



Environmental Permit

Environment Protection Act (CAP. 549)

Permit number:
NP0160/20

Approved documents
NP0160/20/1B/16A

The Environment and Resources Authority (hereinafter the Authority; the Competent Authority or ERA) in exercise of its powers under the Environment Protection Act (CAP. 549), hereby authorises:

Mr Vincent Attard obo Nature Trust FEE Malta (hereinafter “the Permit Holder”),
Of / Whose Registered Office (or principal place of business) is at

Xrobb I-Għaġin Nature Park
Xrobb I-Għaġin
Marsaxlokk

Uprooting of 40 shrubs of *Salsola melitensis* and taking of cuttings for propagation of specimens

At Xrobb I-Għaġin Nature Park, Marsaxlokk

The validity of this permit is **up to 31st December 2020** from the granted date below. An application for renewal of this permit is to be submitted at least **one (1) month** prior to expiry of this permit.

Signed	Date
Anthony Aquilina Unit Manager (Permitting) F/ Director Environment and Resources	Permit Granted: 08/05/ 2020

Authorised to sign on behalf of the Competent Authority

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Conditions

Introductory Note

This permit is granted in accordance with the provisions of the Environment Protection Act and Regulation 43(a) and (b) of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006 (S.L. 549.44), hereinafter referred to as the Regulations, for the purpose of exempting the Permit Holder from the prohibitions on operations or activities referred to in Regulation 26(2) of the same Regulations to uproot a limited number of *Salsola melitensis* specimens for the purpose of protecting archaeological heritage in-line with Regulation 44(c) of the said Regulations, and to take cuttings of, transport, propagate in an artificial environment, and replant specimens of *Salsola melitensis* in line with Regulation 44(a)(d) of the said Regulations.

The activity shall, subject to the conditions of this Permit, be managed, controlled and carried out as described in the NP Application, approved documents, and/or as otherwise previously agreed in writing by the Authority.

Status Log

Detail	Date
Application NP	25/03/2020
Permit Issued	08/05/2020

Pre-Commencement of activities/ work

1. The Permit Holder shall advise of the dates of works at least seven (7) days prior to the commencement on ced.nature@era.org.mt. In the case of change of date, the permit holder is to inform ERA of such a change at least two (2) days in advance. In the case of short-term cancellation of the activity (especially outside office hours), the Authority should be contacted on 9921 0404.

Permitted Activities

2. The Permit Holder is authorised to carry out the activities and the associated activities specified in Table 1

Activity	Description of specified activity	Limits of specified activity
Uprooting of specimens and taking of cuttings of protected species for propagation and re-planting	As described in the planting plan NP0160/20/16A	(i) Uprooting of 40 shrubs of <i>Salsola melitensis</i> ; (ii) Taking of cuttings from parent plants and transporting to Wied Għollieqa Nursery for propagation; (iii) Re-planting of 400 propagated plants at the locations marked on NP0160/20/16A.

Site

3. The activities authorised under condition 2 shall be affected in the location as marked on the site plan on the approved planting plan NP0160/20/16A.

Conditions of Activity/Work

4. Activities are to be held according to the approved Project Description Statement NP0160/20/1B.
5. This permit covers the uprooting of 40 specimens of *Salsola melitensis* and taking of cutting from such specimens only. No samples may be taken from any other flora species.
6. Cuttings shall be taken prior to uprooting of parent plants and shall be transported, stored and propagated at Wied Għollieqa Environment Centre, San Ġwann, in accordance with the methodology in approved document NP0160/20/16A and in accordance with good practice.
7. 400 specimens shall be planted to the site marked on the approved Planting Plan NP0160/20/16A between October and March. These shall be maintained by the permit holder for a period of three (3) years from planting, including necessary aftercare such as watering, weeding and pruning as may be required.

Evidence of planting shall be submitted within one month of planting on ced.nature@era.org.mt.

Should any of the transplanted specimen die within the period specified above, the permit holder shall inform ERA accordingly and be bound to replace the said specimen/s with the additional cuttings taken from the area.

General Conditions

8. The 'Permit Holder', is responsible to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken so that the activity conforms to the conditions in this Permit and the procedures outlined within the Permit application.
9. The activities covered by this permit are restricted to the Permit Holder, employees and/or volunteers and contracted parties commissioned for such activities/works under his supervision and direction, who shall all be made aware of this Permit and the contents within.
10. The following activities are strictly prohibited:
 - a. the deliberate picking, collection, taking, cutting, uprooting, harming, destroying or damaging deliberately destroying, keeping, transporting, selling, buying exchanging, offering for sale or for exchange, importing or exporting in any way of any specimen of wild flora, except as permitted;
 - b. the deliberate hunting, killing, capturing, taking, harming, disturbance particularly during periods of breeding, rearing, hibernation and migration, destruction and deterioration of breeding sites or resting places, pursuing, taking or attempting to take, deliberately killing or attempting to kill, deliberately destroying, keeping, transporting, selling, buying exchanging, offering for sale or for exchange, importing or exporting any specimen of any specimen of wild fauna;
 - c. cutting or damaging of reeds, tree branches etc.

