

Dwejra Protection & Management Regulations: Public Consultation



Background

The proposed Regulations aim to:

- protect and safeguard the unique ecological, geological, geomorphological, physiographical and landscape features and characteristics;
- safeguard the biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna;
- ensure sustainable use of natural resources within the site; and
- designate as a Site of Geological Importance.

The Regulations are **without prejudice** to existing laws and are to be construed and implemented with other existing legislation.



New Framework & Regulation Processes

- Addressing gaps in legal provisions and providing clear permitting and compliance frameworks;
- Extend the protection of biodiversity to cover all flora and fauna within the area and add regulations on introduction of alien species;
- Protects and safeguard the geological features and declare the site as a protected area for geological importance and introducing new assessment processes;



New Framework & Regulation Processes

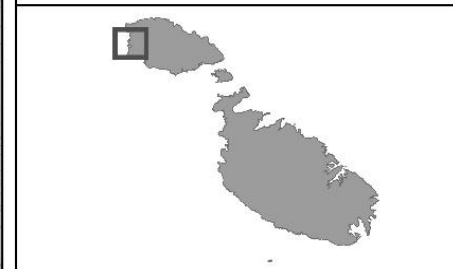
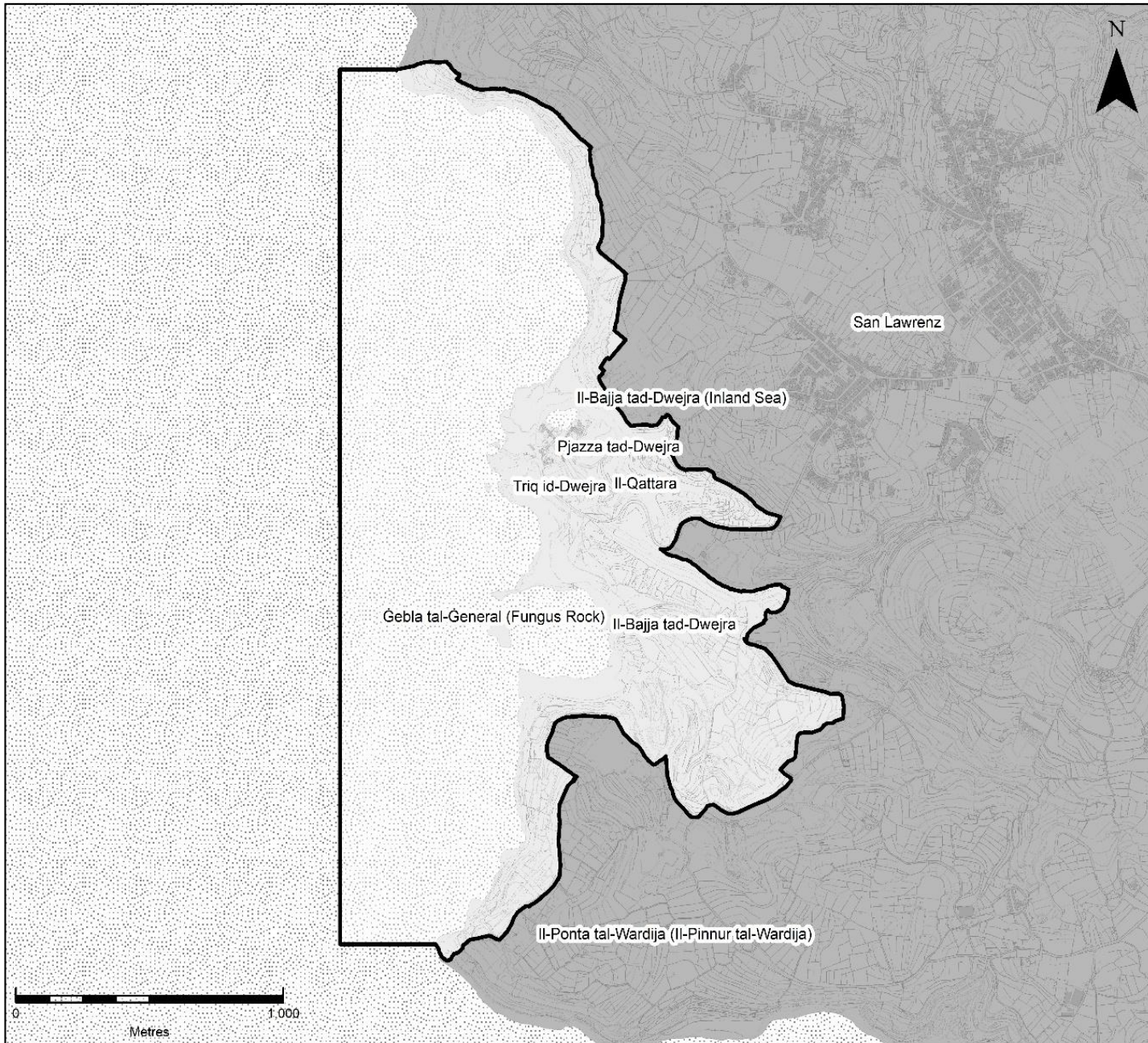
- Addressing gaps in legislation on light, music and noise aspects within the protected area, also extending light considerations this to the main quarries (beyond the protected area);
- Including a common legislative framework covering litter, offroading, barbecues, fire, camping, spearfishing, fossils and site management considerations, which were hitherto not consolidated.



