

# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Screening

(According to Schedule IB of LN 114/2007, as amended)

<b>PA file no.:</b>	PA 03592/16
<b>Other reference:</b>	EA 00024/16
<b>Project Title:</b>	To demolish pre 1978 existing dwelling and to construct an aging and disability residence (class 2) on disturbed land, according to SPED policy TO 2.1.
<b>Location:</b>	Site at, Għargħur Road, Sqaq L-Imnieqa, Naxxar, Malta
<b>Screening date:</b>	August 2016

### 1. Description of Proposal

#### 1.1 Outline of project/development

PA 03592/16 is an application for an old people's home of three storeys with two basement levels. The proposed facility will have a total site area of approximately 4,748m<sup>2</sup> with a building footprint of 1,957m<sup>2</sup>, and a total floor area of 8,510m<sup>2</sup>; a soft landscaping scheme is also planned. It will consist of 234 beds within the three over-ground floors, as well as a number of other miscellaneous facilities including a dining room, chapel, activity room, multi-sensory room, therapeutic baths, and a gymnasium. The proposal also includes provisions for administrative areas, staff facilities, plant and servicing facilities, storage rooms, and medical facilities (medical treatment rooms and a morgue).

Two access points will be available to the site. The primary access will be from Triq Għargħur which will allow access to the reception area, ambulances, and surface parking. Sqaq L-Imnieqa will then provide access to the basement parking levels, and for service vehicles.

Water, sewage and electrical services are readily available.

#### 1.2 Site description and related considerations

The site falls Outside the Development Zone (ODZ) boundary and outside the Category I settlement. It is currently occupied by a rural structure which was a part of a, now mostly demolished, farming complex. The rest of the site is disturbed land on which there is discarded rubbish and demolition debris.

Developments in the surrounding vicinity are mainly residential and agricultural. The North of the site is characterised by a Category I Rural Settlement, while the Naxxar Development Zone is directly adjacent to the site's Western side. Arable land and agricultural features dominate the rest of the surrounding areas.

Furthermore, the site does not fall within any listed ecological or archeologically sensitive areas however it lies (i) adjacent to a Grade 1 Archeologically Protected Site (G.N. 486 of 2012); and (ii) 250 metres from a Groundwater Protection Zone.

Figures 1 - 4 below indicate the location and ground floor plan of the proposed development, as well as a view into the site.

#### 1.3 Relevant planning history

- PA 01662/94: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of villa (**Refused**)
- PA 05054/98: To divide portion of land partly used as residential and partly as a farm into residential units (**Refused**)
- PA 06856/04: Proposed boundary wall (rubble wall) (**Approved**)
- EC 00432/09: Poggejt tank u materjal jew skart iehor minghajr permess (**Pending Direct Action**)
- PA 03592/16: Current Application

#### **1.4 Alternative Sites**

A Site Selection Exercise (SSE) was also carried out as part of the proposal in order to identify a suitable site for the proposed development. Phase 1 of the SSE first identified two vacant land sites in Naxxar within the Development Zone, but these were determined by the Planning Authority to be unfeasible based on the results from the SSE and a feasibility analysis conducted for each site. ERA was not consulted on this decision, nor at any other stage of the SSE. Phase 2 of the SSE involved identifying suitable sites which were Outside Development Zone. In this regard, two sites were identified, one in Maghtab and the Scheme Site. The Maghtab Site was deemed unsuitable due to its rural location, distance from the nearest urban area, and general accessibility issues. The Scheme Site was chosen following a SWOT analysis of the site.



Figure 1: Location of the site earmarked for the proposed aging and disability residence (Source: PA Mapserver)



Figure 2: Close-up of the site and its immediate surroundings (Source: PA Mapserver)



Figure 3: View into the site



Figure 4: Proposed Ground Floor Plan

## 2. EIA-relevant history

### **2.1 Relevant EIA/screening criteria** (citations refer to S.L. 549.46, as amended, except where otherwise specified):

At ERA screening stage (Minute 18 in file), the proposed development was deemed to require a Project Description Statement (PDS) given that the proposal is seeking permission for an old people's home with more than 60 beds in a rural area and a gross floor area that exceeds 2,000sqm in accordance with Schedule IA, Category II Section 3.9.2.2 of the EIA Regulations, 2007 (S.L. 549.46).

### **2.2 Version of documents used for screening:**

1. PDS dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 (PA/03592/16/Doc. 59a).
2. Plans and Drawings (PA/03592/16/Doc. 1).

