

**ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT  
(CAP. 549)**

**Dwejra Protection and Management Regulations, 2026**

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred by articles 54 and 55 of the Environment Protection Act, the Minister responsible for the environment after consultation with the Environment and Resources Authority, has made the following regulations:-

Citation and scope.

1. (1) The title of these regulations is the Dwejra Protection and Management Regulations, 2026.

(2) The aim of these regulations is to:

(a) protect and safeguard the ecological, geological, geomorphological, physiographical, landscape and natural habitats, features and characteristics of the Dwejra-Qawra area and its environs;

(b) safeguard the site's biodiversity through the conservation of its natural habitats and wild flora and fauna;

(c) ensure the use of natural resources at the Dwejra-Qawra area and its environs is sustainable; and

S.L. 549.44.

(d) enhance the protection of the Dwejra-Qawra area as a Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance and Special Protection Areas in terms of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations.

Interpretation.

2. In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires:

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"Act" means the Environment Protection Act;

S.L. 549.44.

"alien" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations;

"competent authority" means the Environment and Resources Authority as established in article 6 of the Act;

S.L. 549.44.

"endemic" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations;

"entertainment purposes" includes but is not limited to fireworks, bonfires, barbecues and camp-fires;

"geological features" includes the bedrock, minerals and palaeontological features;

"geomorphological features" includes physical, topographic and bathymetric features created by physical, chemical or biological processes operating at or near the Earth's surface;

"indigenous" means native species which is naturally found within the protected area and which are not alien, and includes species which are considered to be possibly native and, or endemic. Indigenous also includes subspecies and other infraspecific ranks;

S.L. 549.44.

"management plan" means the Natura 2000 Management Plan or equivalent conservation measures as established through the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations;

"Minister" means the Minister responsible for the environment;

S.L. 552.02.

"offroading" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Motor Vehicles (Offroading) Regulations;

"protected site" means the area delineated in the site map in Schedule I;

S.L. 549.44.

"Special Area of Conservation of International Importance" and "Special Protection Area" have the same meaning as provided in the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations;

"Steering Committee" means the Dwejra Steering Committee as established in regulation 5;

"Zone 1" means the strictly restricted area as delineated in the site map in Schedule II, where camping and the kindling of fires for entertainment purposes shall be prohibited; and

"Zone 2" means the restricted area as delineated in the site map in Schedule II, where camping and the kindling of fires for entertainment purposes shall be prohibited unless, in possession of a prior permit from the competent authority.

Designation of a Special Area of Geological Importance.

3. The Minister hereby declares Dwejra-Qawra area and the adjacent areas in the western Gozo, as delineated in the site map in Schedule I as a Special Area of Geological Importance.

Implementation.

S.L.549.44.

4. For the purpose of implementation of these regulations the competent authority may enter into a management agreement, in accordance with regulation 15 of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, to appoint a site manager who shall be responsible for the carrying out of specific tasks related to the Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance, the Special Protection Areas and the Special Area of Geological Importance.

Dwejra Steering Committee.

5. (1) The Dwejra Steering Committee is hereby being established.

(2) The Steering Committee shall be composed of not less than seven (7) members who shall be appointed by the Minister for a term of three (3) years, renewable for further periods, as follows:

- (a) a Chairperson;
- (b) a representative of the competent authority;
- (c) a representative of the Minister responsible for the environment;
- (d) a representative of the Minister for Gozo;
- (e) a representative of the San Lawrenz Local Council;
- (f) one (1) expert member knowledgeable in geology, ecology or the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife;
- (g) one (1) member representing relevant non-government organisations; and
- (h) any other representatives that the Minister may deem fit.

(3) The Chairperson and the other members of the Steering Committee may resign their office at any time by giving notice in writing to the Minister:

Provided further that the Minister may at any time remove the Chairperson and, or any of the members of the Steering Committee, by giving notice in writing on grounds of disability to perform their functions or neglect of duty.

(4) The Steering Committee shall regulate its own procedure.

(5) The Minister shall appoint a secretary to assist the Steering Committee, who may be a representative of the competent authority.