11. ERA may request updates and/or further information on the activity in question as deemed necessary.
12. The conditions imposed shall be adhered to throughout all the activities. Failure to do so may result in enforcement action and cessation of any related works or activities.
13. ERA may impose other additional rules or conditions, or may amend one or more of the listed rules or conditions, as it deems necessary for the proper conservation of a protected site or area, biodiversity and the environment in general, and to ensure public safety.
14. The Permit Holder may apply for a variation of the Permit and shall seek the Authority's written agreement prior to any operational changes, by sending to the Authority:
 - a. Written notice of the details of the proposed change, including an assessment of its possible effects or risks to the environment from the approved activity;
 - b. Any relevant supporting information;
 - c. Any relevant supporting assessments and drawings, and;
 - d. The proposed implementation date.

Any such change shall only be implemented following the issue of a variation of the permit by the Authority.

15. In accordance with Regulation 46(4) of S.L. 549.44, a brief report with photos of the activities held, including any publications as a result of the activity, is to be provided to ERA by the Permit Holder within one month of the expiry of the permit, and is to be submitted to nature.permitting@era.org.mt. Information that should be treated as confidential as outlined in Regulation 48(4) of S.L. 549.44 shall be specified.

A template for the report is available at <http://era.org.mt/en/Documents/Activity%20Report%20template.doc>

16. This permit is granted saving third party rights. The Permit holder is not exempt from any other legislation or regulations, codes of practice, conditions or requirements imposed by any other competent authorities, including the obtaining of permits, licenses, or clearances including from site owners.
17. Without prejudice to the Trade in Species of Fauna and Flora Regulations, 2004 (S.L. 549.38), the Permit holder cannot sell or exchange by any method, import or export, any specimen of the species found within the SAC, unless in possession of a prior official Permit from ERA.

The Permit Holder is to ensure that any samples held are in line with the requirement of S.L. 549.38 and Council Regulation EC 338/97.

18. The Authority may suspend or revoke this Environmental Permit in line with the provisions of CAP 549.
19. The Permit Holder shall notify the following matters to the Authority in writing at least 10 working days prior to their occurrence:
 - a. Any change in the Permit Holder's trading name, registered name or registered office address;
 - b. Any change to particulars of the Permit Holder's corporate identity.
20. Upon the joint application of a Permit Holder and a proposed transferee, the Permit Holder may request to transfer an environment permit. The permit shall not be transferred from the Permit Holder without prior approval from the Authority. Upon the Authority's decision to transfer the permit to the transferee, all rights, obligations, liabilities shall subsist onto the transferee.

21. In accordance with Regulation 47 of S.L. 549.44, details of the Permit Holder together with the details of conditions imposed in this Permit shall be maintained by the Authority in a register available for public inspection or maintained in electronic form.
22. ERA may inspect and monitor the activity at the expense of the Permit holder at rate and arrangement communicated by ERA's Compliance and Enforcement Directorate to ensure the safeguarding of the natural assets. ERA may also appoint other on-site monitors at the expense of the Permit Holder to act as an on-site liaison between the Permit Holder and ERA if the case arises.
23. The Authority's representatives may inspect and photograph any part of the site/ activity and ask for any closed or locked areas to be opened and may demand to be provided with any proof, documentation, plans, receipts or any other records.
24. This Permit including any Variation Notices or amendments to it shall be made available for any inspection by ERA officials at all times, or any legally recognised compliance and enforcement officials, when requested.
25. Whenever there is a conflict between the conditions of this Permit and approved documents, the conditions of the Permit shall prevail.
26. ERA shall not be held liable for any accidents or injuries which may occur during the activities being permitted through this Permit. It is the responsibility of the Permit Holder to ensure that all safety measures are taken.
27. This permit is without prejudice to any liability of the Permit Holder under the Act and to any punitive measures the Authority may wish to take with respect to works already carried out without permit.
27. The validity of this permit is **up to 31st December 2020**. The Permit Holder may apply for a renewal to this Permit expressing his/her intention at least four (4) weeks prior to the expiry of this permit. Request for renewals shall only be considered upon confirmation of compliance with Permit conditions and fulfilment of documentation as requested by this Permit.
28. Any aggrieved person may appeal from this decision before the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal within 30 days in terms of Article 63 of the Environment Protection Act.

