

Meeting	EIA Public Consultation for EIS in relation to the following development permit application: Sterling – Extension to Sterling Chemicals Ltd. at Site at Hal Far, Birzebbugia, Malta
Date	05/08/2019
Duration	17:00 : 19:00
Location	St. Benedict's College, Birzebbuġa Primary School, School Street, Birzebbuġa, Malta
ERA representatives	Kevin Mercieca (Deputy Director), Josianne Abela Vassallo (Team Manager; EIA), Daniel Xuereb (Environment Protection Officer; EIA)
Minutes taken by	Daniel Xuereb (Environment Protection Officer; EIA)

- Mr. Kevin Mercieca opened the meeting giving details about the proposed development which is currently subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (*Sterling – Extension to Sterling Chemicals Ltd. at Site at Hal Far, Birzebbugia, Malta*)
- Details vis-à-vis the purpose of the meeting were provided, in particular that the meeting was part of the EIA process (EIA Update). 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. Mr. Kevin Mercieca asked if there were any objections to the meeting being held in English.

Mr. John Grech (Birzebbugia Action Group).

Mr. John Grech objected to the meeting being held in English and reiterated his objection to the meeting being held on the day after the village feast. He had previously sent an email in this regard asking to change the date.

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

Mr. Mercieca confirmed that the hearing would continue in Maltese. He also explained that the ERA has endeavoured to change the date of the meeting but was unable to do so for various logistical reasons. He also invited anyone that was unable to attend to request a separate meeting with ERA. Furthermore, the original deadline for written comments was extended from 12/08/19 to 20/08/19.

- Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi) delivered a presentation explaining the studies carried out as part of the EIA.

Member of the Public (Birzebbugia Action Group).

During the presentation, a question was asked regarding the location of liquid waste storage facilities in the factory, as it seemed there was a discrepancy between the EIA and the presentation. A follow-up question was also asked regarding the method of disposal for

hazardous waste. The member of the public also pointed out that on the last public inspection of the existing Sterling Chemicals Ltd. factory, which was also attended by ERA officials. It was noted that there was a subterranean floor waste collection area which was not included on the plans, and not included in the IPPC permit.

Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi) and Ms. Rachel Decelis (Adi).

Adi representatives explained the details of the way in which liquid waste would be handled by the factory. It was made clear that all hazardous waste would be exported.

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

Mr. Mercieca noted that if there was an unplanned subterranean floor, it is good that ERA was aware of it, and any IPPC permit would need to be amended to reflect such plans. It was clarified that this was a meeting on the EIA findings, and not the IPPC; the IPPC goes into more detail regarding operations. Detailed comments regarding such operations should be made during the appropriate forum.

Member of the Public (Birzebbugia Action Group).

There are also a number of critical environmental issues that should be included in the EIA.

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

Once these issues are brought to ERA's attention, we will evaluate and refer to the consultants to update the EIA, or provide an explanation as to why there is no need for an update.

Mr. John Grech (Birzebbugia Action Group).

Mr. John Grech also raised a number of issues related to the operations of the facility.

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

Mr. Mercieca remarked the differences between the EIA and the IPPC.

- Presentation was continued by Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi)
- Mr. Kevin Mercieca opened the floor for comments after the presentation.

Mr. John Grech (Birzebbugia Action Group).

Mr. John Grech enquired about the type of filters which would be included in the factory.

Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi) and Ms. Rachel Decelis (Adi).

Adi representatives explained the details of the factory's filtration system.



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

Mr. Mercieca noted that, again, this was not the remit of the EIA. The EIA only notes whether it is technologically possible or not to mitigate the impact in question. The IPPC then goes into detail about whether or not such measures are in place.

Member of the Public (Birzebbugia Action Group).

It was noted that the baseline studies for the Wied Znuber valley was not updated from the original EIA, and that the drains which are part of the original factory (and 12m away from the valley) were not considered in the EIA.

Ms. Rachel Xuereb (Adi).

The EIA Coordinator explained that the Wied Znuber valley was in fact considered to be pristine as it was during the original EIA undertaken in 2014.

Member of the Public (Birzebbugia Action Group).

It was remarked that Wied Znuber could be at a high risk from contamination from Sterling. It was further noted that Sterling has a number of drains. These were not mentioned in the EIA.

Perit Wallace Farrugia, Project Architect.

Regarding the drains, the architect noted that these collect water coming from the roof, the internal yard/s, and the balconies. He also invited the members of the Birzebbugia Action Group present at the public hearing for a tour of the drainage system at the factory – a copy of the drainage system plans was also provided during the said meeting.

Member of the Public (Birzebbugia Action Group).

It was noted that a wastewater reservoir would be built in a way which would preclude testing of the reservoir for any leakages.

Perit Wallace Farrugia, Project Architect.

Details on the washwater reservoir construction and operation was provided, and noted that the system was not prone to any leaks and could also be checked for any leakages.

Member of the Public (Birzebbugia Action Group).

During the meeting, other operations related issues, namely on scrubbers and overflows were raised.

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

Mr. Mercieca noted that, again, this was not the remit of the EIA but rather the IPPC.



- 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 20th August 2019.