(6) The quorum of the Steering Committee shall consist of the Chairperson and not less than half of the voting members. The Chairperson shall have an original vote and, where the votes are equally divided, a second or casting vote.

Functions of the Steering Committee.

6. (1) The Steering Committee shall have the responsibility to assist the competent authority in the implementation and supervision of the:

(a) management plans, conservation orders and, or protection notices established for the Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance and Special Protection Areas located within the protected site; and

(b) conservation measures for the Special Area of Geological Importance delineated in the site map in Schedule I.

(2) Without prejudice to sub-regulation (1), the Steering Committee shall also act as a contact point between the Government, stakeholders and organisations involved in the implementation of the relevant management plans, conservation orders or protection notices.

(3) The Steering Committee is to provide an annual report of its activities to the Minister and to the competent authority.

Control of activities within the protected site.

S.L. 549.44.

S.L. 552.02.

7. (1) Unless in possession of a prior permit issued by the competent authority where applicable, and without prejudice to the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations and the Motor Vehicles (Offroading) Regulations, no person shall:

(a) within the confines of the protected site capture, hunt, collect, take, pursue, trap, pick, uproot, cut, destroy, damage, harm, kill, create any adverse condition, disturb, keep or possess any specimen of indigenous flora or fauna:

S.L. 549.42.

S.L. 549.90.

Provided that the restrictions on hunting and trapping of birds and wild rabbit shall be regulated through the provisions of the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations and the Protection of Wild Rabbit Regulations;

(b) buy, sell, exchange, advertise or in any manner trade in, transport or, export any specimen of indigenous flora or fauna collected from the terrestrial part of the protected site;

(c) deliberately destroy or damage the breeding sites or resting places of birds within the protected site;

(d) collect or extract fossils from the protected site;

(e) release and, or in any way intentionally assist the establishment or potential establishment of non-indigenous flora or fauna within the protected site or, allow the escape of such species:

Provided that, without prejudice to the Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations and the Control of Invasive Alien Species of European Union Concern Regulations, the planting or sowing of agricultural and horticultural plants may be allowed within fields registered for agricultural use with the Agricultural Directorate;

(f) carry out an activity, intervention, operation or endeavour which damages or which may reasonably be expected to negatively impact the biodiversity, geology, geomorphology, physiography or landscape features of the protected site, or parts of it;

(g) cut into, excavate, level or permanently cover any bedrock or rocky terrain within the protected site or, construct any structure or foundations therein;

(h) dump, deposit, pour or throw any waste or any other form of litter, refuse, rubble, gravel or other deleterious substance, or leave behind any such material including barbeque remains, within the protected site;

(i) cause, or permit to cause, loud music or any unnecessary noise within the terrestrial part of protected site;

Notice to Mariners No. 44 of 2020.

(j) cause or, permit to cause loud music or any unnecessary noise within the marine part of the protected site as per Notice to Mariners No. 44 of 2020;

(k) drive, park, tow, or place any caravan within the protected site;

(l) practice offroading by motorised vehicles within the protected site provided that the parking and driving of agricultural vehicles on cultivated land as reasonably required for the purpose of continued cultivation is not prohibited;

(m) kindle, or attempt to kindle, a fire for entertainment purposes within the zones delineated in the site map in Schedule II;

(n) camp within the zones delineated in the site map in Schedule II.

Control of lighting within the protected site.

(2) Within the protected site:

(a) no lights shall be projected on the cliffs;

(b) lights on land shall be switched off between midnight and sunrise:

Provided that this does not apply to minimal external lighting to ensure safety;

(c) between sunset and sunrise of the following day, any vessel shall switch off all external lights except those strictly required for safety onboard, for safe navigation purposes or for fishing:

Provided that this does not apply to minimal external lighting to ensure safety on board;

(d) the installation of any new permanent external lighting fixtures on land shall be prohibited unless permitted by the Authority;

Provided that there shall be the presumption against the approval of new external lighting fixtures for commercial enterprises;

(e) any lights in quarries which are in the area indicated in Schedule III of these regulations shall be shielded such that the light is directed downwards in a manner which does not allow light emissions above the horizon and which does not have a correlated colour temperature (CCT) of more than 2700 Kelvin;

(f) the competent authority may impose in a phased approach, the shielding of existing external lights such that the light is directed downwards in a manner which does not allow light emissions above the horizon and which does not have a correlated colour temperature (CCT) of more than 2700 Kelvin.