NP0160/20/1B

Description Annex A

Aim of project National Project Rescue Operation of the Xrobb L-Ghagin Neolithic Temple within the Xrobb L-Ghagin Nature Park Marsaxlokk. This temple is situated in the edge of the NE cliff which, due to heavy erosion is about to fall down

Justification for project. What is the value of the project in scientific and educational terms?

In 2018, a government task force was set up by - the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry for Culture, in order to study the best way to preserve a Neolithic temple from being lost altogether, due to the cliff erosion on which it was found. The action agreed upon by experts which, also included Heritage Malta, was that to excavate as much as possible the temple, whilst adopting all safety procedures, and move the temple to safer ground.

This temple is found on the edge of the North East cliff of the peninsula of Xrobb L-Ghagin with the Nature Park area. Scans have been carried out to identify the temple exact position. Following the recommendations of the said task force, a budget allocation was agreed by the Cabinet. Works on the operation started by Heritage Malta late 2019. On May 2020 the excavation and rescue works are planned to start.

The site topsoil, is presently covered by the endemic Maltese Salt Tree (*Salsola melitensis*). This form part of a population found on site along the cliffs. Over the years of management NTM have also helped the increase of this plant in other areas on the cliffs away from the temple location.

Brief project outline: The aim of this project is that the *Salsola melitensis*, found on the temple area has to be removed in order to enable a safety cage to be installed for the archaeologists to work. Therefore before any excavation can start the vegetation has to be removed.

In order to mitigate this action in the temple rescue project, Nature Trust is prepared to take as many cuttings as possible for the shrubs removed with the aim to:-

- 1) Replant the successful cuttings in the same place once the temple is removed and top soil placed again
- 2) use the rest of the cuttings to continue to aid the population to take over parts of the degraded cliff within the area both inside the park and outside.

Starting date and estimated duration of project including date[s] and time[s]. When is/are the handling/collection planned? If possible, provide month[s] and date[s].

Removal of the shrubs found on the temple site - 3 weeks due to danger elements on the cliff face

Nursery growing period 24 months

Replant in area 3 months

Total period 30 months

The site/ geographic area of the activity. (The area[s] should be clearly indicated on an official site plan). In the case of access from privately owned land, permission will need to be sought from the owner/s. Please specify whether this has been obtained and attach copy of permission. Attached below

3 Persons from Ambient Malta to cut the shrubs, 3 persons for NTM at Nursery, 3 persons to replant all in the end

How will be the site be accessed? Provide details of the motor vehicles to be used [e.g. dinghy, car, helicopter, etc.] and how you will reach other parts of the area [e.g. abseiling, walking, diving, etc.]. By foot and taking all safety precautions as will be identified by Heritage Malta

