

# Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

## Water Policy Framework

Screening according to S.L. 549.100

**ERA Reference no.:** EA/00031/20  
**PA Reference no.:** PA/06827/19  
**Project Title:** Proposed mooring bays  
**Location:** Site at, Id-Dahla Tal-Kalkara, Kalkara  
**Screening date:** August 2020

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### **I. BACKGROUND**

#### **1. Outline of Proposal**

- 1.1 The project involves the introduction of 305 new berthing spaces for boats of widths ranging between 4.5 m and 9.0 m, and will occupy a total area of 35,000 m<sup>2</sup> (see figures 1-2).
- 1.2 The proposed project will be carried out in three phases identified below:
  1. Phase 1: Displacing of material
  2. Phase 2: Laying of concrete anchors
  3. Phase 3: Installation of buoys.
- 1.3 The main raw materials that will be used for the project will consist in 500 concrete anchors and 305 heavy chains.

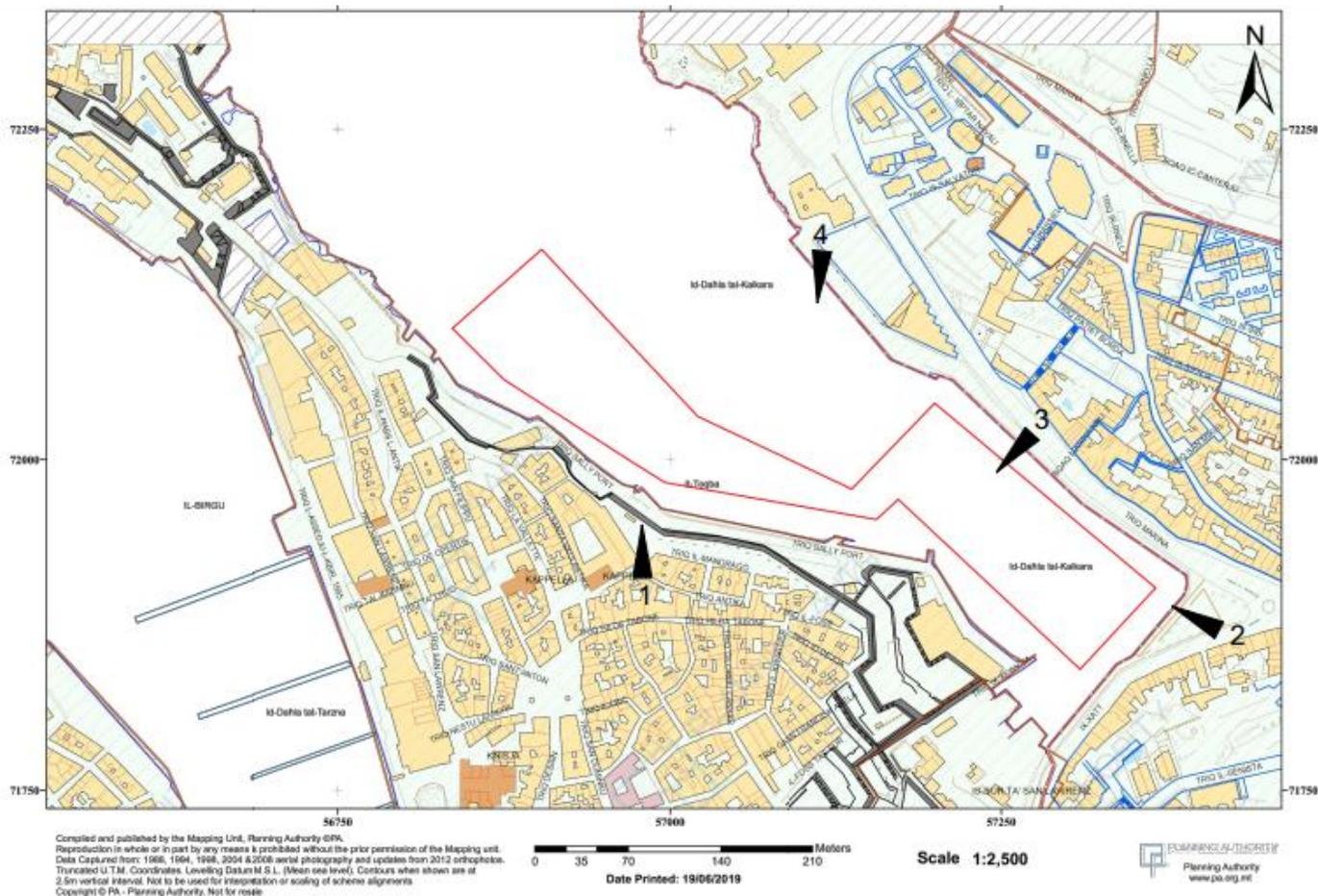


Figure 1: Plan showing the proposed location of the Project (source: E-Apps)