Control of spearfishing within the protected site.

(3) In the sea within the protected site, no spearfishing with compressed air cylinders may be carried out at any time, and no spearfishing may be carried out from dusk to dawn.

Permits.

**8.** Without prejudice to the provisions of these regulations, the competent authority may grant, or partially grant, or refuse an application for a permit for any activity or operation.

Offences and penalties.

- 9.** (1) Any person who, wilfully or through imprudence, negligence or incompetence:
- (a) fails to observe any condition of a permit granted under the provisions of these regulations;
  - (b) fails to comply with any provision of these regulations or, with any order lawfully given in terms of the Act;
  - (c) infringes any restriction, prohibition, order or requirement arising from these regulations;
  - (d) acts in contravention of any provision of these regulations;
  - (e) conspires with, aids, abets, counsels, instigates, procures or knowingly allows any other person to contravene or fail to comply with the provisions of these regulations or of any restriction, order, prohibition or requirement imposed by or under these regulations;
  - (f) attempts to do any of those actions indicated in paragraphs (a) to (e); or
  - (g) makes a statement or presents information or documentation, which such person knows to be false for the purpose of obtaining the approval of a permit under these regulations
- shall be guilty of an offence against these regulations.

(2) Any person who commits an offence against these regulations shall, on conviction, be liable to:

(a) in the case of a first offence, a fine (*multa*) as indicated in Schedule IV of these regulations;

(b) in the case of a second or subsequent offence, a fine (*multa*) as indicated in Schedule IV of these regulations.

Provided that without prejudice to the provisions of this sub-regulation, in determining the gravity of the offence the Court may consider, amongst others, the following factors:

(i) the possible damage to any habitat or species of national or international concern as a consequence to the offence;

(ii) the intrinsic value or socio-economic benefits of any wildlife, habitat, landscape or natural features within the protected site;

(iii) the possible damage caused through the introduction of species not indigenous to the protected site; and

(iv) the impact of the offence on the general public by the nature of the place, species or habitat affected, or any other similar consideration inherent with the nature of the offence.

(3) The Court shall order the offender to remove the causes of the offence and to undo anything which was done without a permit within a time sufficient for the purpose, but in any case not exceeding three (3) months from the date of judgement, to be fixed by the Court; and, if the offender fails to comply with any such order within the time so fixed, he shall be liable to a fine (*multa*) of not less than sixty euro (€60) and not more than one hundred and twenty euro (€120), as the Court may fix, for every day that the default continues after the expiration of the said time.

(4) Any person who has been found guilty of committing an offence against these regulations shall also pay for the expenses incurred for remedying the damage caused by the said infringement, and for any other expense incurred or mitigation measures required to remedy such doings, damage and infringement.