GEO002 - Id-Dwejra u l-Irdumijiet tal-Punent ta' Għawdex, inkluz Baħar fil-Madwar

Key

 Special Area of Geological Importance



Bounding Co-ordinates of Map (UTM / Metres):

Min E 425,127; N 3,991,918
Max E 429,446; N 3,988,138

Background

Through the proposed Regulations:

- the current Dwejra Steering Committee will be also established formally, with the aim to assist the ERA, in the implementation and supervision of the conservation measures.
- The Committee, which is already in operation, shall consist of *at least* seven members - including a representative of relevant non-governmental organisations - who shall be appointed by the Minister for a term of three years, renewable for further periods.



Restriction of Activities

Restrictions are related to:

- excavations into the rock;
- dumping of waste material;
- the exploitation of species;
- introduction of non-native species,
- collection of paleontological features (including fossils);
- camping and kindling of fires for entertainment purposes in selected areas;
- off-roading; and
- restrictions on light and noise pollution.



Noise & Light Pollution Provisions

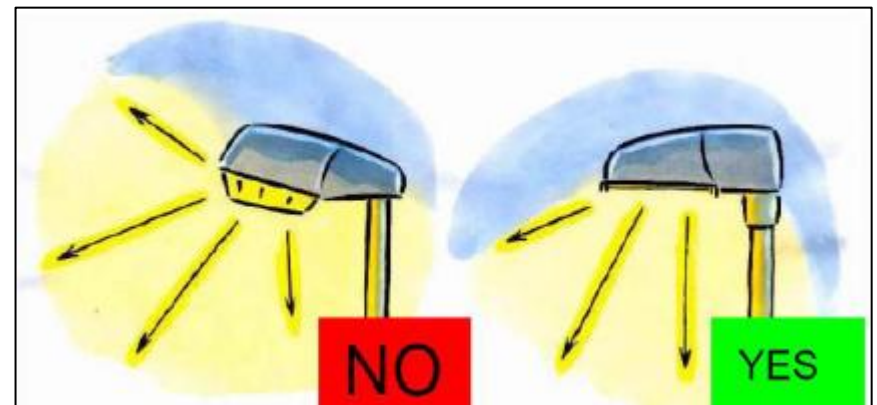
Add to current aspects covered by Notice to Mariners (No. 44 of 2020), but these are extended inland:

- Prohibition of loud music or unnecessary noise within the terrestrial part of the protected site;
- Prohibition on lights projected on cliffs;
- Lights on land to be switched off between midnight and sunrise, except minimal lighting for safety;
- Vessels must switch off all external lights between sunset and sunrise, except those required for safety, navigation, or fishing;