### 3. Screening Matrix

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	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 proposal has a site area of approximately 4,748m <sup>2</sup> located ODZ, on a site that is partly occupied by a dwelling with the rest being undeveloped, albeit disturbed, land.	<b>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. The site under assessment is located outside the development zone boundary. Although much of the site has already been committed, the proposal would result in the intensification of the existing structures, committing the entire site through further formalisation of the area leading to further sprawl of urban development beyond the designated Urban Area (Development Zone and the Category I settlement) (vide former EPD memo at <b>PA 03592/16/Doc. 18</b> ).	PDS Pg. 12
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.  The proposal will take up approximately 4,748m <sup>2</sup> of land ODZ.  The proposal also includes the use of a variety of building materials, including steel, concrete, bricks, plastic, membranes, and glass during construction, and of water and electricity during operations.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No.  The use of such resources for this individual project per se is not likely to have a significant impact, particularly since the amounts expected to be used are minimal.  The energy and water requirements of the project are expected to be minimal, thus no significant impact is envisaged.	PDS Pgs. 12, 30
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?	Yes.  Dust emissions may also occur during demolition, excavations and construction phases, which may have a temporary impact on the nearby residential dwellings and commercial areas, together with other emissions that would be generated by machinery during construction.  During operation, the proposal will include an increase in operational traffic which may have an impact on air emissions.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No. Potential dust impacts from excavation works (leading to a total of approximately 12,000 cubic metres) are short-term and temporary.  During operation, the proposal may potentially lead to an increase in air emission impacts generated by traffic in and around the area, however given that the AADT was predicted to be 455 vehicles ( <i>source: PA3592/16/83a</i> Traffic Impact Assessment), the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on air quality during operation.	PDS Pgs. 31-32  Traffic Impact Assessment t pg. 37.

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning ?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>During the construction phase, waste will include soil removed from the site and normal construction waste streams (12,000 cubic metres of excavated rock) associated with the building of boundary wall, levelling and construction of structures. The soil will be stored off-site or re-used as landscaping as necessary, with any remaining soil used as directed by the PA/Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>The operational phase will produce approximately 2,000 litres of domestic waste, 1,000 litres recycling waste, and 350 litres of clinical waste per day. 1 litre of sharps is also expected to be produced per month. This will be stored in the basement (level -1) and disposed of off-site.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>    Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>No. As long as both hazardous and non-hazardous waste generated during both the construction and the operational phase, follow the required legislation, impact is not considered to be significant.</p>	PDS Pgs. 31-32.
5	Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Dust emissions may occur during demolition, excavation and construction phases, which may have a temporary impact on the nearby residential dwellings and commercial areas, together with other emissions that would be generated by machinery during construction.</p> <p>During operation, the proposal will include an increase in operational traffic which may have an impact on air emissions.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>    Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>Impacts associated with dust generation during the construction phase are not considered to be of major significance, given the amounts of excavations required for the proposal, and as long as the construction phase of the project respects the requirements of the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007.</p> <p>During operation, the proposal may potentially lead to an increase in air emission impacts generated by traffic in and around the area, however given that the AADT was predicted to be 455 vehicles (<i>source: PA3592/16/83a</i> Traffic Impact Assessment), the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on air quality during operation.</p>	PDS Pgs. 19-20.  Traffic Impact Assessment pg. 37.
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The proposal will generate noise, vibrations, and light emissions during both construction and operation.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>    Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>During construction potential noise impacts are likely to be short term, temporary and localised given the scale, duration and nature of the proposal. The construction phase will likely generate noise from excavators and additional truck traffic in and out of the site.</p>	PDS Pgs. 19-20.

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
			During operation the ambient noise in the immediate vicinity will be generated from the increased traffic levels from and into the site, however such impact is not likely to be significant.	
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?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The site lies about 250m from the closest Groundwater Protection Zone.</p> <p>During the construction phase, spillages of oils and lubes, as well as overflows of construction/excavation debris, may result. During the operational phase, run-off from the site into the surrounding fields may occur.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>No. The implementation of appropriate design and operational measures should suffice for ensuring that there is no percolation of such waste into the groundwater, and any spillages can be effectively prevented through the application of mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007.</p> <p>During operation, the on-site reservoir will be used to collect run-off water.</p>	PDS Pgs. 31, 36
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, other than 'normal' occupational risks typically associated with proposed development.	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>No significant impacts are envisaged during both construction and operation.</p>	/
9	Will the Project result in social changes for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No. Considering the scale, nature and size of the project, the proposed development is not expected to lead to significant demographic or social changes. The project will employ an equivalent of 70 full-time workers and will provide approximately 234 beds for the elderly during operation.	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>No significant changes are expected.</p>	PDS Pgs. 12, 33
10	Are there any such factors which should be considered such as the consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The development would potentially open up development pressures in the surrounding area.</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p>Yes. The development of this proposal on ODZ land may contribute to the further sprawl of urban development beyond the Urban Area and into the countryside.</p>	/

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
	in the locality?			
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?	Yes.  The site does not fall within any listed ecological or archeologically sensitive areas. However it lies: (i) adjacent to a Grade 1 Archeologically Protected Site (G.N. 486 of 2012).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> <hr/> It is unclear whether the project, through site clearance and excavation would result in the discovery of any artefacts on site or whether it is expected to have a significant impact on the protected site in question.	/
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 listed ecological sensitive areas.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <hr/> No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
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, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	No.  The site does not contain any protected, important, or sensitive species.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <hr/> No significant impacts are envisaged.	/
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which	Reply to Question 7 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> <hr/> Reply to Question 7 refers.	PDS Pgs. 31, 36

