

# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Schedule III

(Screening according to S.L. 549.46)

**ERA Reference no.:** EA/000011/18

**PA Reference no.:** PA/09598/17

**Project Title:** To sanction dumping of construction inert waste in quarry, extraction of stone, sanctioning of structures in quarry including reservoirs and stores for vehicles, machinery and equipment used in quarrying activities boundary walls and fixing of gates.

**Location:** Quarry at Piccolo Feudo, Kontrada tad-Dawl off, Ta' Ghadajma, Mqabba, Malta

**Screening date:** March 2018

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### 1. Description of Proposal

#### 1.1 Outline of project/development

PA/09598/17 is a planning application for a proposed development located at Quarry at Piccolo Feudo, Kontrada tad-Dawl off, Ta' Ghadajma, Mqabba. The proposed project will involve the following interventions (see **Figure 3**):

- Phase 1: Quarrying the remaining available soft minerals along with crushing activities (approx. area to be quarried: 6000 m<sup>2</sup>);
- Phase 2: Restoring the quarry through backfilling with inert material; and
- Phase 3: Transforming exhausted quarry into an open storage facility.

The applicant seeks to restore parts of the quarry that has been exhausted into a temporary aggregate production facility and undertake quarrying/mining activities of the remaining soft stone. When all activity will be ceased and backfilling completed, the quarry will be turned into an open storage facility to house boats and heavy machinery/vehicles. The restoration of the exhausted parts will be infilled with inert construction material. The proposed development covers a site area of approximately 26,091 m<sup>2</sup> whilst the depth levels of the quarry vary from an elevation of 76.12 m, from mean sea level on the south-west part of the site; to an elevation of 97.85 m, from mean sea level on the northeast part of the site.

#### 1.2 Site description and related considerations

The site falls within the administrative territory of the Mqabba Local Council, particularly to the northeast periphery and is situated very close to the Malta International Airport. The site adjoins two access roads and is accessible from Triq il-Madonna tad-Dawl (see **Figure 1 and 2**).

The site is disturbed land as it has been heavily degraded by quarry operations which characterise the immediate surroundings. Apart from other quarries, agricultural fields, access roads, construction/yard plants and industrial garage complexes also surround the site. The quarrying activities almost exhausted by large, have left a distinctive void that is being replaced with inert construction material. A number of small buildings are present on site. These include, a generator room, used to generate electricity on site; storage facilities, sanitary facilities, offices and other ancillary facilities, used for the purpose of running the quarry. The site falls within L-Ajruport ta' Ħal-Luqa Bird Sanctuary (Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations, S.L. 549.42), considered a nominal environmental constraint as the "bird sanctuary" in question is intended as a prohibition of shooting activities for the purpose of airport safety, and is not related to environmental protection.

### 1.3 Site history

An enforcement notice, EC/00821/06, was issued for illegal soft stone quarrying, generator room, stores and stone crusher without permit, which is still pending direct action.

A planning application, PA 02604/16, (submitted previous to PA 09598/17) with the same proposal has been withdrawn.

