

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/00008/24
PA Reference no.: PA/00335/24
Project Title: Transforming an existing waste treatment site into an urban greening project including excavation, underground parking facilities, educational building, greenhouse, food court and water feature.
Location: Sant Antnin Waste Treatment Plant, Triq Sant' Antnin, Marsascala
Screening date: 27 May 2024

I. BACKGROUND

1. Outline of Proposal

The proposal entails the transformation of a substantial portion of the existing Sant' Antnin Waste Treatment Plant (SAWTP) site (Figures 1 and 2) into an urban greening project, thus returning an area of approximately 23,800m² to the community.

The project includes the planting of several mature trees and shrubs, amounting to 14,500m² (c. 62% of the site area) as well as natural paths. The proposal will also feature a body of water of approximately 4,200m² and an island of approximately 320m² aimed at sustaining a micro ecosystem. Few water reservoirs will harvest rainwater from the roofs of the proposed buildings. The excavation of 3 levels of underground parking (catering for 365 parking spaces), a multipurpose garden with a glued laminated light timber structure above the parking, construction of an educational building and a food court, with solar panels and green roofs on top, and a greenhouse are also proposed.

Part of the site of the SAWTP will remain operational for the treatment of glass waste. The said operation is covered by an Environmental Permit (EP 0016/23) granted by ERA in December 2023. Proposed works within the industrial area (in Figure 1) include levelling of the same area and the excavation of a reservoir (section in Figure 6), and the construction of a retaining wall that will separate the said industrial area from the urban greening project. The industrial area will be utilised as a storage area for the glass sorting line.





Figure 3: Photos of existing site and proposed visual for viewpoints 1 and 2 (Source: PDS)



Figure 4: Photos of existing site and proposed visual for viewpoints 3 and 4 (Source: PDS)

2. Site context and history

The site lies just below Wied iz-Ziju, West to Sant Antnin Family Park and East to the Sant Antnin Sewage Plant in Marsaskala (Figure 1).

Sant' Antnin Waste Treatment Plant (SAWTP) formed part of an integral part of Malta's waste management infrastructure that entailed the treatment and management of solid waste. Part of the facility was destroyed following a fire that took place in May 2017. In October 2018, a pilot project was launched to collect biodegradable waste as a separate organic fraction, to deviate waste away from landfill, and to improve the quality of the digestate and biogas yield. For a time, the said organic bag was processed at Sant' Antnin but eventually, the treatment of the organic waste was also shifted to Magtab and currently, the site only operates as a glass sorting line.

SAWTP is undergoing partial decommissioning in line with the SAWTP Decommissioning Plan (as approved by ERA as part of the IPPC), and until now WSM has almost completed the removal of the anaerobic digestion plant and ancillary activities. Following the decommissioning of the latter, WSM will decommission the subsequent areas in line with the decommissioning plan.

A land and groundwater baseline analysis and a Hazardous Property Assessment of ground samples were also carried out (refer to Figure 4). The fate of the excavated material will depend on the results of these tests, a summary of which is presented in Table 1.