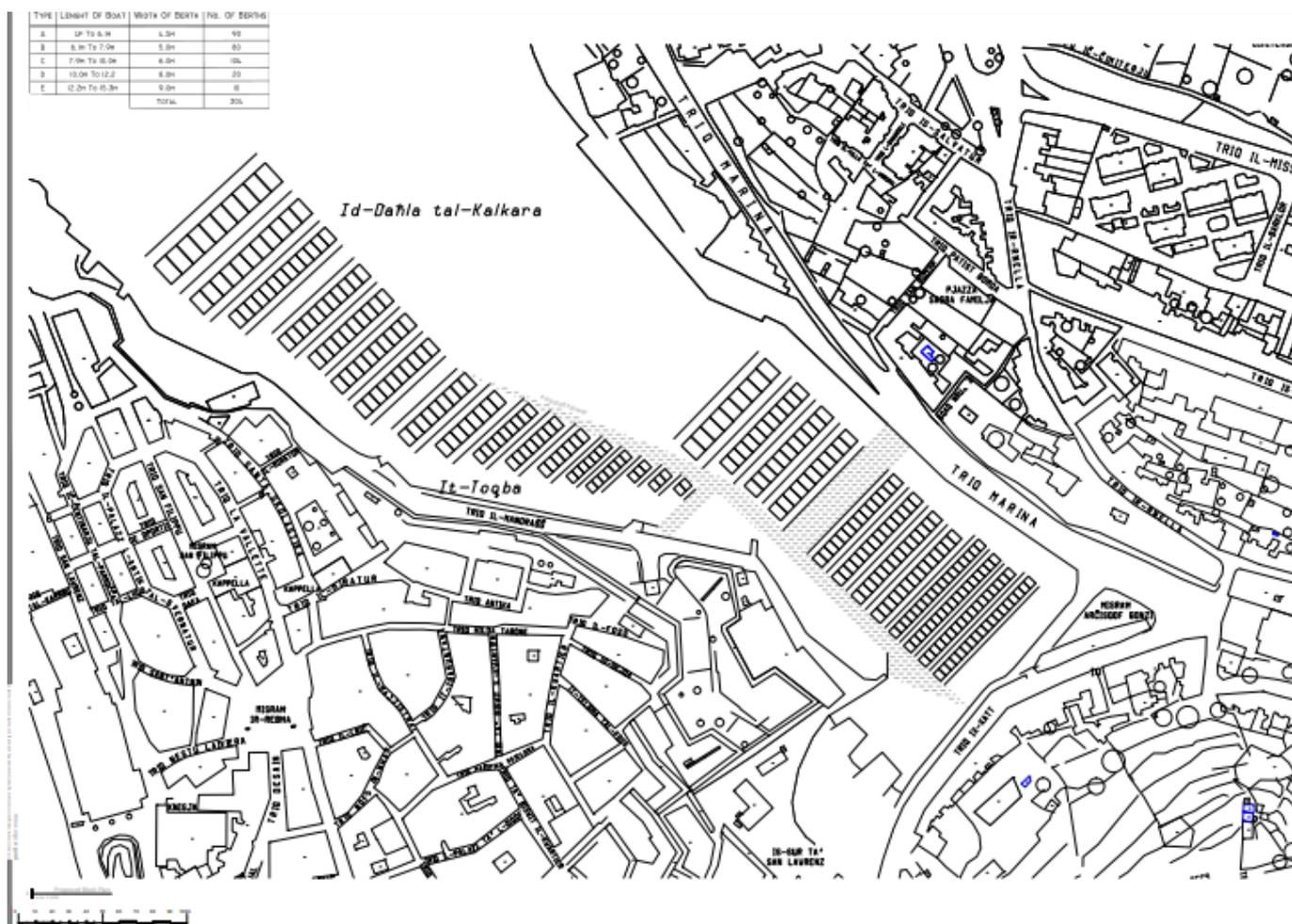


Figure 2: Block plan showing the proposed location of the Project (source: E-Apps)

## 2. Site context

- 2.1 The project is located in the Kalkara inlet as shown in Figure 3. The inlet is currently utilised as a mooring area by a large number of private vessels (Picture 1)
- 2.2 The area around the site of the project is characterised by residential and historical buildings, and by a public promenade along the Birgu-Kalkara coastline.
- 2.3 The site around the project forms part of the scheduled Area of High Landscape Value of the Harbour Fortifications (G.N. 133/01).
- 2.4 In addition, the site is located within the coastal water body MTC 115 – Il-Port Il-Kbir sal-Port ta' Marsamxett, identified as a heavily modified water body for the purposes of the Water Policy Framework Regulations, 2015 (S.L. 549.100).