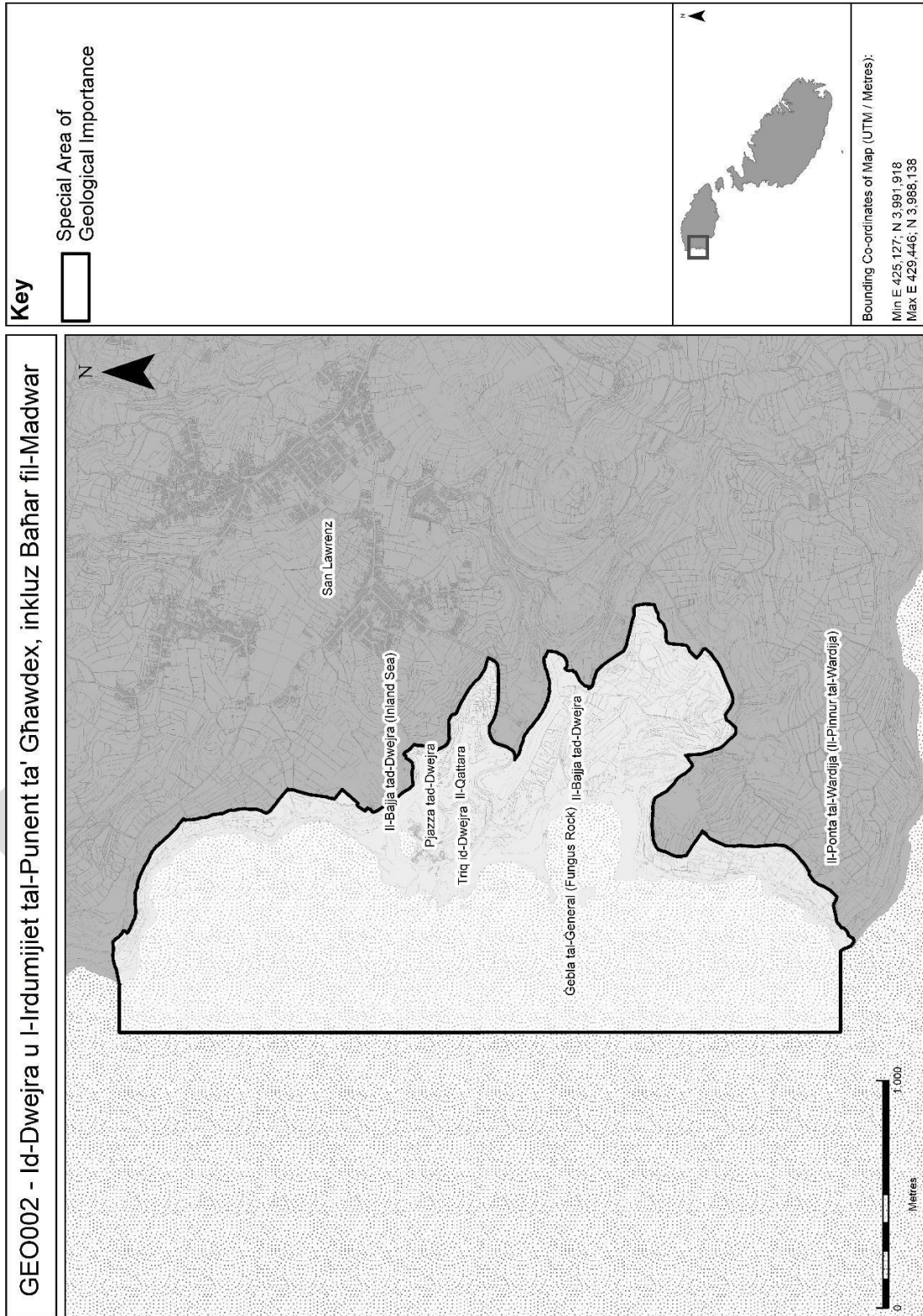
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(5) The provisions of articles 23 and 30(1) of the Criminal Code shall, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to proceedings in respect of offences against these regulations, so however that the disqualification from holding or obtaining a permit or authorisation shall in no case be for less than one (1) year.