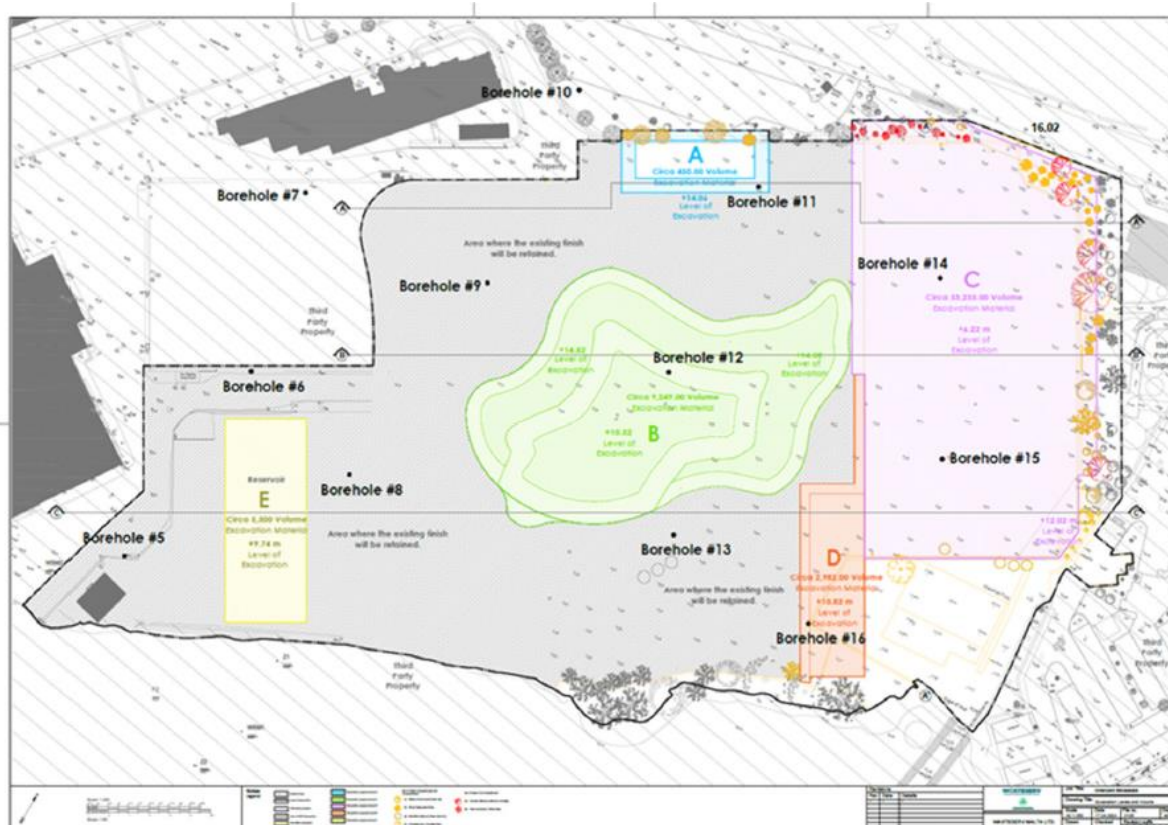


Figure 4: Plan illustrating excavated areas and location of boreholes (Source: PDS)

Table 1: illustrating the fate and volumes of the excavated material depending of the results

Location	Representative Boreholes	The range of depth (in meters), from existing FFL, taken to calculate the volume of excavated material that exceeds residential levels (this includes a precautionary buffer of 0.5m)	Volume (in cu.m.) of material which exceeds industrial limits.	Volume (in cu.m.) of material which exceeds residential levels but within industrial limits.	The range of depth (in meters), from the existing FFL, taken to calculate the volume of excavated inert material	Volume (in cu.m.) of inert material
A	11	from 0 – 1,5	450	0	N/A	0
B	12	from 0 – 2,5	0	7,433	from 2,5 – 5	1,816
	13	from 0 – 5			N/A	
C	14,15	from 0,5 – 2,5	0	10,662	from 0 – 0,5 from 2,5 – 9,8	42,573
D	16	from 0 - 5	0	2,982	N/A	0
E	6	from 0,5 – 3,5	0	11,881	from 0 – 0,5 from 3,5 – 5,5	3,619
	8	from 0 -1,5			from 1,5 – 5,5	
	Total Volumes in cu.m.		450	22,958		48,008
	Proposed disposal or recovery options:		This material shall be disposed of in an authorized non-hazardous landfill, in line with waste acceptance criteria.	This material shall be re-used on site to reach the required levels and sealed. This material shall be located in areas marked W, X, Y and Z in the following plan, <i>Figure 11</i> .		This material will be partly re-used on site to achieve the desired levels while the rest will be loaded onto covered trucks and transported to an authorized filling quarry for recovery, following the EWC code 17 05 04. The latter classification was determined following a Hazard Assessment of Ground Samples at SAWTP, carried out by an expert engaged by WSM, and which was also submitted to ERA.

