



## Environmental Permit

Environment Protection Act (CAP. 549)

Permit number:  
**NP0189/20**

Approved documents  
**NP0189/20/14A/14B**

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 Joseph Cutajar obo EcoGozo Directorate** (hereinafter “the Permit Holder”), Of / Whose Registered Office (or principal place of business) is at

**Ministry for Gozo  
St. Francis Square  
Victoria Gozo VCT1335**

to carry out sand sifting activities

**At Ramla Bay, Gozo**

The validity of this permit is **for one (1) year from the granting date of this permit**. An application for renewal of this permit is to be submitted at least **one (1) month** prior to expiry of this permit.

Signed	Date
<p data-bbox="284 1697 758 1794">Anthony Aquilina Unit Manager (Permitting) F/ Director Environment and Resources</p>	<p data-bbox="890 1697 1232 1729">Permit Granted: 27/05/ 2020</p>

**Authorised to sign on behalf of the Competent Authority**

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## Conditions

### Introductory Note

The permit is granted in accordance with the provisions of the Environment Protection Act and Regulation 18(2) of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006 (S.L. 549.44), hereinafter referred to as the Regulations, for the purpose of the activities that shall be carried out within the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of L-Inħawi tar-Ramla (MT0000005).

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
<i>Application NP0189/20</i>	<i>24/04/2020</i>
<i>Permit Issued</i>	<i>27/05/2020</i>

### Pre-Commencement of activities/ work

1. The Permit Holder shall advise of the dates of works at least two (2) days prior to the commencement on [ced.nature@era.org.mt](mailto: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.
2. The permit holder is to nominate for ERA approval, at least seven (7) days prior to commencement of works, a suitably qualified and experienced ecological monitor for identification and monitoring of Ghost crab burrows, monitoring of compliance with permit conditions and to ensure that works are carried out with the least possible impact on habitats, species and water quality.

The monitor shall:

- i. be engaged at the expense of the applicant;
- ii. monitor the beach prior to the sifting taking place and mark the location/s of any burrows from the ghost crab;
- iii. ensure that the works are carried out in line with the permit and without damage to the natural features on site;
- iv. be present on site during the entire duration of the works, unless directed otherwise by ERA officers monitoring the activity on site;
- v. notify ERA immediately of any breach of conditions.

The project manager and the Permit Holder shall provide all the information and assistance to ensure that monitoring of works is carried out in a satisfactory manner. A monitoring report with photos shall be submitted by the monitor as part of the report of activities to ERA that is to be submitted as per condition 21, not later than one month after to expiry of permit.

No works shall be carried out unless the monitor and monitoring plan are approved by ERA.

## Permitted Activities

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

<b>Table 1.</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description of specified activity</b>	<b>Limits of specified activity</b>
Sand sifting	As described in (i) NP0189/20/14A	Cleaning of the sand on the beach using a mechanical sand sifter to pick up small pieces of waste within 15cm from the surface of the sand.

## Site

4. The activities authorised under condition 2 shall be affected in the location as marked on the approved site plan NP189/20/14B.

## Conditions of Activity/Work

5. Activities are to be held according to the approved Project Description Statement NP0189/20/14A.
6. Activities are to be held between June and September 2020, between the hours of 5.00am and shall cease before sunset. In the event that longer working hours are required for practical reasons, these activities are permitted to commence at 1.00am and in such a case lighting shall be limited to the lighting installed on the sand sifting vehicle. No additional lighting is allowed.
7. Access to vehicles on the beach for the purpose of the activity permitted through this permit shall be in line with the Operating Procedures on Beach Cleaning Guidelines, ERA, July 2017 available at: <https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Operating-Procedures-on-Beach-Cleaning.aspx>.
8. The vehicle specified on the approved Project Description NP0189/20/14A shall be used to carry out the operation, including a loading van to collect and transport the collected litter.

