



Environmental Permit

Environment Protection Act (CAP. 549)

Permit number:
NP0214/20

Approved documents
NP0214/20/1B

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 Alexei Zammit obo Ambjent Malta (hereinafter "the Permit Holder"),
Of / Whose Registered Office (or principal place of business) is at

Ta' Qali National Park
Ta' Qali

Removal of Alien Invasive Species of flora

At L-Irdum tal-Madonna, Mellieħa

The validity of this permit is **one (1) year** 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
<p data-bbox="284 1563 756 1650">Anthony Aquilina Unit Manager (Permitting) F/ Director Environment and Resources</p>	<p data-bbox="890 1563 1230 1592">Permit Granted: 09/06/ 2020</p>

Authorised to sign on behalf of the Competent Authority

This page has been deliberately left blank

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) and Special Protection Area (SPA) of L-Inhawi tar-Ramla tat-Torri u tal-Irdum tal-Madonna (MT0000009).

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 NP0214/20	19/05/2020
Permit Issued	09/06/2020

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
Removal of alien species of flora	As described in NP0214/20/1B	(i) Removal of Invasive Alien Species of <i>Agave americana</i>

Site

3. The activities authorised under condition 2 shall be affected in the location as marked on the site plan in approved document NP0214/20/1B.

Conditions of Activity/Work

4. Activities are to be held according to the approved Project Description Statement NP0214/20/1B.
5. The permit holder shall ensure that disturbance of any specimen of any species is kept to a minimum. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to ensure that no harm is caused to the environment either intentionally or accidentally. Attention must also be afforded to the whole of the environment of the SAC in view of the protection status of SAC.

6. It is not permitted to use chemicals in the SAC to control, remove or eradicate any alien species.
7. No access of any machinery is allowed in the target area and on garrigue/steppe and any other natural habitats. Any vehicles such as an excavator and a truck are to be operated from the adjacent access road.
8. Access and parking of any vehicles used for works shall be kept to the parking area on the outside of the access road. Access on natural areas including rocky ground and agricultural land is not allowed. Off-road driving and creation of temporary or permanent access routes, irrespective whether intentional or accidental is prohibited.
9. No habitat or soil engineering or contouring shall take place.
10. No interventions or disturbance shall be carried out on any native species which are already present at the planting sites.
11. Removal of alien species shall be followed up accordingly throughout the lifetime of the permit in order to address any re-sprouting accordingly.
12. Removal of alien species of flora shall be carried out in accordance with the methodology described in the approved method statement NP0214/20/1B and in accordance with the methodology on the "Guidelines on managing non-native plant invaders and restoring native plant communities in terrestrial settings in the Maltese Islands" found at <https://era.org.mt/en/Documents/PlantInvaders-RestorationGuidelines-MEPA-2013.pdf>.

Removed alien species shall be shredded (either on site or in a permitted waste disposal facility) in a contained manner and carted away with securely covered waste carriers registered in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Activity Registration) Regulations 2007 (S.L.549.45) and Waste Regulations 2011 (S.L.549.63) , including where necessary through the Consignment Permit procedure.

Otherwise, debris from AIS shall be destroyed on site through incineration through controlled fires. No open fires are allowed and controlled fires are only being permitted for the incineration of any plant and tree debris within an appropriate enclosed skip.

Fires are prohibited in wind forecasts of Force 4 or stronger, and are to be entirely spent before sunset.

The Permit Holder is to inform ERA on the chosen process concerning disposal of the removed alien species seven (7) days prior to the carrying out of the procedure as well as provide details on this in the report of the activities held that is to be submitted in line with condition 22.

Certificates of destruction at the waste facility are also to be provided to ERA along with the report of the activities held.

13. Activities shall take place between sunrise and sunset.

General Conditions

14. Any material removed shall be immediately carted away in waste carriers registered in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management (Activity Registration)

Regulations 2007 (S.L. 549.45) for appropriate disposal in facilities permitted in accordance with the Waste Regulations 2011 (S.L. 549.63).

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, 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;
 - 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.
18. ERA may request updates and/or further information on the activity in question as deemed necessary.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.

22. 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>

23. 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.
24. 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 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.
25. The Authority may suspend or revoke this Environmental Permit in line with the provisions of CAP 549.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.

31. 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.
32. Whenever there is a conflict between the conditions of this Permit and approved documents, the conditions of the Permit shall prevail.
33. 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.
34. 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.
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 – Rdum tal-Madonna, Mellieha- Agave species removal

3.3 Project Description:

1. Aim of Project;

The Natura 2000 adopted management plan for the Rdum tal-Madonna requires the removal of alien species (Specifically Operational Objective OO4.1 To eradicate invasive species). The project aims to remove invasive *Agave* species from the area.

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

The removal of *Agave* species eliminates competition between this alien species and native ones. Such a measure considerably favours the indigenous species.

3. Brief project outline;

Removal of large *Agave* individuals with an excavator; and removal of smaller individuals with hand held tools.

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];

Start date: as soon as practicably possible. The extent of works is extremely laborious and fluid and therefore difficult to provide definite timeframes. ERA would be notified upon commencement of works and provided with weekly updates as works progress.

5. The site/geographic area of the activity.



6. How many persons are involved per visit?;

Five Ambient Malta personnel with hand held tools and operating one small excavator.

7. How will be the site be accessed?

There is adequate vehicular access within the site, with the main access route as shown below. Agave species are easily reached with an excavator.



8. Description of the method to be used for the project;

The method to be used is in line with the Guidelines on managing plant invaders and restoring Native Plant Communities; it considers the nature and sensitivity of the site and accessibility.

This measure shall follow the practice used for the removal of Agave species at Ghadira s-Safra (another NATURA2000 site).

Uprooting of the Agave is very possible making use of an excavator since the site is easily accessible and no trampling/ degradation of any existing habitats is to occur. The small individuals would be removed manually using hand held tools.

The Agave would then be disposed of at Maghtab landfill.

Within the adopted management plan the habitat codes for the area include 5410; 1240; and 8210. The area is very much degraded due to vehicular access and no vegetation grows in these tracks. Within the patches of Agave to be removed, one may occasionally find a remnant of a species typical of these habitat codes. Should these Agave individuals be left to proliferate, then the native specimens would eventually be replaced/ taken over by more Agave. Nevertheless, the Agave individuals are currently protecting the native ones from complete obliteration by vehicular access (refer to photo below).



Given this scenario, it is therefore being proposed, that wherever possible (and this would need to be determined as the works are in progress), indigenous individuals are protected from the aftermath of the Agave eradication (which is degradation by vehicles), by cordoning off these patches with wooden stakes and directing the public away. This would also be in line with project P6 of the adopted management plan - Application of access control measures at habitats 1240, 5330 and 5410.

Monitoring of the area for any re-sprouting would be an ongoing exercise.

9. Safety equipment available, in case of emergency;

Standard safety equipment used by Ambjent Malta personnel when making use of such hand held tools.

10. Any additional information deemed necessary;