The possibility of integrating the excavated material on site was extensively considered, resulting in 22,958m³ of excavated material to be crushed, graded and re-used on site to reprofile the site [in areas W,X, Y (up till level +15.6m) and Z – as per Figure 5 and Table 2).

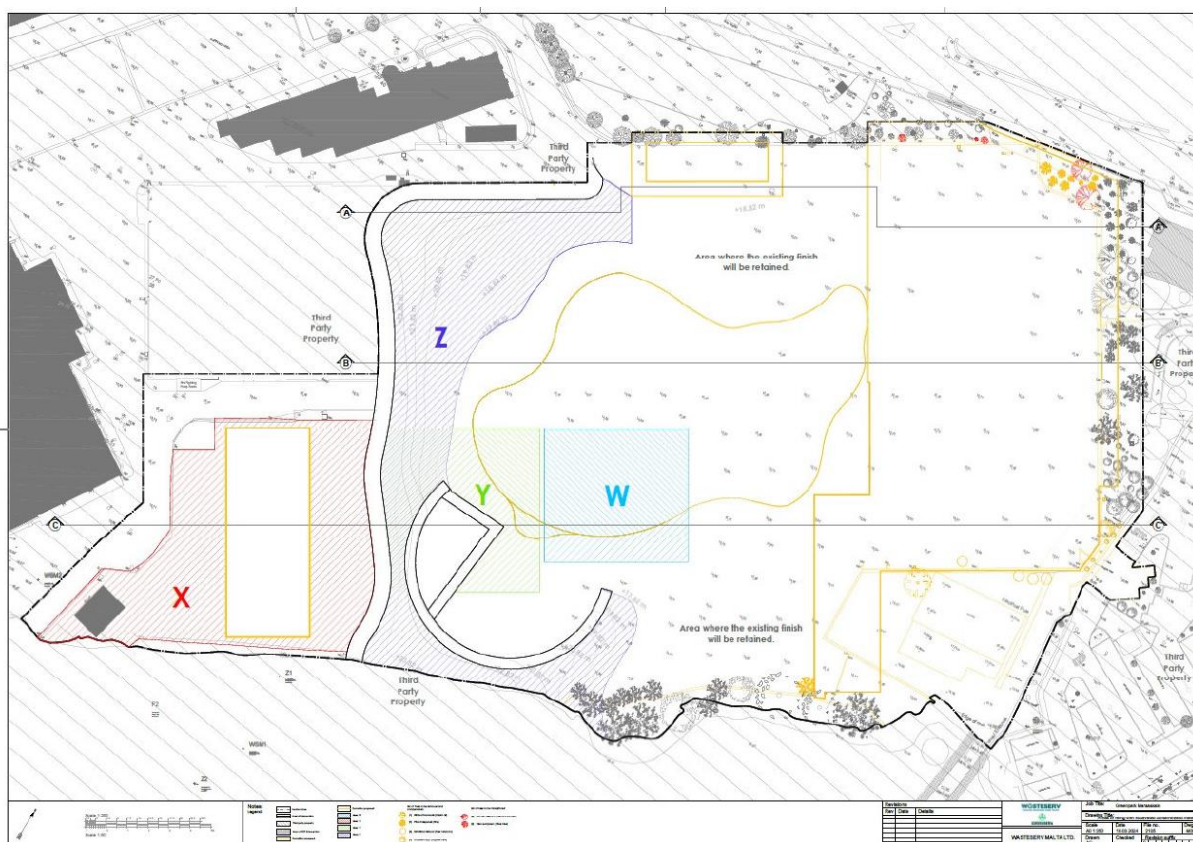


Figure 5: Plan showing the location of excavated material to be re-used on site (Source: PDS)

Table 2: Volumes of excavated material which exceeds industrial limit and is proposed re-use location within the site (Source: PDS)