The vehicles shall:

- a. Prior to being used on site, cleaned from all extraneous debris including spalls, stones, soil and dust. Prior to leaving the bay, the vehicle shall be dusted manually from all sand;
- b. Be in a good state of maintenance and in any case do not leak oils or other polluting fluids;
- c. Only make use of existing roads for access;
- d. Be stored overnight in such a manner to avoid any accidents, including due to storms;
- e. Be refuelled in such a manner to avoid spillage into the ground and sea; and
- f. Not be washed on site.

All the equipment, vehicles and materials shall be removed immediately once works are completed.

9. Prior to commencement of any works, the environmental monitor shall survey the site and non-intrusively mark any burrows of the protected Ghost Crab – “il-Granċ tar-Ramla”, *Ocypode cursor*. In the event that t *O. cursor* or any other protected in faunal species, including their burrows are recorded on site, no form of sand sifting or mechanised trampling shall take place in the areas of the beach from where such species are recorded and a distance of 2m shall be kept from such burrows.
10. No form of mechanised beach cleaning activity and/or vehicular access or mechanical interventions shall occur within a radius of 15 metres from any known or likely marine turtle nest and within 5 metres from sand dunes, or over any natural vegetation within the site. In the event of a known or likely marine turtle nesting occurrence, only careful manual collection of surface litter, supervised by ERA officials, shall take place within a radius of 15 meters from the confirmed or presumed location of the nest.
11. The sand sifter is not to penetrate further than 15cm from the surface of the sand.
12. No movement of pebbles or rocks or relocation within the site is being permitted as part of the proposal.
13. The permit holder shall be responsible for ensuring that no damage whatsoever is caused to natural habitats (particularly sand dunes, including their fore-dunes) through a combination of suitable precautionary measures and basic good practice.

Cleaning of the sand dune areas is to be done by no more than 5 people at a time and no sand sifting is allowed, including within 5 metres of the marked sand dunes.

14. Collected waste should not be stored, stockpiled, incinerated, or buried on any beach. All collected waste material shall be collected, immediately removed from the site and disposed of accordingly in accordance with the Waste Management (Activity Registration) Regulations 2007 (S.L. 549.45) and the Waste Regulations, 2011, (S.L. 549.63), including where necessary through the Consignment Permit procedure.

### **General Conditions**

15. 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.
16. 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.
17. 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;
  - 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;
  - d. planting of vegetation, shrubs and/or trees or the introduction of any flora or fauna into the site or its environs;
  - e. introduction, removal, significant movement and re-engineering, and/or collection of sand, shingle, stone, soil and/or sediment;
  - f. excavation works and any physical modification of the vegetation cover, the ground and landform of the site and its surroundings;
  - g. generation of excessive noise, including extremely loud music or the use of noisy generators, or light pollution through the use of floodlights;
  - h. disposal, discharge or spillage of oil, fuel, paint or other pollutants, or of solid waste, ash or combustibles;
  - i. lighting of fires.
17. ERA may request updates and/or further information on the activity in question as deemed necessary.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.

21. 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](mailto: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>

22. 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.
23. Any accidental handling, capture or collection of specimens or part thereof, whether dead or alive, of species listed within Schedule V and VI, and endemic species not listed in Schedule X of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44) shall be reported on [nature.permitting@era.org.mt](mailto:nature.permitting@era.org.mt) within seven (7) days of sampling of the specimen provided that the permit holder may only keep such

specimen or part thereof for scientific research purposes. The Authority may request additional information from the permit holder, including but not limited to, an application for authorisation for the keeping of such specimens or samples.

24. The Authority may suspend or revoke this Environmental Permit in line with the provisions of CAP 549.
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. The Authority may carry out regular pre-set or unannounced compliance or monitoring checks that vary in frequency according to the site's compliance with the permit conditions and safeguarding of natural assets. Any checks or audits carried out by the Authority may be made at the Permit Holder's financial expense at rate and arrangement communicated by ERA's Compliance and Enforcement Directorate. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. Whenever there is a conflict between the conditions of this Permit and approved documents, the conditions of the Permit shall prevail.
32. 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.
33. 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.
34. This permit is subject to a bank guarantee of €10,000. The guarantee is covered in accordance with the *Letter of Undertaking covering Government Projects* ref MF35/05/160.