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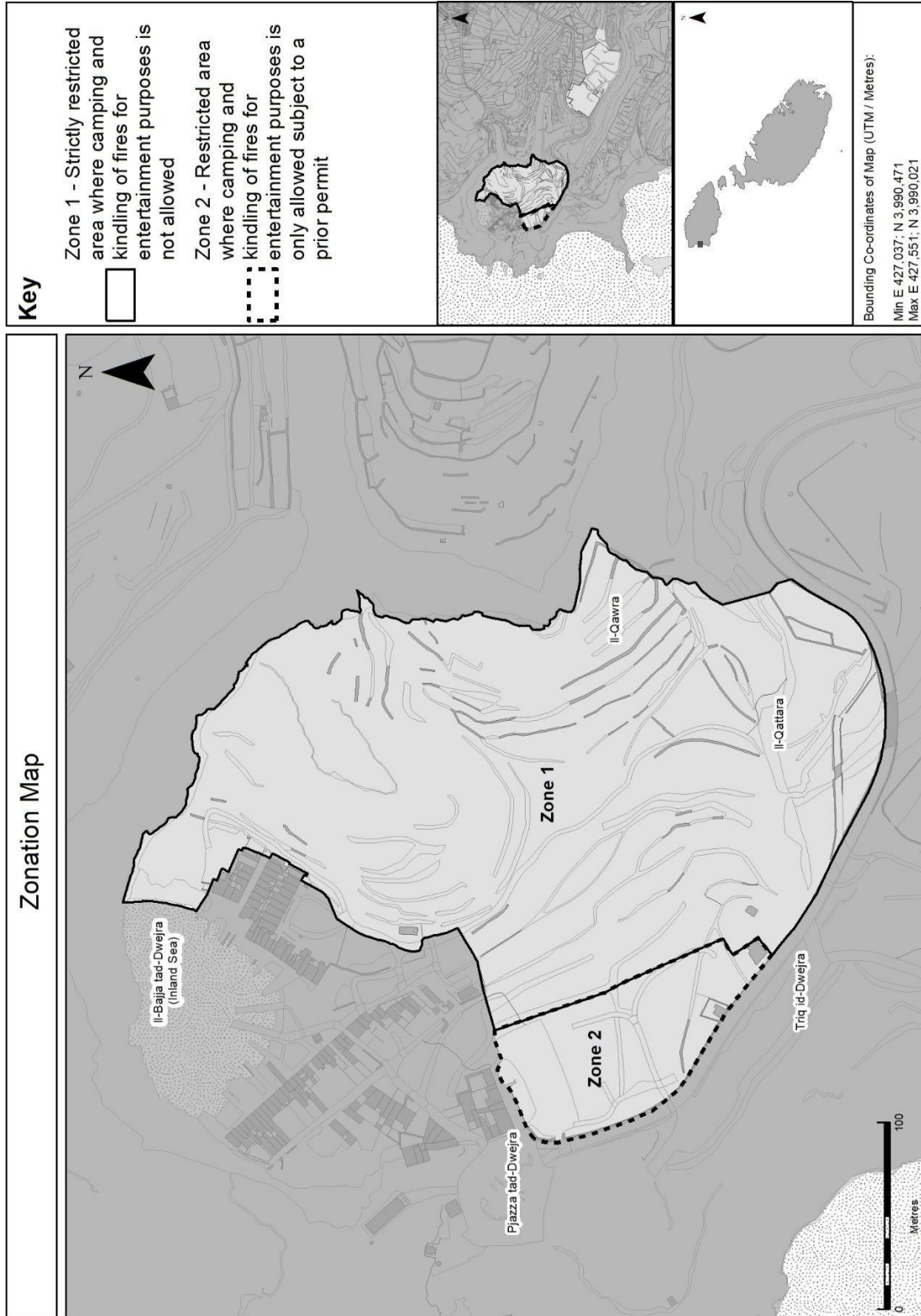
# SCHEDULE I

Special Area of Geological Importance (Dwejra/Qawra and its environs)  
(Regulation 3)