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
	could be affected by the project?			
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 such areas are known of.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts are being envisaged.	/
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 lies in the vicinities of Triq Gharghur and Sqaq L-Imnieqa. These roads are used for access to the adjacent Category I Rural Settlement, the Naxxar Development Zone, and the surrounding agricultural areas.  An increase in operational traffic is expected as a result of the proposal.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  During operation, the proposal may potentially lead to an increase in air emission impacts generated by traffic in and around the area, however given that the AADT was predicted to be 455 vehicles ( <i>source: PA3592/16/83a</i> Traffic Impact Assessment), the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on air quality during operation. The Transport Impact Assessment presented as part of the case file did not identify any significant traffic related impacts resulting from the development. It also identifies a number of measures to mitigate to minor impacts that are likely to occur (Eg. The relocation of the nearest bus stop 17metres north as it currently straddles the proposed exit point of the development)  A Green Travel Plan was also presented in order to shift the mode of travel of staff and visitors away from single occupancy passenger cars.	PDS Pg. 27  Traffic Impact Assessment t pgs. 43-44
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?	Yes.  The site lies in the vicinities of Triq Gharghur and Sqaq L-Imnieqa. These roads are used for access to the adjacent Category I Rural Settlement, the Naxxar Development Zone, and the surrounding agricultural areas.  An increase in operational traffic is expected as a result of the proposal.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  The Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) identified two junctions which were specifically susceptible to congestion. However, no significant impacts were identified in the analysis.  Furthermore, the TIA also included the AADT that is to be generated by the project (455 vehicles). This does not represent a significant environmental impact.	PDS Pg. 27  Traffic Impact Assessment t pgs. 27-29, 43
18	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes.  The site lies Outside Development Zone (ODZ) and adjacent to a Category I Rural	<b>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  Yes. The project will result in the modification to the appearance and character of the site through physical	PDS Pg. 34

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
		Settlement, and the Naxxar Development Zone. Therefore, the proposal is likely to be visible to most of the locals.  The proposed structures will also be visible from the agricultural areas to the northeast and southeast of the project	interventions. The proposal will increase the built development and intensify activity on site. A separate visual impact assessment has been submitted as part of the case file. This assessment has identified potential impacts of moderate significance on visual amenity. Such impacts are expected from the northeast and southeast of the site.	
19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Reply to Question 11 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>  Reply to Question 11 refers.	/
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	No.  Although the site lies Outside Development Zone (ODZ), it is currently occupied by a rural structure which was a part of a, now demolished, farming complex. The rest of the site is disturbed land on which there is discarded rubbish and demolition debris.	<b>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  Yes. Although, the land is already disturbed, with a number of structures in place, the proposal will lead to the uptake of land currently not being within the development zone.	PDS Pg. 12
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. Part of the site lies within a Category 1 Rural Settlement area and is approx. 50 metres from the village of Ħal Għargħur.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  The development may potentially have negative social impacts for those living in the vicinity, as it will be introducing a built development of an urban nature to the site, however such impact is not considered significant.	
22	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No such future uses are currently envisaged or known of.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unclear <input type="checkbox"/></b>  No significant impacts are envisaged.	/

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
23	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built up, which could be affected by the project?	Yes.  The site lies adjacent to a Category I Rural Settlement, and the Naxxar Development Zone.  Replies to Question 3 and 21 refer.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unclear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>  The development may potentially have negative social impacts for those living in the vicinity, as it will be introducing a built development of an urban nature to the site; however such impact is not considered significant.  On the other hand, emissions during construction, as well as air emissions from operational traffic, may have a negative impact on the surrounding communities.	/
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 such land uses are present.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> 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?	Reply to Question 7 refers.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> 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	Yes.  The site is currently occupied by a rural structure which was a part of a, now demolished, farming complex. The rest of the site is disturbed land on which there is discarded rubbish and demolition debris.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/>  No significant impacts envisaged.	/

	Issues to be considered	Relevant constraints, environmental considerations & potential impacts	Is any significant effect envisaged?	Document reference
	standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?			
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. No such events are likely to occur in this area given its location, topography and context.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unclear <input type="checkbox"/> No significant impacts are envisaged.	/

#### **4. EIA Screening Conclusion and recommended way forward**

##### **4.1 EIA screening conclusion**

The above EIA screening matrix indicates that the proposed development would qualify for an EIA as per Schedule IA, as per Schedule IA, Category II Section 3.9.2.2 of the EIA Regulations, 2007 (L.N. 114 of 2007, as amended), which would need to address the following aspects:

- Effects of the proposal on land use;
- Potential cultural heritage impacts;
- Cumulative impacts on the surrounding area of influence; and
- Impacts on the visual amenity of the site.

In the light of the above, it is confirmed that:

1. The proposed development qualifies for an EIA (EPS); and
2. The envisaged impacts of the proposal are such that the development cannot be exempted from such EIA requirement.

The above is without prejudice to the concerns raised in EPD Memo at Doc. PA03592/16/18 in view that the proposed development outside the development zone boundary will lead to an intensification of the existing structures thus committing the entire site to development, further formalisation of the site area and further urban sprawl through the introduction of an urban use ODZ.

##### **4.2 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.