This guarantee shall be maintained throughout the validity of the permit. Following renewal and/or variations to this permit, the Authority may require amendments to the Bank Guarantee.

The Authority may take part or all of the bank guarantee if the Permit Holder fails to take the necessary action, or fails to fulfil his legal obligations under the Act of its

subsidiary legislation thereof, in cases of non-compliance with these permit conditions,. This bank guarantee is without prejudice to any environmental liabilities incurred by the Permit Holder through failure to adhere to permit conditions or any other works/activity carried out on site.. Should the Authority forfeit the Bank Guarantee either in part or in full, the permit holder shall ensure that this is replenished without undue delay in any case not exceeding 2 months from the date of forfeiture.

In cases where the bank guarantee does not cover the expenses incurred by the Authority to take remedial actions on the Permit Holder's behalf, the Permit Holder is to financially reimburse the Authority of all the expenses incurred.

35. The validity of this permit is for **one (1) year** from the granting date of this permit. 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.
36. 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.



## Attachment 2

### 1. Aim of Project

1.1. In this particular project, the EcoGozo Directorate within the Ministry for Gozo is applying for a Nature permit for the sifting of sand at Ramla il-Hamra Bay in Gozo to recover and dispose of litter that would have been discarded on the beach or beached as flotsam and marine litter, and slowly incorporated in the sand matrix.

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

2.1. The reason for the sifting of sand is to recover and dispose of litter (cigarette butts, syringes, microplastics, etc) that would have been discarded on the beach or beached as flotsam and marine litter, and that have slowly incorporated in the sand matrix thus ensuring that the beach is more attractive and safer for beach goers. Ramla Bay experiences high daily visitation numbers. There is therefore the need for regular sifting to remove litter that would have entered in the sand matrix and thus would be difficult to be visualized and thus collected by beach cleaners. This sifting exercise would lead to cleaner sand, cleaner beach and a safer beach in all contexts. Such sifting would have minimal detrimental effect on the beach's abiotic and biotic components.

### 3. Brief project outline;

3.1. The EcoGozo Directorate, within the Ministry for Gozo plans to undertake the proposed works at various intervals throughout the summer months. The date proposed for the first sifting exercise is the beginning of June. Following that, in June, July, August and September, the sand will be sifted once per month.

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

- 4.1. The proposed works are to be carried out in June/July/August/September 2020.
- 4.2. The sifting is envisaged to be carried out over a period of four hours but if the weather permits, works can be cleared out in a shorter period.
- 4.3. Operations shall take place between 0400 hrs to 0800hrs on Monday to Sunday, including public holidays.

### 5. The site/geographic area of the activity. (The area[s] should be clearly indicated on an official site plan (Attachment 1)). 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;

- 5.1. Refer to Attachment 1.
- 5.2. There is no privately owned land.

### 6. How many persons are involved per visit?

6.1. Not Applicable.

7. **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.];**

7.1. Site will be accessed through existing access routes.

8. **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 studied 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.)**

### **8.1. Area of Maintenance Works**

The general area where maintenance works are required are shown in Attachment 1 – Site plan (Map Number 115944G).

### **8.2. Area specific methodology including machinery to be used**

A mechanical sand sifter will be used since the beach is predominately sandy. Particular attention will be taken when sifting at the back of the beach due to the important sand dune systems and sand dune vegetation present. For this reason, the sifting machine will be kept at a distance of 5 m from any sand dune vegetation. Particular attention will also be taken with regards to the penetration depth of the sand sifter, which will be limited to a maximum depth of 15 cm. The vehicles selected for this project must also comply with the criteria stated by the Operating Procedures on Beach Cleaning. Such requirements include that all vehicles must use rubber wheels and vehicular weight and length must be limited to 12,000 kg and 6.5 m, respectively should the Nature Permit be granted.

During the works, a minimum of two vehicles will be present on the beach at any particular point: the sand sifter and a loading van for the collection and transport of the collected waste and litter. Using this methodology, the entire beach (except for identified areas of the beach known to harbour the protected Ghost Crab) will be sifted and the litter will be separated on the beach. The waste streams are expected to be a mixture of organic, recyclables and non-recyclables. The material sifted will be loaded on a van, which conforms to the specifications stated above and is carted off to a licensed waste facility. The stones and pebbles will be placed back on the beach in the same areas from which they are gathered.

