

Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening Report

PA file no.:	PA03432/06
Other reference:	EA00011/16
Project Title:	To convert soft stone quarry into an open storage premises, soft landscaping areas and restoring of existing agricultural premises.
Location:	Soft Stone Quarry No. 13, Tat-Tabib, L-Iklin
Screening date:	May 2016

1. Description of Proposal

1.1 Outline of project/development

Planning Application PA03432/06 is a development application which proposes to convert soft stone quarry into an open storage premises, soft landscaping areas and restoring of existing agricultural premises at Soft Stone Quarry No. 13, Tat-Tabib, L-Iklin.

The proposal will restore an exhausted soft stone quarry (No.13) into an open storage area with extensive soft landscaping areas at the area known as Tat-Tabib, L-Iklin. The restoration of the exhausted parts of the quarry in question will be infilled. The area has in the past been used for quarrying activities of which most of them have been restored and converted to other industrial uses, open storage areas and construction yards.

The proposal also includes parking provision in accordance with established parking standards, where ample space is available and no formal arrangement is needed, given that no visitors are anticipated. The site is already connected to the existing power grid, water supply and telephone networks.

1.2 Site description and related considerations

The site is located in the northern periphery of Iklin Local Council boundary and abuts Triq il-Ħwawar, off Triq tal-Balal at the outskirts of Naxxar (Triq il-Ħarrub) to Triq Għargħur, which in turn links the Triq Dun Karm, B'Kara and San Ġwann. The landscaped area and open storage facility has an approximate site area of 7,160 sqm, whereas the administration and support facilities will occupy an area of 700 sqm. The site is surrounded by agricultural land, a number of open storage areas, construction/plant yards, boat yard, industrial garage complexes and other associated uses.

The site falls Outside Development Zone (ODZ), is within a drinking water safeguarding zone (Malta Resources Authority) and abuts an Area of Containment. Within 400 meters from the site, there are no other protected sites. The proposal lies approximately 225 metres from the built-up area of Iklin.

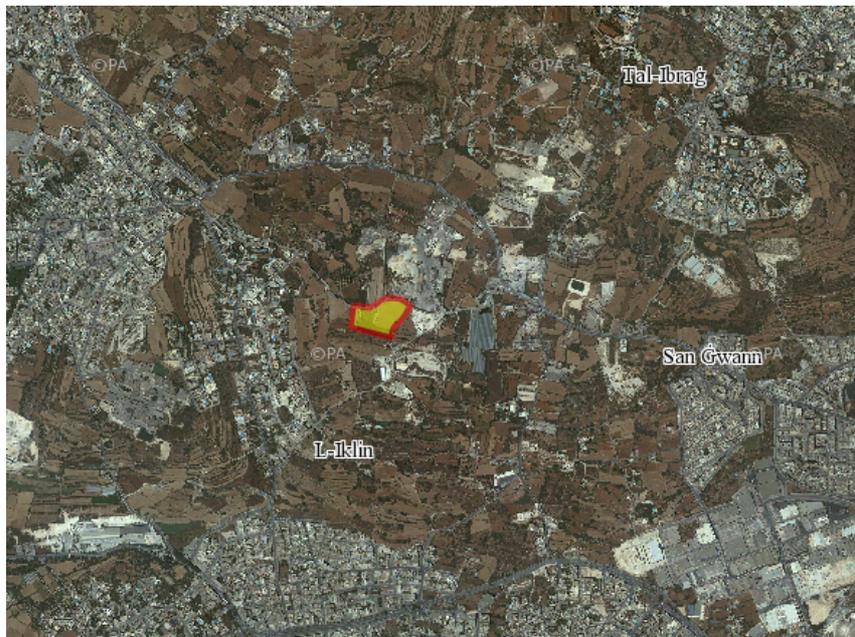


Figure 1: Aerial image of the site and its surroundings.



Figure 2: Aerial image of the site.

