

Ing. Fredrick Azzopardi  
Chief Executive Officer  
Infrastructure Malta,  
Vjal L-Avjazzjoni,  
Luqa LQA 1023

Date: 23/12/2020  
ERA Ref: EA/00058/20

Dear Sir,

**Planning Ref.:** PA/04721/20  
**Description Proposal:** Proposed Upgrading of Junction at Node WA23 including a new overpass, underpass and widening of road.  
**Location:** Site at, Vjal L-Avjazzjoni, Triq il-Kunsill tal-Ewropa, Triq San Tumas, Triq il-Mithna ta' Caraffa, Triq Ganni Vassallo, Luqa.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46)**

Reference is made to the Project Description Statement (PDS) for the above-captioned proposal, at document PA/04721/20 – 77a, which was referred to ERA on 17 December 2020.

ERA's recommendation and representation on the said development proposal are being lodged in its capacity as an external consultee and an interested party in accordance with the Development Planning Act and the Development Planning (Procedure for Applications and their Determination) Regulations (S.L.552.13).

#### ***ERA Assessment and Recommendations***

The proposal involves the development of a grade separated junction at Vjal L-Avjazzjoni, Triq il-Kunsill tal-Ewropa, Triq San Tumas, Triq il-Mithna ta' Caraffa and Triq Ganni Vassallo, Luqa. This node is part of Route 1 of the Core Trans European Network and is a strategic stretch linking the Malta Freeport to Valletta, including connection with the Malta International Airport. The junction improvement seeks to improve traffic flow which is subject to traffic congestion, particularly during am and pm traffic peaks. The proposal also seeks to improve pedestrian access, cycling as well as public transport facilities.

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46), notably in terms of Schedule I, Category II: Section 2.1.2.1 (*Construction, excavation or realignment of roads, tunnels, viaducts or bridges, not covered by Category I, if located ODZ or at the edge of the development zone*). Therefore, the proposal was also screened in terms of the EIA Regulations.

Whilst certain environmentally relevant aspects have been identified through this screening (e.g. the uprooting of trees, additional land uptake with its associated loss of agricultural land, changes to the visual amenity of the site), these impacts are not considered significant to the point of warranting an EIA when taking into consideration the various preventive mitigation measures, and the nature and characteristics of the proposal and the surrounding area. Thus, no further assessment in terms of regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46) is required subject that:

- The area indicated as *buffer zone* in Annex III is kept free from development and any eventual works in it would need to be clarified and assessed further;
- Efforts are made as much as possible to secure the transplanting of trees within the site and measures are taken for the survival of these trees. With respect to the *Prunus dulcis* species located along Triq il-Kunsill Tal-Ewropa, near the junction with Triq Il-Gudja, such should be retained in view that these are located outside of the proposed widening area;
- Further details are provided regarding the proposed reuse of excavated rock on site; and
- A landscaping plan is submitted (reserved matter), detailing the proposed planting of vegetation and inclusion of any green infrastructure, in order to offset the loss of vegetation on site due to the proposed interventions on trees and reduce the visual impact of the proposal.

In this regard, ERA does not object to the proposal from an environmental point of view, subject to the above requirements and the inclusion of ERA's conditions in the development permit

Yours faithfully,

Yves De Blick  
Environment Protection Officer  
f/Director Environment & Resources

cc.: Perit Robert Zerafa, Infrastructure Malta, Vjal L-Avjazzjoni, Luqa LQA 1023