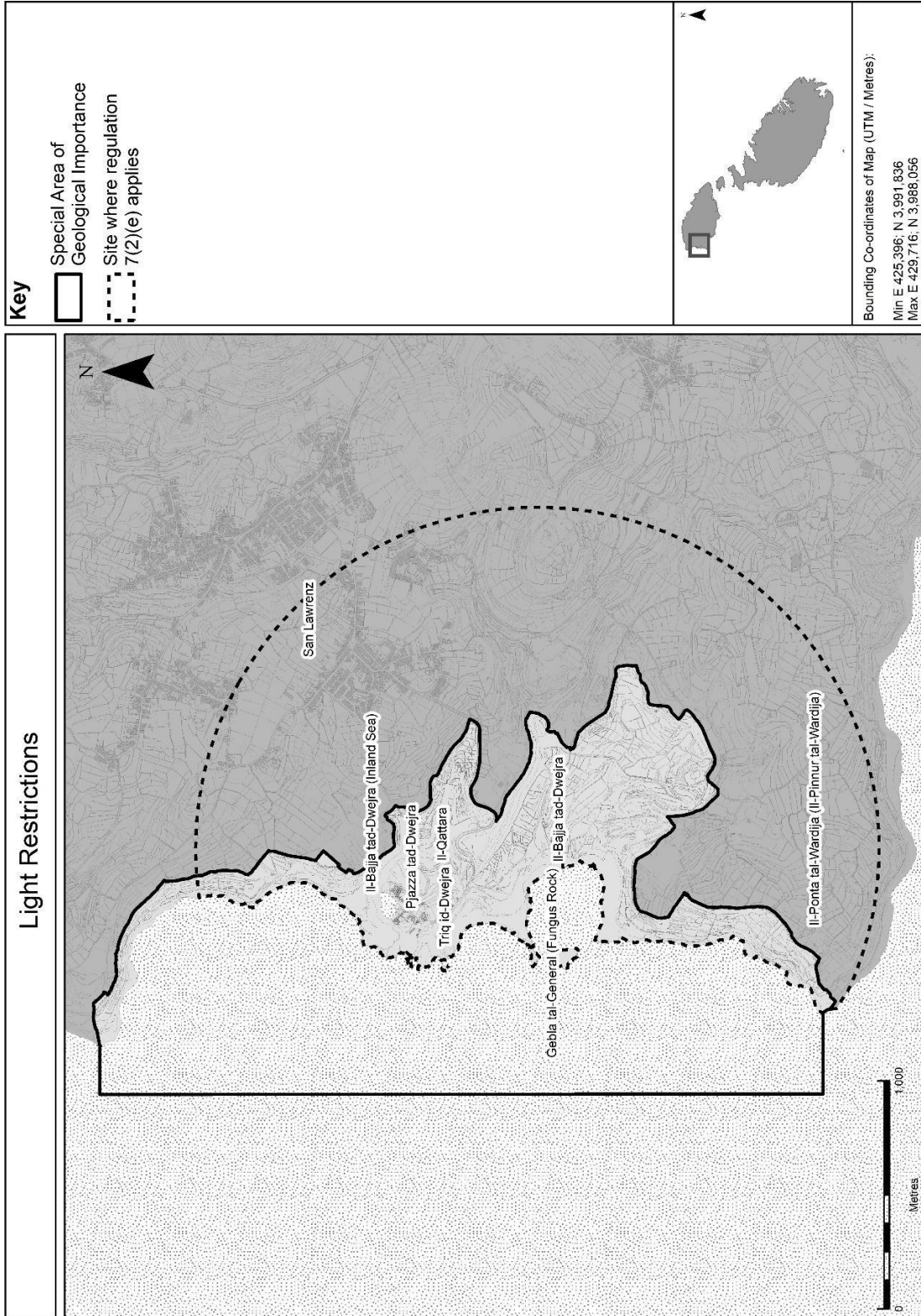


## SCHEDULE II

Zones where restrictions laid down under regulation 7(1) paragraphs (m) and (n) apply



**SCHEDULE III**  
Regulation 7(2) paragraph (e)



## SCHEDULE IV

### APPLICABLE FINES

(Regulation 9)

Applicable fines for offences according to regulation 9:

Offence in breach of:	APPLICABLE FINE ( <i>multa</i> ) (€)			
	First Offence		Second or subsequent Offence	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
Regulation 7(1)(k) and 7(1)(l)	150	2,500	500	10,000
Regulation 7(1)(a) and 7(1)(b)	500 per specimen	2,500 per specimen	1,200 per specimen	5,000 per specimen
Regulation 7(1)(d), 7(1)(i), 7(1)(j), 7(1)(m), 7(1)(n) and 7(2)	500	2,500	750	10,000
Regulation 7(1)(h)	650	4,000	1000	15,000
Regulation 7(1)(c), 7(1)(e), 7(1)(f), and 7(1)(g)	750	5,000	1250	20,000
Other offences	500	2,500	750	10,000