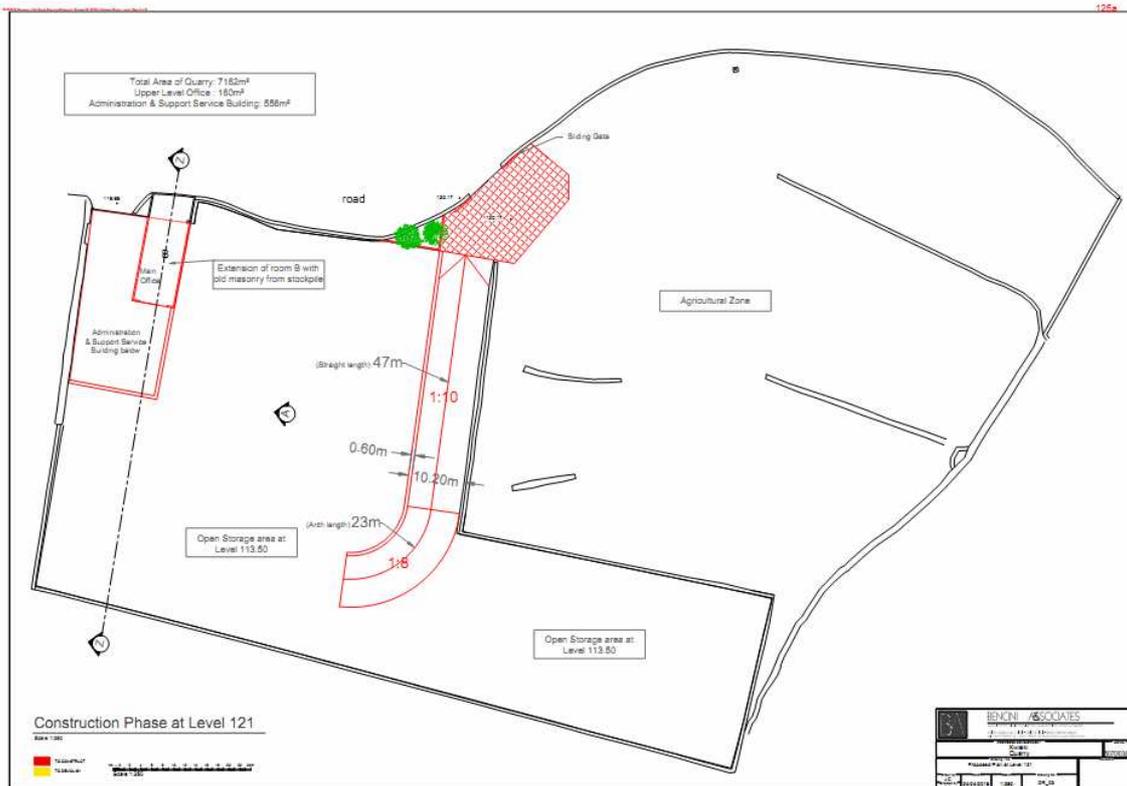


Figure 3: Proposed Block Plan.

2. EIA-relevant history

2.1 Relevant EIA/screening criteria (citations refer to L.N. 114 of 2007, as amended, except where otherwise specified):

Schedule 1A Category II criteria 5.3.2.1 (Restoration and after use of existing and disused quarries not already covered by an approved landscaping/restoration scheme, where the boundary of the site is within 200m of a protected site or a site of known environmental importance).

2.2 Version of documents used for screening:

1. PDS dated 6th April 2016.

3. Screening Matrix

	Issues to be considered	Relevant environmental constraints, considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>	Document reference
1	Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, landuse, changes in water bodies, etc)?	Yes. The proposed project is located outside development zone lies within a disused quarry. It will result in the intensification of the site to accommodate an open storage facility (7160sqm), an administration and support facility (700sqm) and parking spaces. Furthermore, the project will hinder the potential backfilling and comprehensive restoration of an existing depression in the topography.	No. Although the character of the site will be significantly altered (from disused quarry to open storage), the site in question is not of any particular ecological, or visual value and therefore the impacts on land use are not considered significant.	PDS Pg. 1-2