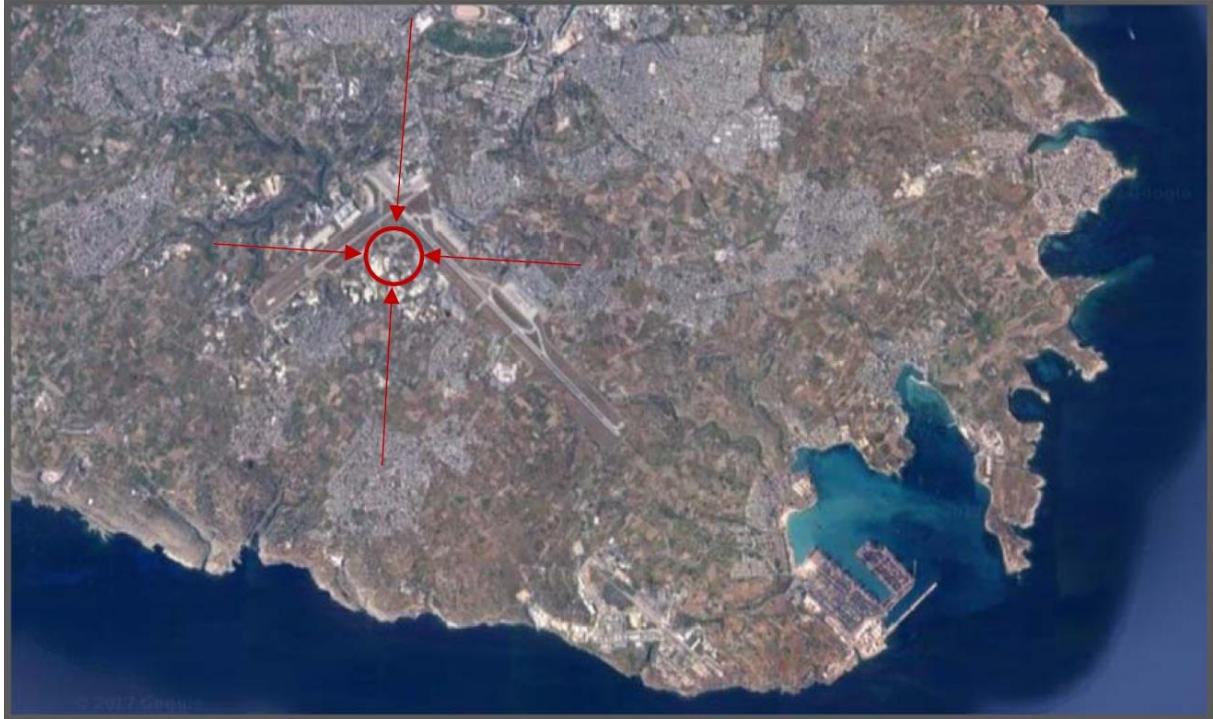


Figure 1: Location of site area (in red). Source: PDS.



Figure 2: Location of site (in red), accessed from Triq il-Madonna tad-Dawl. Source: PDS.