Manual cleaning of litter and on foot and if absolutely necessary will be carried out on the sand dunes. Access to the sand dunes will be limited to one or two persons, if necessary.

### **8.3. Machinery**

A mechanical sand sifter and a loading truck. For dry sand, a sand sifter with different mesh sizes i.e. 6mm, 8mm and 10 mm mesh sizes can be used. The different sizes are usually used in different runs and if needed. Normally three nets with 10 mm rhomboid shaped mesh are fitted in the sand sifter and used in the first runs.

If the sand is wet, a sand sifter rake is usually recommended. The following is a [link](#) that shows the process of cleaning using the sand sifter rake.

#### **8.4. Indication of time frame for proposed works**

The cleaning procedure would be carried out during the early hours of the morning between 0400hrs and 0800 hrs and is expected to take up approximately 4hrs each run for Ramla L-Hamra.

#### **8.5. Location where the debris, material (pebbles and sand) will be shifted**

The material sifted will be loaded on a van, which conforms to the specifications stated above and is carted off to a licensed waste facility.

#### **8.6. Indication of depth of cleaning works**

Sand sifting shall be limited to a maximum depth of 15 cm.

#### **8.7. Inclusion of access routes**

Refer to points 7.1.

#### **8.8. Requirements for monitoring**

The applicant shall appoint an ERA approved ecological monitor to monitor works and to conduct random inspections. ERA also reserves the right to monitor works and to conduct random inspections or to nominate an independent monitor at the expense of the applicant. ERA will be informed of works at least two weeks in advance. To this effect, applicant is recommending Mr Sacha Dunlop B.Sc Biology & Chemistry ( Hons.) and M.Sc Biology, ecologist as a qualified monitor for the said works. ERA will be informed of works at least two weeks in advance.

#### **8.9. Mitigation measures to offset any impacts**

Works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the method statement (all details mentioned above) and the following measures shall be undertaken:

- No additional material besides that explained about shall be transferred back to the site in the sea;
- Adequate measures shall be taken to ensure that the vehicles leaving the site/engaged in the construction works do not deposit mud, rubble or other materials on public roads;
- No rubble walls at the entrance are to be demolished or damaged;
- No trees in the surrounding area will be damaged in the process of works;
- (Only if the case) Any infilled fissures (daghbien), caverns, hollows, Quaternary deposits or other features of potential geological, geomorphological, paleontological or archaeological interest which are discovered will be reported immediately to ERA and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage and no further works or activity will take place which would disturb these features until these entities conclude their investigations;
- Cleaning operations shall be limited to the removal of accumulated foreign debris material. No excavation, breaking or cutting of underlying bedrock (or, if present, paving or Quaternary deposits, or clay) shall be carried out or permitted to occur;
- All points, ramps and tracks providing vehicular access shall be kept clean and restored;
- All the considerations expressed or implied in this method statement and its conditions shall also be communicated to workmen involved in the project in such a manner as to ensure effective compliance with these conditions;

- The areas outside of the identified sites shall be left intact. No dredging, entry or parking of vehicles or equipment, or storage or deposition of material shall be carried out or allowed;
- No fires shall be lit within the whole stretch of watercourse under consideration;
- No materials or equipment shall be stored within the spread of the branches of the trees.

**9. Safety equipment available, in case of emergency;**

Contractor that will be carrying out the works shall be obliged to work within the parameters set by Chapter 424 - OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY ACT.

**10. Any additional information deemed necessary;**

None.

**11. Please indicate whether any of the above information should be kept confidential, providing a justification.**

None.

# Attachment 1



Ramla Bay

Ramla Bay  
Island beach cove  
with rust-colored sand

NP0189/20/14B

Il-Kcina tar-Ramla

Public Bathroom

Rose's Bar & Restaurant

Champions Best ice  
cream Ramla Gozo  
Ice Cream - \$

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Google