Figure 3. Location of the site (source: PDS)



Picture 1. Photo showing Kalkara inlet (source: E-apps)

### 3. Case history

3.1 This site has been previously subject to the following development consent applications:

- PA/06609/03 - *To display signs to generate revenue for the Regatta Club.* Application approved.
- PA/03896/04 - *Upgrading of Triq il-Mandragg, including construction of promenade.* Application approved.
- PA/06219/07- *To sanction room as built.* Application refused.
- PA/02359/10- *To construct a marina for all seasons for a period of 8 years.* Application approved.
- PA/00661/12- *Erection of a floating structure to serve as a landing place for dghajsa tal-pass.* Application may eventually be reactivated.
- PA/02015/13- *To sanction location of pontoons (of approved marina for all seasons for a period of 8 years) and installation of additional pontoon.* Application approved.
- PA/00984/14- *Trenching works for the laying of ducts.* Application approved.
- PA/03578/14- *Demolition of existing r.c. roof over ground floor, construction of same at lower level, addition of a new first floor level and sanctioning of rooms at ground floor level.*

Application withdrawn.

- PA/00114/16- *Internal alterations at ground floor level to house the 'Regatta Club', the demolition of the existing roof that is being proposed to be replaced to support a newly added floor that is to house a conference hall.* Application approved.
- PA/04757/19- *Rehabilitation and embellishment of Sally Port Promenade including the reconstruction of the extensively damaged quay wall. Application also includes the demolition of the existing public toilets and reconstruction in a different location.* Application undergoing screening.
- PA/04716/19- *Minor changes to existing launching ramp including modification of gradient, installation of fenders and elongation of landing to make room for dis/embarcation.* Application approved.
- PA/08446/19- *Internal and external alterations to existing regatta club, demolition of existing public toilets and construction of first floor restaurant Class 4D.* Application is awaiting recommendation.
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#### **4. Screening Criteria**

##### **4.1 EIA Screening**

*(citations refer to S.L. 549.46, except where otherwise specified):*

##### **4.1 EIA Screening** *(citations refer to S.L. 549.46, except where otherwise specified):*

The proposed development falls under the scope of *Schedule I, Category II of the EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46)*, namely *Section 6.2.1.3 – Marinas*. Therefore, the proposal was also screened in terms of the EIA Regulations.

##### **4.2 Water Policy Framework Screening** *(citations refer to S.L. 549.100, except where otherwise specified):*

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100) in view that the proposal is located within coastal water body MTC 115 and in view of the nature of the proposal.

#### **5. Documents used for screening**

- a) Project Description Statement (PDS) which was referred directly to ERA on 25th July 2020;
- b) Figures 1-2 (E-Apps docs. 1 a,b respectively); Picture 1 (E-Apps doc. 1e).

## **II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL**

### **6. Assessment of Impacts and Ancillary Considerations**

*(Screening in terms of Schedule III of the EIA Regulations, S.L. 549.46).*

### Sea use

- 6.1 The project will lead to an intensification of moorings from the existing baseline conditions. However, considering the nature of the project in the larger context of the site, the seaward part of which is dominated by other marina related activity, the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

### Marine Ecology

- 6.2 During the construction phase, the removal of the current mooring infrastructure and the placement of the new concrete anchors may potentially affect benthic habitats and/or species present. In addition, the water quality in the inlet may be temporarily degraded during the works due to the suspension of sediments. In this regard, it is unclear whether such impacts would be significant or otherwise. Therefore, in order to identify the presence of sensitive/protected benthic species and habitats, which may be subject to impacts following the proposed works, an ecological survey of the area of intervention is required. The survey should also take note of the presence of sensitive/protective species, including but not limited to *Cladocora caespitosa*, *Steromphala nivosa* (formerly *Gibbula nivosa*) and *Posidonia oceanica*. The presence of such species on existing mooring infrastructure is also to be noted.
- 6.3 ERA acknowledges that the area of the inlet, which may potentially be subject to the suspension of sediment throughout the construction phase, can be significantly reduced through the appropriate use of silt curtains, as proposed in the PDS. Moreover, additional spill equipment should be kept on site to deal with any chemical and oil/fuel leaks that may occur. However, the significance of the impacts on the marine ecology remain unclear in the absence of further details on the benthic habitats and protected species present.
- 6.4 During the operations, the expected increase in marine traffic may potentially disturb sensitive species or habitats, however similar to the construction phase, it remains unclear whether any significant impacts are expected, in the absence of further details on the benthic habitats and protected species present.

