

# Environmental Impact Assessment

## Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

<b>ERA Reference no.:</b>	EA/00008/22
<b>PA Reference no.:</b>	PA/00043/22
<b>Project Title:</b>	Proposed underground storm water tunnel linking to existing NFRP infrastructure in Triq Valletta, Mosta.
<b>Location:</b>	Triq Valletta, Triq Valletta, Mosta
<b>Screening date:</b>	March 2022

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## I. BACKGROUND

### 1. Outline of Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal is an extension of the existing National Flood Relief Project (NFRP) tunnel system as shown in Figures 1-3 below. This extension consists of a bored tunnel circa 400m in length with an average diameter of 3.2m. The average depth of the crown of the tunnel from road level is between 8m to 10m below the surface of the road. The proposed tunnel will be tunnelled underneath existing public roads.
- 1.2 A section of the existing NFRP tunnel as shown in yellow in Figure 3 will need to be remodelled to allow for the junction with this proposed branch.
- 1.3 The proposed extension will receive rainwater coming from the area of Ta' Mlit and the already existing rainwater system in Triq Valletta. This proposal will also install a number of oil and grit separators at every across-the-road inlet culvert.
- 1.4 The estimated duration of the construction phase is envisaged to take 9 months.
- 1.5 The proposed project will generate 5600m<sup>3</sup> of excavated material. This material is proposed to be temporarily deposited in part of the existing car parking area near the NFRP Maintenance Depot shown in Figure 1 and then loaded onto larger trucks for disposal at a licensed dumping site.



Figure 1: Close-up aerial ortho-photo showing the site extents of the proposal in blue and the NFRP Maintenance depot with tunnel entrance in red (*Source: PA Geoserver, 2018*)



Figure 2: Aerial ortho-photo showing the location of the proposal in blue (*Source: PA Geoserver, 2018*)

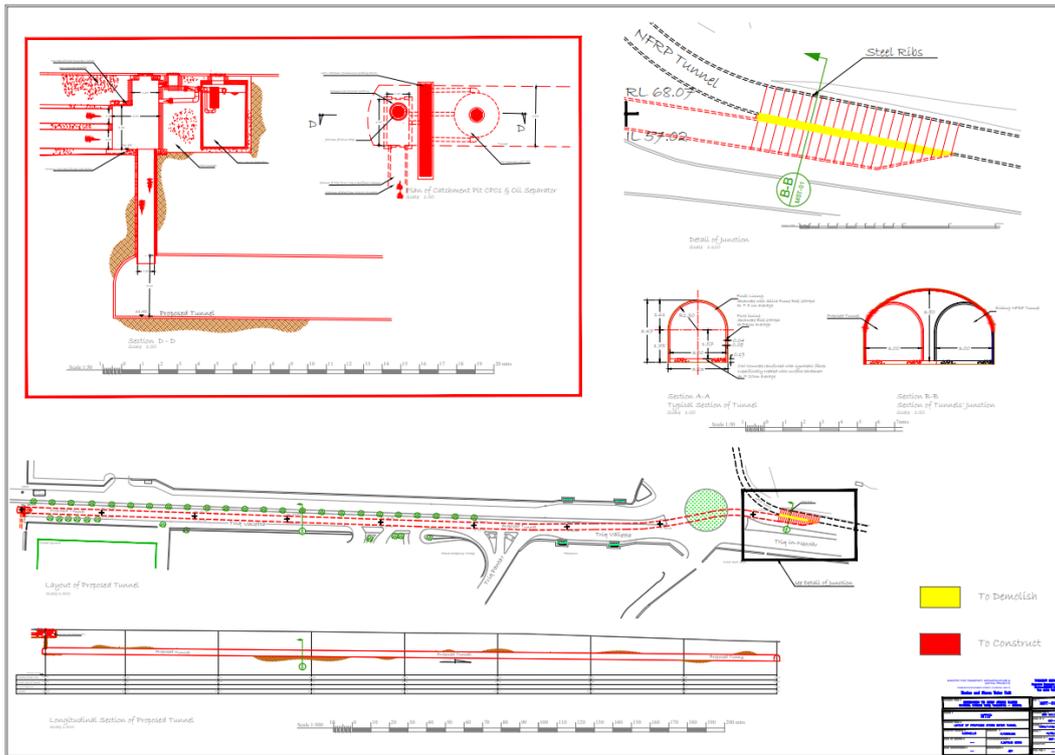


Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan and Sections (Source: Referred directly to ERA via Email on 18/02/2022)