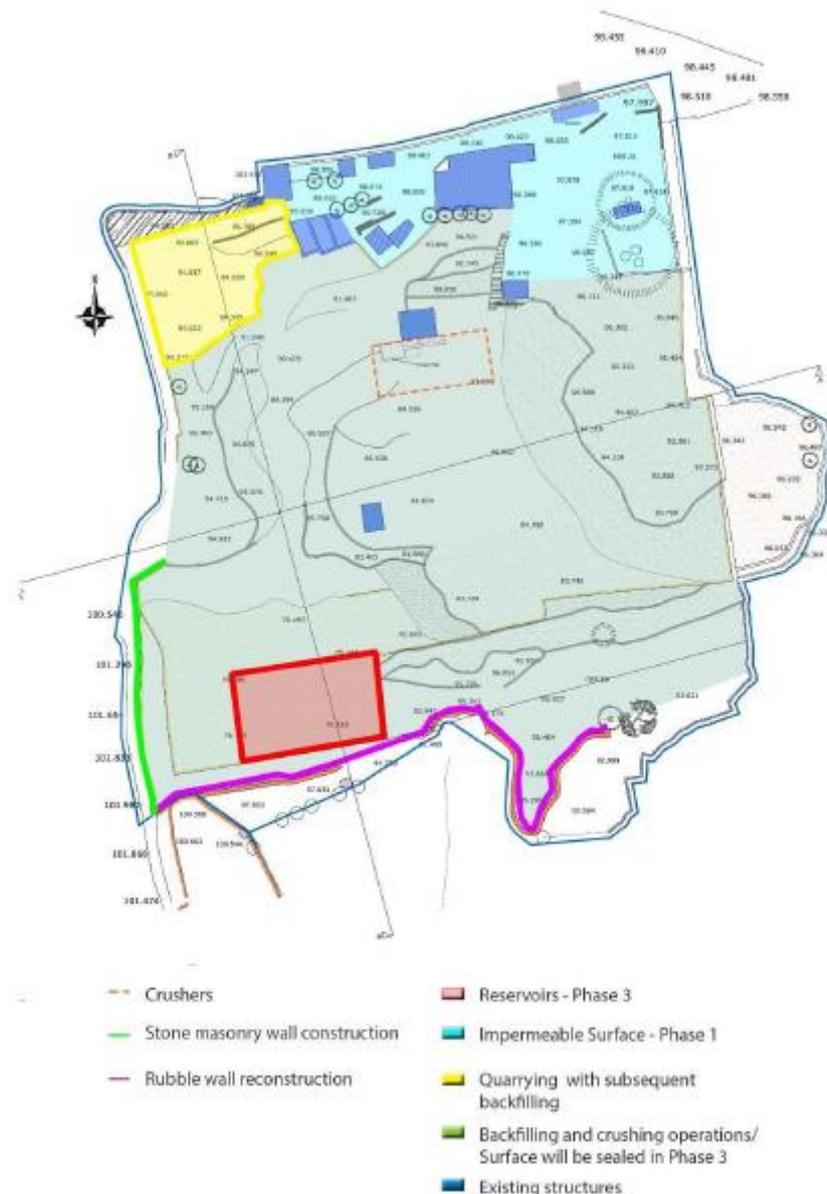


Figure 3: Key Plan (not to scale). Source: PDS.

## 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 under Schedule I: Category II Projects: Sections 9.0.2.1 (*Quarries, open-cast mines or underground mines, or projects for the extraction of minerals, ores or peat, as well as, extensions thereto or ancillary surface or subsurface installations, not covered by Category I*); and 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 (S.L. 549.46) .

2.2 **Documents used for screening:**

1. Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018;
2. ERA Screening Memo in PA 2604/16/doc.25a

### 3. Screening Matrix Checklist

The following screening checklist is based on information in the Project Description Statement provided by the developer in accordance with Schedule II of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46) and the European Commission Guidance on Screening (2017).

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
1	Will construction, operation, decommissioning or demolition works of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in water bodies, etc)?	Yes. Quarrying, crushing, backfilling and the proposed open storage will change the topography and land use.	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No. Although the proposed open storage shall hinder the potential restoration of the site to its original use, the site, part of which is to be sanctioned works carried out on site without permit, and its surroundings are already heavily committed to quarrying and other related activities including other industrial uses. In this regard, no significant impacts in terms of topography and physical changes to the site are envisaged.</p>	PDS pgs. 12-13 & 31.
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?	Yes.  Quarrying will extract c. 430,016 m <sup>3</sup> of Globigerina Limestone, which is a non-renewable natural resource in short supply. The open storage facility will occupy the site following the backfilling of the exhausted quarry.	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The extracted resource will be used in the local construction industry. Although it is being assumed that around 25% of the extracted stone products would be unsuitable for use and therefore treated as waste such material will be re-used and recycled (see question 4 below). In this regard, impact is not considered significant.</p> <p>Given the nature and scale of Phase 3 (open storage), no significant impacts are envisaged.</p>	PDS pg. 13.
3	Will the Project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or	The proposed project is likely to be a source of dust emissions and potentially lead to leaks of fuels or oils from the machinery into the surrounding environment	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No. The impact associated with dust emissions and potential leaks of fuels or oils is not considered significant, given the temporary nature of the quarrying</p>	PDS pg. 16 - 17

