

Meeting	EIA Public Consultation for EIS in relation to the following development permit application: PA 03465/14 - Proposed construction of structure to house end of life vehicles and sanctioning of existing store. Site at, Triq L- Ibragg, Gharghur, Malta.
Date	29/05/2018
Duration	16:00 : 17:00
Location	Każin Banda Għaqda Mużikali San Bartolomew, Għargħur
ERA representatives	Kevin Mercieca (Deputy Director), Daniel Xuereb (Environment Protection Officer; EIA)
Minutes taken by	Charmaine Zerafa (Administrative Assistant; Environment Assessment Unit)

Mr. Kevin Mercieca opened the meeting giving details about the proposed development which is currently subject to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (*PA 03465/14 - Proposed construction of structure to house end of life vehicles and sanctioning of existing store. Site at, Triq L- Ibragg, Gharghur, Malta.*)

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.

Profs. Lino Bianco delivered a presentation explaining the studies carried out as part of the EIS.

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

Perit Edgar Rossignaud (Swieqi Local Council).

Perit Rossignaud expressed his concern as to the credibility of the studies carried out with regards to this application being that the report seems to be favoring the applicant. It was pointed out that this proposal lies much closer to Swieqi rather than Ghargħur and that residents of Swieqi will be impacted the most with such development. According to studies carried out, the increase in traffic once this development is up and running is not considerable. This is hard to believe being that the current illegal development is already generating a considerable amount of traffic. Site is already subject to enforcement and there are important reasons as to why said enforcement was issued. The practice of submitting a development application on a nearby site is only a polite way to sanction an illegal development. The EIS mentions numerous mitigation measures; what guarantee is there that such mitigation measures are put to practice and adhered to? Will this application be subject to an Operational Permit?

Mr. Kevin Mercieca (Deputy Director; Environment and Resources Authority).

Mr. Mercieca explained that this meeting is being carried out to gather feedback from the public in order to be factored in the process. The studies carried out were according to LN 114/2007 and were compiled according to the Terms of Reference issued by the ERA. The consultant in charge to carry out such studies is independent from the applicant and architect of such development. Should this application be approved by the Planning Authority it will surely qualify for an Environmental Permit. Such permit is issued by the Environment and Resources Authority however at this stage one cannot preempt whether application will be approved or not. The ERA will provide conditions to be included in permit should this be granted.

Perit Anton Valentino (Swieqi Local Council).

The studies are being portrayed as if the permit for such application will be surely granted. The Rural Policy and Design Guidance was not taken into consideration in the report being presented. One has to note that such Policy and Guidance document clearly states that the after use of a disused quarry should not be a business related one but more likely an agricultural one. It is difficult to believe that no other location was available for this type of development other than within an Outside Development Zone area.

The report states that there will be approximately 480 trips per annum however this is referring to actual vehicles. What about the trips involved in delivering parts and material to other sites?

If these studies are the result of the Terms of Reference issued by the ERA then one can conclude that such TOR's were not appropriate.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca (Deputy Director; Environment and Resources Authority).

The Terms of Reference being questioned were formulated according to the Legal Notice. Such TOR's were available on ERA's website and were subject to a one month public consultation as per normal practice.

The Rural Policy and Design Guidance is a tool used by the Planning Authority for their decision making process. It is not within the ERA's remit to decide how and if such policy and design guidance document is used.

Perit Anton Valentino (Swieqi Local Council).

Perit Valentino expressed his believe that the ERA is very weak and should protect the environment in a more effective way being that the main objective of such authority is to safeguard the environment. He asked whether ERA can guide better the Planning Authority with regards to applications effecting the environment.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca (Deputy Director; Environment and Resources Authority).

Mr. Mercieca explained that the process is not closed yet and that this report is part of the documents and studies that will help ERA establish a final recommendation. The Environment and Resources Authority is not in a position to make any recommendations as yet.

Mr. Kevin Mercieca closed the meeting by confirming that the points raised have been recorded and 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 04th June 2018.