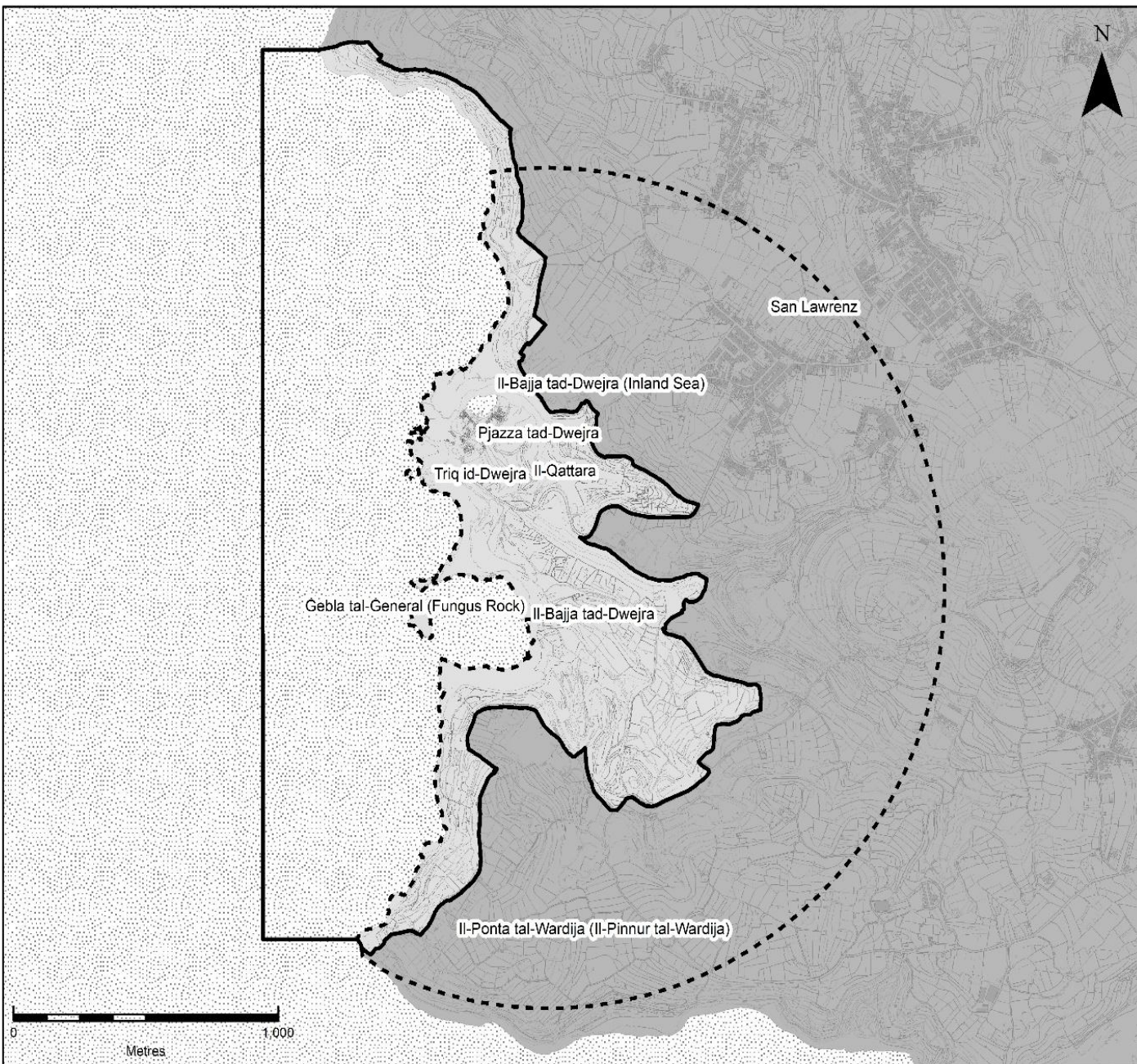


Noise & Light Pollution Provisions



- Installation of new permanent external lighting fixtures on land is prohibited, with a presumption against approval for commercial enterprises;
- shielding of existing external lights may be phased out;
- lights in quarries that fall within the area indicated in the map must be shielded.

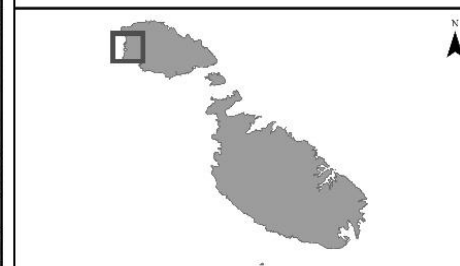


Light Restrictions



Key

-  Special Area of Geological Importance
-  Site where regulation 7(2)(e) applies



Bounding Co-ordinates of Map (UTM / Metres):

Min E 425,396; N 3,991,836
Max E 429,716; N 3,988,056

Camping & Fires Provisions

- Activities related to fires and camping are subject to permitting in Zone 2 but prohibited in high-risk areas in the Il-Qawra zone (Zone 1).
- Any other prohibited activities could be allowed through the issuance of a prior permit from the ERA, barring for the above restrictions (related to fires and camping).
- The Regulations will be enforced by the ERA as the competent authority with the assistance of relevant entities as applicable.