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
		The depression is a by-product of past quarrying activities on site.		
2	Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	<p>Yes. The proposal will be backfilled with about 96,000m³ of construction and demolition waste, most of which will be brought to the site from different parts of the island.</p> <p>The construction phase will make use of natural resources such as local limestone, land, energy and water which are non-renewable. Such resources are neither renewable nor in such short supply as to be markedly affected by this project <i>per se</i>.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The use of such resources for this individual project <i>per se</i> is not likely to have a significant impact given the nature and scale of the proposal.</p>	PDS Pg. 18-20
3	Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials or energy, especially any resources which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	<p>Yes. Fugitive dust emissions during the infilling phase. Such activity may have a temporary impact on the immediate surroundings.</p> <p>During the construction phase, transportation of the raw materials, as indicated in Question 2 above, would be required, thus not involving any storage and transport of harmful/hazardous materials or substances.</p> <p>In terms of the operational phase, the project will require the occasional maintenance of the vehicles proposed to be stored on site. Such activities may contribute to the spillages and accidental leaks of hazardous substances.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant impacts are envisaged during backfilling and construction phase. Moreover, any possible impacts may be sufficiently mitigated through the application of mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (Legal Notice 295 of 2007, as amended).</p> <p>Generally waste management and mitigation measures during operation can be adequately managed through a combination of relatively standard design specifications and an operational registration rendering the impacts of the operations on human health and the environment insignificant.</p> <p>Furthermore, all operations concerning the management of waste are subject to the legal provisions of the Waste Regulations 2011 (Legal Notice 441 of 2011, as amended) and the Waste Management (Activity Registration) Regulations, 2007 (Legal Notice 106 of 2007).</p>	PDS Pg. 21-22, 26-27

	Issues to be considered	Relevant environmental constraints, considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning?	<p>Yes. The construction phase is expected to result in small quantities of construction waste, given the scale of the proposed construction works.</p> <p>Wastes arising during the operational phase will be minimal, save for oils, chemicals, fluids and/or acids, and municipal waste.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The waste generated for this individual project <i>per se</i> is not likely to have a significant impact, as long as conditions set by the Environment & Resources Authority (ERA) are adhered to. Reply to question 3 above also refers.</p>	PDS Pg. 17, 21
5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	<p>Yes. During construction: fugitive dust emissions from the quarry restoration works, and NO_x from construction vehicles.</p> <p>During operation: NO_x from operational traffic to and from the site as well as the activities carried out within the open storage area.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No. During the infilling of the quarry and construction phase, emissions are not considered to be significant. This is in view that the site context is such that there are no particular sensitive receptors in the expected area of influence of the development. Dust during infilling and construction is a temporary impact which can be sufficiently mitigated through the application of measures identified in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (Legal Notice 295 of 2007).</p> <p>The proposal is not expected to generate a considerable amount of traffic during operation.</p> <p>Other impacts generated from the open storage can be sufficiently mitigated through proper design, adequate waste management and measures which could be managed through environmental permit.</p>	PDS Pg. 26-27
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	<p>Yes. A degree of noise emissions are expected to occur during the infilling, construction, and operation phase. Vibrations are expected to be minimal and temporary, during construction.</p> <p>Light emissions are expected to be generated during night-time operation.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant noise impacts are envisaged during construction (minimal construction envisaged). This however does not exonerate the applicant from adopting mitigation measures that reduce noise emissions, and other requirements stipulated in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (Legal Notice 295 of 2007, as amended).</p> <p>Vibrations and noise impacts are not expected to be substantial during the operational phase</p>	PDS Pg. 27-28

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
			<p>given the site context. Any impacts can be sufficiently mitigated through proper design and measures which could be managed through an environmental permit.</p> <p>Light emissions above the current baseline situation may be reduced through minimum security lighting during the night while care should be taken in the choice of luminaries to minimise glare and at the same time prevent the energy wastage.</p>	
7	<p>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>	<p>Yes. The site is located within a drinking water safeguarding zone (Malta Resources Authority). The project will increase the risk of contamination of water through the potential release of contaminated waters into the surrounding environment.</p> <p>There are also potential risks of oil leaks and accidental spillages from construction vehicles, albeit these are expected to be minor.</p> <p>During operation, there is a greater risk of leaks and spillages from the open storage.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant impacts are envisaged in terms of contamination of water bodies.</p> <p>A combination of standard design-based and operational measures should be sufficient to ensure that there are no risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants. It is envisaged that such measures will be duly factored directly into the mainstream development permitting and environmental permitting mechanisms.</p>	PDS Pg. 25-26
8	<p>Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?</p>	<p>No increase in the risk of accidents is envisaged, other than occupational risks typically associated with construction activity and day-to-day general operations.</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>	/
9	<p>Will the Project result in social changes for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?</p>	<p>No. The project is not likely to result in social changes in demography, traditional lifestyles, or employment.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant negative impacts are envisaged.</p>	PDS Pg. 4
10	<p>Are there any such factors which should be considered such as the</p>	<p>No other consequential developments are being envisaged, provided that appropriate safeguards are included in the development</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No significant impacts are envisaged. Reply to question 1 refers.</p>	/