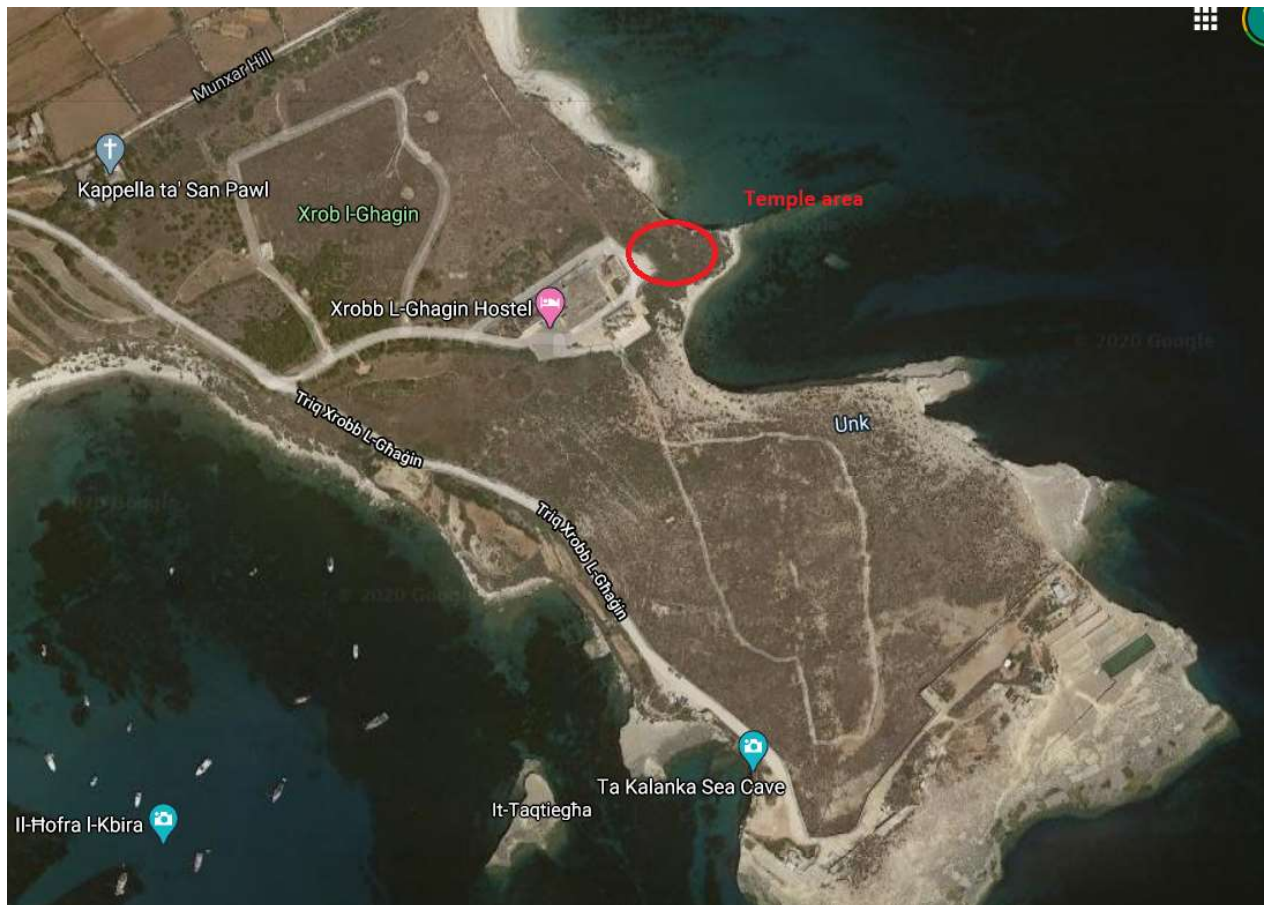
Description of the method to be used for the project

Description should also include mode of capture, handling, transport and/or keeping, if applicable. The number of specimens to be collected, clearly justifying the taking, should also be included, even if estimates. In case of sampling from dead specimens, please indicate what sampling tissues or organs are needed for such scientific studies and the number of samples. Please note that in the case that samples are sent abroad, full justification, a detailed route and the addressee should be provided. If covered by CITES, another permit might be required. 3 Ambjent Malta staff will be removing the Salt tree by had cutters. These will be passed on to NTM to take cuttings and pot in the nursery at Lija and Wied Ghollieqa. And or Ambjent Malta nursery.

Safety equipment available, in case of emergency.

Following instructions of Heritage Malta who know the site well

AREA IN QUESTION



Heritage Malta marked areas already in place

Attached as File

NTM 24032020

Xrobb l-Għagin



Nature Permit for the removal of the *Salsola melitensis* along the cliffs in Xrobb l-Għagin to excavate the temple study area.

Method Statement:

Given the irregular topography across the study area, the propagation method used will include the collection of layered sections of the *Salsola melitensis* on site and a series of second and third year cuttings.

All available layered specimens on site will be collected and a total of twenty (20) cuttings per specimen will also be collected, this will ensure good germination rates whilst inhibiting a large clone population across the site. A total of forty (40) *Salsola melitensis* shrubs will be removed within the temple study area.

All specimens collected on site will be placed inside a carrying chamber including water and rooting hormone to ensure cuttings do not dry out until transported and planted. Specimens will be transported and housed at the Wied Ghollieqa Nursery; this will ensure a cooler micro-climate and promote higher successful germination rates.

The predominant soil substrate used during sowing consists of terra rossa soil, this will be mixed with some compost to ensure smoother root development across a softer substrate. All specimens collected will be maintained until the site has been prepared for plantation of the *Salsola melitensis*.

Plantation of the *Salsola melitensis* will include a section of the green buffer on site, additional planting in areas with an existing population and new areas where *Salsola melitensis* will be introduced. Hence specimens will be planted across the entirety of the site perimeter.

Planting shall be carried out during winter (Dec - Feb) to ensure a cooler micro-climate hence greater success rates. Specimens shall be maintained for a duration of two (2) years to ensure successful growth rates and quick population establishment and habitat recovery.

Xrobb l-Ghagin Nature Permit
Nature Trust Malta 2020