### Landscape and Visual Amenity

- 6.5 No significant impacts during the construction-phase are envisaged, given that the presence of machinery on site (barge, crane, etc.) will be temporary and of a short duration, and as long as the use of such machinery properly adheres to the minimum specifications set out in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007 (S.L. 552.09).
- 6.6 During operations, the upgraded mooring area will attract larger sized vessels to the area, which may potentially affect the views of the Birgu bastions and Kalkara, which form part of the Area of High Landscape Value (Harbour Fortifications) (Govt. Notice 133 of 2001). However, taking into consideration the nature of the surrounding area and the limited scale of the project in relation to the various other mooring bays for larger ferry vessels in the harbour, such impacts are not expected to be significant.

### Waste

- 6.7 During construction phase, waste will comprise mostly of moorings and anchors that are currently in place, together with metals, ropes, concrete and plastics. Such waste

generation is not considered to be significant, as long as the materials generated on site as a result of the works are carted away immediately and not left on site, and the waste generated on site is managed appropriately as per the requirements of Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007 (S.L. 552.09).

- 6.8 During operation phase, the type and quantity of waste generated from the project will be limited to materials which are disposed when maintenance is performed. The quantities of operational waste cannot be estimated at this stage. Despite this, however, it is to be ensured that environmental contamination is prevented at source through basic operational good practice.

#### Air quality

- 6.9 During construction phase, no significant impacts on air quality are expected in view that works will be carried out from a barge and few materials and waste will need to be transported to and from the site.
- 6.10 During the operational phase of the project, no additional significant air quality impacts are being envisaged.

#### Noise emissions

- 6.11 Any noise emissions during the construction phase are not expected to be significant, as long as good site practices, stated in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations, 2007 (S.L. 552.09) are being adhered to at all times.
- 6.12 During the operational phase of the project, no additional significant noise emissions are being envisaged.

#### Consequential interventions

Assuming that the area of this project is sufficiently protected by the wave motion and the present proposal will not entail the need for further interventions to make the inlet safe, it remains assured that any further works (e.g. coastal defenses) undertaken in the bay will be not allowed by the Authority as they haven't been specified in the PDS.

## Screening Outcome

The above screening concludes that impacts of the development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA in accordance with the EIA Regulations, 2017 (S.L. 549.46), subject that a localised benthic survey is carried out (particularly within the footprint and immediate area of influence of the project, to identify any ecologically important features and/or habitats in the area (especially with regard to *Cladocora caespitosa*, *Steromphala (Gibbula) nivosa* and *Posidonia oceanica*) to allow for effective monitoring during construction, and as long as various preventive and mitigation measures are duly incorporated into the mainstream development consent mechanism and mitigated by means of conditions and specifications (e.g. approved documents) in the development permit.

## 7. Screening in terms of Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100)

7.1 *With respect to the Water Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100)*, ERA will only be in a position to determine the need for further assessment once the required expert opinion is submitted to ERA.

## 8. Further requirements to be submitted:

- a) As already requested by ERA in the document 20a on EApps, a localised benthic survey particularly within the footprint and immediate area of influence of the project, is to be carried out to identify any ecologically important features and/or habitats in the area (especially with regard to *Cladocora caespitosa*, *Steromphala (Gibbula) nivosa* and *Posidonia oceanica*), to allow for effective monitoring during construction.
- b) An Emergency plan for the area has to be provided as an integral part of the proposed development.
- c) Following completion of the benthic survey, further potential investigations may be required to the applicant.

## III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

Following screening of this proposal, ERA concludes that the environmental impacts from the proposed development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting an EIA or a formal assessment in terms of Article 4(7) of the EU Water Framework Directive, however the submission of a benthic survey is required (refer to Section 6 – Screening outcome above).

ERA reserves the right to issue its conditions and/or request for any additional information, following the satisfactory submission of the above-mentioned requirements.

## 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.*