounted in clusters on different sections around the circumference of the landfill on the slopes; no releveling 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 environment in this regard.
- 3.2.** Waste generated during construction will be minimal as on-site development largely consists of assembly of pre-constructed parts. Some waste may be generated, but these can be dealt with through the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 552.09).
- 3.3.** While the site is located close to L-Ghadira s-Safra SAC (MT0000008) and Is-Salini SAC, it is unlikely to have any effect on these areas due to the nature and scale of the project, particularly since no increase in noise levels is envisaged during both the construction phase and the operational phase. Furthermore, the site itself is not sensitive from an ecological, social, or cultural point of view.
- 3.4.** The project will be highly visible by many people, and may have an impact on the visual amenity and landscape of the area. However, such an impact is unlikely to be significant relative to the current baseline which is dominated by the prominent landfill. The panels will also be installed at a specific angle to reduce light reflection, as well as using specific materials and coatings to reduce glare. This is covered by the Landscape and Visual Amenity study included as part of the PDS (See Figure 2 for photomontages of the site).
- 3.5.** The development is also in line with the Solar Farm Policy of 2017 and its environmental considerations. Specifically, it is a disused landfill, one of the preferred site listed in the Policy, will not include any agricultural land or have a negative impact on its surroundings, and is an area with low landscape sensitivity.



**Figure 2.** Photomontages showing the proposed development (Source: PDS)

## **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. Recommended permit conditions**

#### **4.2.1. 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.

#### **4.2.2. 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.

#### **4.2.3. 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, overflows, 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.

#### **4.2.4. Light pollution**

The permitted development shall not be a source of light pollution, especially at night. To this effect:

- There shall be no lighting of access roads, tracks and paths leading to the site or other lighting beyond the site boundary;
- All exterior lighting installed on site is to be downward-pointing and full cut-off. No luminaire globes or uplighters are allowed; and
- All exterior lighting shall be intruder-triggered and continuous nocturnal lighting shall be avoided

#### **4.2.5. 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.

**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.