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
	materials which could be harmful to human health to the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	during the quarrying, infilling and crushing activities.  Spent oils and fuels from the stored vehicles may leak.	and backfilling operations. Given the location of the proposal and as long as the conditions in the environmental permit are adhered to, impacts are not likely to be significant.  With respect to potential leaks of oils and fuels for vehicles stored in the open storage facility, impacts are not significant as long as the ground is impermeable.	
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Yes.  Phase 1 and 2: Around 25% of the extracted material would be unsuitable for use and will be recycled/reused or sold to third parties. Waste material from the quarrying (and crushing) suitable for recycling will be produced into either fine or coarse grain aggregate stones of varying sizes. Unsuitable material will be sorted, deposited and compacted within the quarry or into skips to be deposited into other certified waste management installations.  Phase 3 may generate spent oils and fuels from site.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  Consideration for Best Practicable Environmental Options (BPEO) has been made to ensure preference towards the reuse of mineral waste material rather than disposal. Backfilling would need to adhere to the provisions of the Waste Regulations (S.L 549.63).  Phase 3: No significant impacts are envisaged provided that mitigation measures including the collection of spent oils and fuels into containers placed on pallets which can hold 110% of the said capacity, impermeable concrete mix flooring and storage of spent lead-acid batteries in an acid-resistant container that is collected by an authorized waste broker/carrier for disposal at an approved site.	PDS pgs. 7, 11, 13 & 15.
5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air or lead to exceeding Ambient Air Quality standards in Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC?	Yes.  PM <sub>10</sub> will be generated from quarry operations and backfilling.  The activities for the quarry after use, namely storage and light industrial uses may generate PM <sub>10</sub> and NO <sub>x</sub> from traffic generation. are not likely to generate significant amounts of emissions to air.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No. The impact associated with dust emissions is not considered significant during quarrying and backfilling given the temporary nature. Given the location of the proposal and as long as the conditions in the environmental permit are adhered to, impacts are not likely to be significant.	PDS pgs. 14 & 16.

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or the releasing of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes. The proposal is likely to generate ambient noise in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development through quarrying activities.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No. The proposal is not likely to generate any significant noise or vibration emissions levels that go beyond the background levels of the area given that the site is located c. 400m away from the nearest development zone/residential area in Mqabba.  No significant impacts from light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation are envisaged.	PDS pg. 16 & 24
7	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?	Yes. The proposal partially lies within the groundwater Safeguard Zone – Mqabba-Kirkop Groundwater (MT011) under the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L.549.100).  There are potential risks of oil leaks and accidental spillages from construction vehicles.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No. The proposal is not expected to have a significant effect from contamination of land and water of pollutants on ground or surface water.  A combination of standard design-based and operational measures (such as impermeable concrete flooring) have been proposed to ensure that there are no risks of contamination of land or water from the release of pollutants.	
8	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	No increase in the risk of accidents is envisaged during all phases of the proposal, other than occupational risks typically associated with construction activity and day-to-day quarrying operations.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
9	Will the Project result in environmentally related social changes for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No changes in demography and traditional lifestyles are expected.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant negative impacts are envisaged.	PDS pgs. 22-23 & 29.

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
10	Are there any such factors which should be considered such as the consequential development which could lead to environmental impacts or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	No other consequential developments are being envisaged.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	
11	Is the project located within or close to any areas which are protected under international, EU or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the Project?	Yes, but only nominally. The site is located Outside Development Zone (ODZ) and falls within L-Ajruport ta' Ħal-Luqa 'Bird Sanctuary' (Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations, S.L. 549.42).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No. In this case, the Bird Sanctuary is only a nominal environmental constraint, as the purpose of airport safety, and is not really related to environmental protection.	/
12	Are there any areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. marshlands, wetlands, watercourses or other water bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the Project?	Reply to Question 11 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
13	Are there any areas on or	Reply to Question 11 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  	/

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
	around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over wintering, migration, which could be affected by the Project?		No significant impacts are envisaged.	
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters (or features of the marine environment) on or around the location which could be affected by the Project?	Reply to Question 7 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
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. The site forms part of a cluster of quarries which have completely obliterated the topography of the area.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged given the nature and location of the proposal.	/
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. The site is c. 250 m away from Malta International Airport and neighbours the runway.  On the other hand, the site is not situated on a major road.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts from activities of proposed development are envisaged.	/
17	Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause	No, the site is not situated on a major road.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No, impact is not significant given that it is unlikely that any significant additional operational traffic is attracted to the site.	/