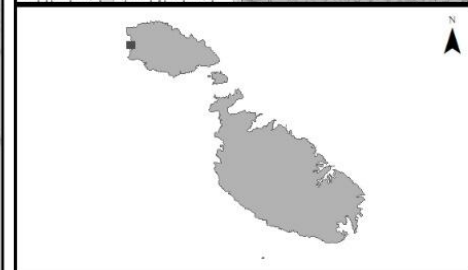
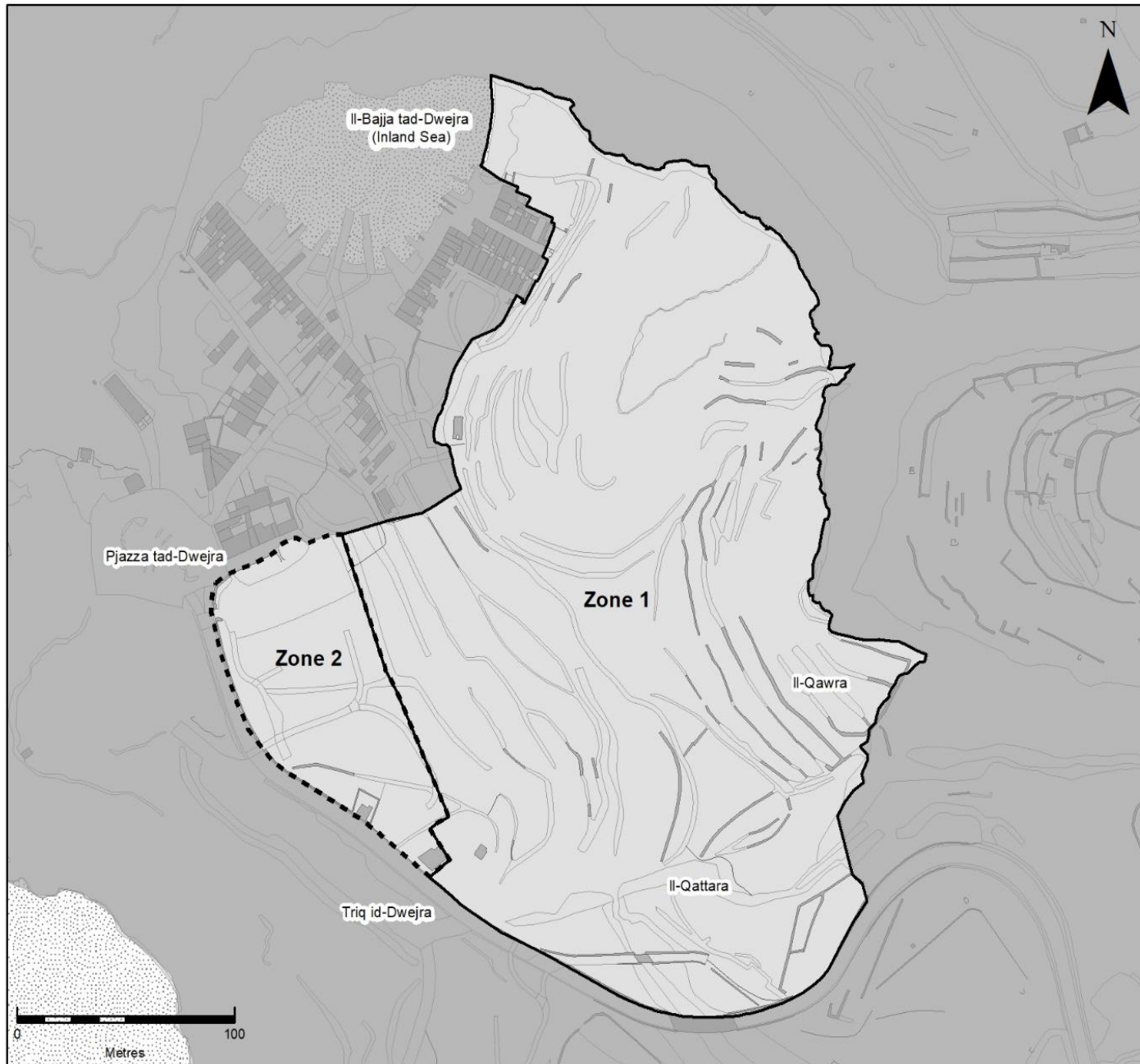
Zonation Map

Key

Zone 1 - Strictly restricted area where camping and kindling of fires for entertainment purposes is not allowed



Zone 2 - Restricted area where camping and kindling of fires for entertainment purposes is only allowed subject to a prior permit



Bounding Co-ordinates of Map (UTM / Metres):

Min E 427,037; N 3,990,471
Max E 427,551; N 3,990,021

Consultation

- Comments received via public consultation will be analysed;
- Subject to necessary assessments, the proposed regulations may then be published in a Legal Notice under the Environment Protection Act.





Proposed Regulations and information available at:
<https://era.org.mt/dwejra-protection-and-management-regulations-2026/>

Comments are being invited to submit feedback to
era.policy@era.org.mt by 3rd March 2026