	Issues to be considered	Relevant environmental constraints, considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
	consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	consent process vis-à-vis future conversion of the development to other uses and potential similar applications within surrounding areas.		
11	Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	The proposed development falls within Outside Development Zone (ODZ) and within the Drinking-Water Safeguard Zone as identified by MRA under the Water Policy Framework Regulations (Legal Notice 194 of 2004).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged. Replies to Question 1 and 7 refer.	/
12	Are there any areas on or around the location which 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?	No. The site does not fall within any areas of ecological importance. Reply to Question 11 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to Question 11 refers.	/
13	Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting,	No. Reply to Question 11 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to Question 11 refers.	/

	Issues to be considered	Relevant environmental constraints, considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
	over wintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?			
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Reply to question 7 above refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to question 7 above 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?	No. There are no designated areas of high landscape value in the near proximity of the site.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Given the nature, location and context of the proposed development, no significant impacts on landscape and scenic value are envisaged.	PDS Pg 28
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?	Yes, albeit limitedly. The site is accessible through existing local access and distributor road network to the quarry site.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged as the development is not expected to entail any substantial increase in traffic.	/
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?	No. Reply to Question 16 refers; the road in question is not particularly susceptible to congestion.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to Question 16 refers.	/
18	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	No. The proposal is situated in a disused quarry and is not likely to be visible to many people due to the low density of visitors in the area.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged given that the proposed open storage will be located below road level and the proposed landscaping will mitigate any perceived visual impact.	PDS Pg. 28

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location were identified.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are expected, subject to consultation (through the development permitting process) with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH).	/
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	No. The site is located ODZ and although the site lies in a disused quarry, it seeks to change the use into an open storage. Furthermore, the proposal will hinder the potential restoration of the disused quarry into its original state.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to Question 1 refers.	/
21	Are there existing land uses on 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 surrounded by agricultural land and also has a number of open storage areas, construction/plant yards, boat yard, industrial garage complexes and other associated uses.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant environmental impacts are expected since the site is self-contained. Furthermore, the nearest residential areas are also well beyond the expected geographic area of influence of the proposed development (Iklin approx. 225 metres).	PDS Pg. 11-12
22	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The proposal is located Outside Development Zone (ODZ) and within a disused quarry.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Replies to Questions 1 and 20 refer.	/
23	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built up, which could be	No. The proposal lies approximately 225 metres from the built-up area of Iklin, at its closest point.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged.	/

	Issues to be considered	Relevant environmental constraints, considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
	affected by the project?			
24	Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities which could be affected by the project?	No. None that are known of.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
25	Are there any areas on 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?	No. Reply to Question 7 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Reply to Question 7 refers.	
26	Are there any areas on or around the location which have already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The surrounding rural landscape has been largely compromised through the proliferation of unsightly industrial developments and quarrying activities. See also replies to Questions 1 and 10.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Replies to Questions 1 and 10 refer.	/

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
27	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, or subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	Yes, but only limitedly, Given the location, topography and self-contained nature of the site, the only relevant consideration is flooding of the site itself in the event of exceptional rainfall (considering that much of the development will be located below street level), potentially increasing risks of leakage/seepage into the aquifer.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> A combination of relatively standard design-based and operational measures should be sufficient to ensure that there are no risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants. It is envisaged that such measures will be duly factored directly into the mainstream development permitting and environmental registration mechanisms.	/

4. EIA Screening Conclusion

4.1 EIA screening conclusion

The above detailed EIA screening did not outline any significant negative impacts of the proposal. This can be addressed directly through the mainstream development consent mechanism and 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 Planning Statement (EPS), and qualifies for the exemption process established in the EIA Regulations, 2007 as per Regulation 3(8) of S.L. 504.79.

Any pending matters outlined in EPD Memo Min. 122 are still applicable.

4.2 Recommended consultations

It is being recommended that the following entities are also consulted: Malta Resources Authority (MRA) in view of the nature and location of the proposal.

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.