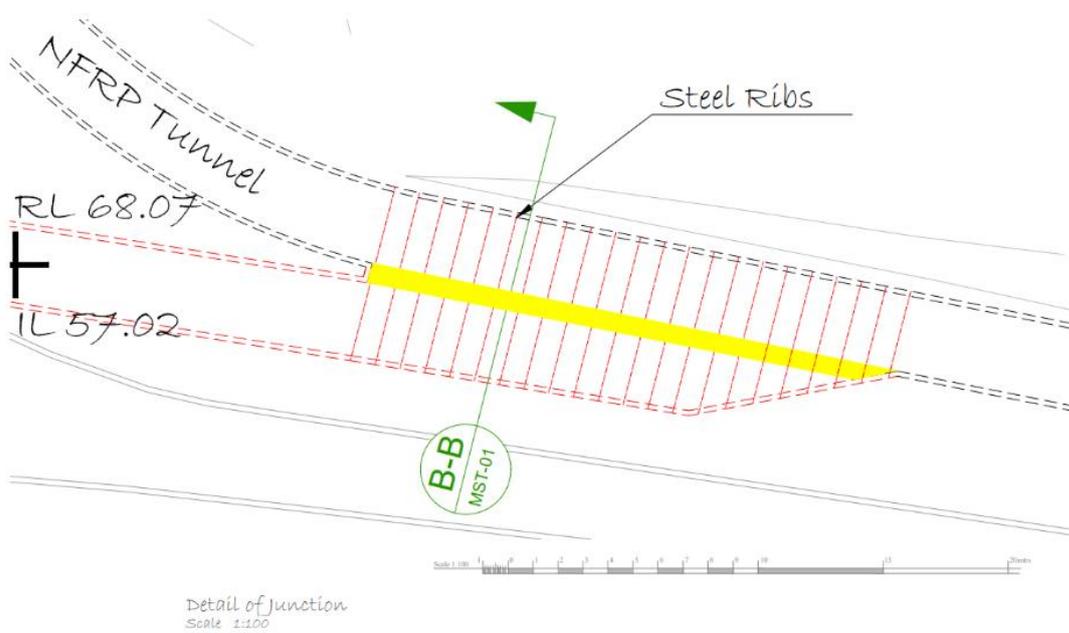


Figure 4: Junction Section from proposed Site Plan (Source: Referred directly to ERA via Email on 18/02/2022)

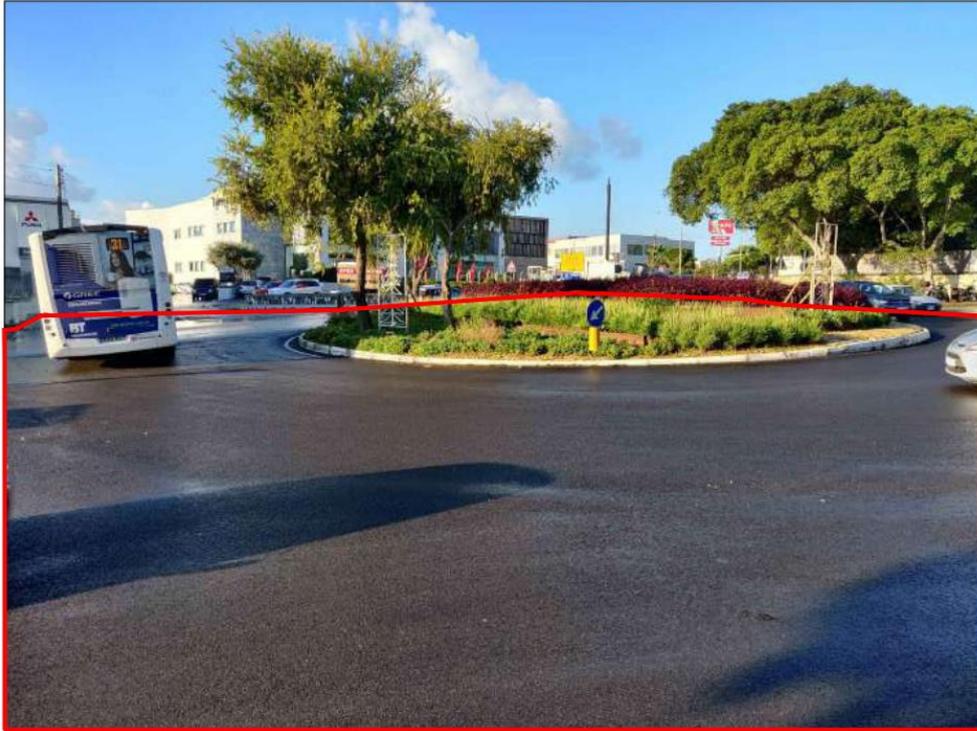


Figure 5: Photo taken from site showing north eastern section of the site area (Source: E-apps PA/00043/22/1d)



Figure 6: Photo taken from site showing the north western section of the site area (Source: E-apps PA/00043/22/1d)

## 2. Site context

2.1 The site is located in Triq Valletta, Mosta and intersects with the existing tunnel system. This is entirely within the footprint of the existing road network, along the Mosta Technopark Industrial Estate. The site lies within the Mosta, Naxxar and Lija Council administrative area.