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
	environmental problems, which could be affected by the Project?			
18	Is the Project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	No. The site is located within an area which is predominately of an industrial nature. Over the years, quarrying and mineral extraction activities have created a scar which is readily visible from high viewpoints.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant visual effects are envisaged considering the site context. Sensitive receptors are minimal as the proposal will be located below street level and is located within a quarried area.	/
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location that could be affected by the Project?	No cultural or historic features are known to have survived within the site or its immediate vicinity.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
20	Is the Project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield/ODZ land?	Partly yes as the proposal will take up the remaining pockets of degraded natural habitat present at the site periphery and in between the boundaries of the adjoining quarries to continue with further stone extraction. This part has an area of c. 6000 m <sup>2</sup>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  Given the nature and location of the proposal, no significant effects are expected.	/
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 surrounding land-uses are predominantly associated with quarrying activities, industrial or agricultural. The industrial areas are mainly construction-related, storage and warehousing.  Residential areas to the southwest and southeast (c. 700m and c. 400m respectively, away from the proposed site boundary). The site is c. 250 m away from the Malta International Airport.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts by the temporary dust emissions on nearby agricultural activity is envisaged.  Although the proposed development seems to be encroaching onto the last surviving pockets of greenfield/degraded natural habitat, given the nature and location of the proposal, no significant impacts are envisaged.	/

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
22	Are there any plans for future land uses within or around the location which could be affected by the Project?	No such future uses are envisaged or known of, other than those identified in the South Malta Local Plan (2006).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged. since the area is designated for such use in the Local Plan for the South of Malta.	/
23	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, that could be affected by the project?	No. The industrial areas juxtaposed to the site are mainly quarrying, construction-related, storage and warehousing.  The proposed development is located c. 400m away from the nearest development zone/residential area in Mqabba.  The site is c. 250 m away from Malta International Airport.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged vis-à-vis densely populated/built-up areas.	/
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?	Reply to Questions 21 and 23 refers.  No such areas are present other than the airport grounds which will not be foreseeably affected by the proposed development.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
25	Are there any areas within or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which	Reply to Question 7 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  Reply to Question 7 refers.	/

Question Number:	Questions to be Considered	Types and characteristics of identified potential impacts  Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect?  Briefly justify	Document Reference
	could be affected by the project?			
26	Are there any areas within or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded that could be affected by the project?	Yes. The surrounding rural landscape has been largely compromised through the proliferation of unsightly industrial developments. See also replies to Questions 1 and 10.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  Given the nature and location of the proposal, no significant effects are expected.	/
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?	No such events are likely to occur in this area given its location, topography and surrounding environmental context.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	/

## 4. Conclusion

### 4.1 Screening Conclusion and recommended way forward

The proposal falls within the scope of Schedule I ,Category II as per Sections 9.0.2.1 (*Quarries, open-cast mines or underground mines, or projects for the extraction of minerals, ores or peat, as well as, extensions thereto or ancillary surface or subsurface installations, not covered by Category I*); and 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 EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46), however following detailed screening in accordance with Schedule III of the same Regulations and matrix above, the proposal does not require an EIA given that no significant environmental impacts have been identified.

#### **4.2 Conditions**

1. The executable version of this development permission together with the approved plans and the commencement notice shall not be issued until such time that the applicant submits a written acknowledgement from the ERA confirming that an Environmental Permit application has been submitted and validated by the ERA. This shall cover all operational aspects of the applicant's site including related operations not necessarily covered by this development application.
2. The backfilling and aggregate recycling operations from outside sources shall not commence until such time that the Environmental Permit is issued by ERA.
3. The executable version of this development permission together with the approved plans and the commencement notice shall not be issued until such time that the applicant submits an application for and obtains a Nature Permit from the ERA for the proposed interventions on trees. Works shall not be carried out until such a permit is granted by ERA.

#### **4.4 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.