2.2 Access to the site will be through the existing ramp leading to the NFRP tunnel at the NFRP Maintenance Depot off Vjal il-Labour. Other existing entrances/exits to the NFRP tunnels in case of emergency include:

- Attard (tal-Hofra) off Triq il-Belt Valletta; and
- Gzira, off Triq G. Miceli.

2.3 The site falls partially within a 300m Groundwater Safeguard Zone, and is located approximately 360m away from a Tree Protection Area (Masġar ta' żebbug antik (*Olea europaea*) f'Wied Ħal Lija (limiti ta' Ħal Lija), designated as per Government Notice (G.N.) 316 of 2017 (to the East of the site). To the South of the roundabout, an existing water culvert is located. The proposal is not expected to affect these designations.

2.4 The primary land uses in the immediate vicinity of the site are commercial uses; including a large shopping mall complex, with an area of containment to the south of the site. Agricultural areas are found to the east and south east of the site, whereas industrial uses; including the Mosta Technopark Industrial Estate and residential areas lie to the north and to the west of the site, respectively.

## 3. Case history

This site has been previously subject to the following relevant Planning Applications and Development Notification Orders:

- PA/03152/96; To widen pavement and modify the traffic scheme – Withdrawn at the request of the applicant;
- PA/01906/01; Construction of new road and upgrading of road where existing. Application includes sanctioning of the removal of rubble walls and soil within the precincts of the new road as proposed – Approved by Planning Board / Commission;
- PA/06704/06; Storm water tunnels for flood relief and conservation for water – Application for development permission has been withdrawn at the request of the applicant;
- PA/00240/08; Propose stormwater reservoir and culverts in Mosta Road, Lija – Application for development permission has been withdrawn by the Planning Directorate in accordance with the provision of section 32(6);
- PA/04926/09; Storm water tunnels and other infrastructural works as part of the National Flood Relief Project (NFRP), with proposals for the areas of Birkirkara, Msida, Wied is-Sewda, Attard, Lija, Balzan, and Gzira; with a discharge point at Ta Xbiex, as outlined in the Cost-Benefit and EIA studies and Technical Assistance reports and

other documents prepared by Politecnica – Approved by Planning Board / Commission;

- PA/02200/12; Access shaft and tunnel connection to storm water tunnels of the national flood relief project (NFRP ) as approved in full development permit PA 04926/09 – Approved by Planning Board / Commission;
- GD/04256/00; Traffic management and upgrading of road formation – Not accepted;
- DN/00210/05; Enemalta trench excavation and cable laying – Accepted;
- DN/00118/07; Proposed Trench excavation for Enemalta cable – Accepted;
- DN/00277/07; Trenching works for Melita Cable – Accepted;

#### **4. Screening Criteria**

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

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

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (S.L. 549.46), notably in terms of the following Category II criteria in Schedule I:

- 4.1.2.6 Canalization or flood-relief works.

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

- ERA's previous correspondence, dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022, refer to E-apps PA/00043/22/37a;
- Project Description Statement (PDS), which was referred directly by the architect to ERA via email on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022;
- Various photos on E-Apps at documents 1a, 1d; and
- Site visit held on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

## **II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL**

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

The proposed infrastructure is entirely situated underground, below the existing road. Apart from additional manholes and inlet culverts, no changes to the road surface are proposed. Therefore, no significant impacts in terms of land use are envisaged. In fact, this proposed extension to the national flood relief infrastructure is considered positive since it will further reduce negative impacts of flooding due to intense rainfall in the area known as Ta' Mlit.

The proposal will generate 5,600m<sup>3</sup> of excavated material. Such waste generation is not considered significant as long as efforts are done to maximise reuse of the excavated material, all waste is managed in accordance with the Waste Management Regulations (S.L. 549.63) and the Authority is contacted for any necessary permits concerning transfer of waste for disposal.

Noise, vibrations, airborne dust and emissions from heavy machinery are expected to be generated during the construction phase, notably from the boring of the tunnel. However, no significant impacts are envisaged as these will be temporary and underground. No operational impacts are envisaged.

## **III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD**

The above screening concluded that the environmental impacts of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant, as long as various preventive and/or mitigation measures are duly incorporated into the mainstream development consent mechanism. ERA does not object to the proposal from an environmental point of view, and requests that the conditions annexed with this document (Annex II) are duly included as an approved document.

### ***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.*