Location	Volume (in cu.m.)	Proposed intervention over the re-use of material which exceeds residential levels but within industrial limits.
W	2,490	Material to be sealed with a concrete structure/ impermeable layer.
X	655	Material to be sealed with a concrete structure.
Y (up till level +15.60m)	5,078	Material to be sealed with a concrete structure/ impermeable layer.
Z	14,735	Material to be sealed with an impermeable layer.
Total Volume in cu.m.	22,958	

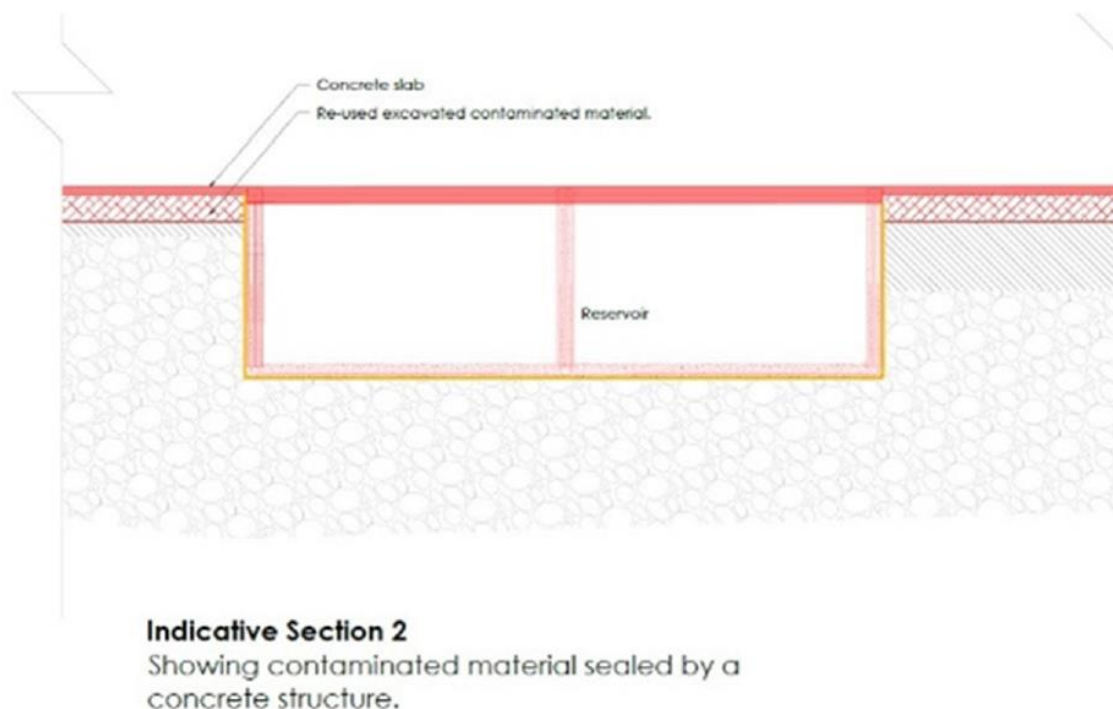


Figure 6: Section of the proposed levelling and excavation of reservoir within the industrial area (area X) (Source: PDS)

3. Case history

The site was previously subject to the following planning applications:

- PA/01275/19 - Widening of door and extension to Mechanical Treatment Plant. Site at EKO Centre, Triq il-Latmija, Triq il-Wied, Marsascala. The case has been dismissed since the requirements set out in the decision have not been complied with within the legislative timeframes.
- PA/09780/18 - Construction of car port shed. Site at EKO Centre, Triq il-Latmija, Triq il-Wied, Marsascala, Malta. This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.
- PA/03160/17 - Change of use from waste pit to class 5A, relocation of approved washing facility and sanctioning of glass crusher. Site at SAWTP, Triq il-Wied, Triq Sant Antnin, Marsascala, Malta. This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.
- PA/09807/17 - Construction of Chemical Room over existing garage. Site at Wasteserv Malta, EKO Centre, Triq Il-Latmija, Marsascala, Malta. This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.
- PA/01191/17 - Addition of toilets to security room. Site at Wasteserv, Triq Il-Latmija, Marsascala, Malta. This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.
- PA/00339/15 - Renewal of PA5696/08 - to sanction demolition of part of existing administration building and excavation. Proposed re-building and extension of existing administration building. Site at Administration Building, Sant Antnin Waste Treatment Plant off, Triq Wied Iz- Ziju, Marsascala, Malta. This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.
- PA/05076/10 - To sanction minor alterations to overall layout and to sanction additions to the shed covering the approved mechanical treatment plant as per PA 4607/06. Site at SAWTP, Triq il-Wied, Triq Sant Antnin, Marsascala, Malta. This application has been approved by Planning Board / Commission.
- PA/04607/06 - Master plan and full development application for part demolition of existing plant and upgrading of the existing facility to accommodate a material recovery facility, a mechanical treatment plant, a digestion plant and composing plant. Site at, Triq Wied iz-Ziju, M'Scala. Planning Authority decision reviewed by Appeals Board / EPRT.

- PA/02838/03 - Part demolition of existing plant and upgrading of the existing facility to accommodate a material recovery facility, a mechanical treatment plant, a digestion plant and a composting plant. Site at Sant Antnin Waste Treatment Plant off, Triq Wied iz-Ziju, M'Scala. Planning Authority decision reviewed by Appeals Board / EPRT.

4. Screening Criteria

4.1 EIA Screening

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

The proposed development falls under 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: Section 1.0.2.1: *Development with a site area of 2ha or more*. Therefore, the proposal was screened in terms of the EIA Regulations.

4.3 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 site of the proposed works is located within the catchment II-Magħluq tal-Baħar - MT0000023.

5. Documents used for screening

- Project Description Statement (PDS), referred to ERA on 18/01/2024 (PA/335/24/10a), revised and referred to ERA on 09/05/2024.

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)

Land and Resource use, and Landscape and Visual Amenity

- As outlined in sections 1 and 2 above, the site is being decommissioning after it was used as a waste management facility for several years. Once the decommissioning is finalised, the site will be rehabilitated and converted into an urban greening project. Although a small portion of the SAWTP will remain industrial, for glass treatment and sorting facility, the majority of the site will be converted to a green urban space thus resulting in a positive change in land-use. As a result of said change in land-use, the proposal will improve the landscape character and visual amenity of the area.

Waste management

- Following the detailed summary provided on the volumes and fate of the excavated material in section 2 above, the proposal involves the excavation of 71,416m³. Out of this, c. 50m³ shall be disposed of in an authorised non-hazardous landfill, in line with waste acceptance criteria, whereas c. 22,958m³ will be re-used on site (in areas W,X, Y and Z as illustrated in Figure 5) to reach the required levels and sealed. The remaining 48,008m³ of inert material will be partly re-used on site to achieve the desired levels, while the rest will be loaded onto covered trucks and transported to an authorised filling quarry for recovery, following EWC code 17 05 04. ERA notes the efforts made to re-use as much excavated material as possible the excavated material on site to re-shape the topography of the site.

- 6.3 During operation, no significant environmental impacts are envisaged given the nature of the proposal.

Noise, dust and traffic flow

- 6.4 During construction, the closest receptor to the proposed development is the Sant' Antnin Family Park which is located 200m away from the site. Other potential receptors are the residential establishments to north-east of the site, however given the history of the site, together with the current traffic along Triq Sant' Antnin and activities from the nearby active quarry, construction noise and dust generation will unlikely have a significant impact on the aforementioned sensitive receptors.
- 6.5 During operation, the noise generated from the nearby quarry and traffic along Triq Sant' Antnin is not expected to be significant. However, it is recommended that noise abatement measures are considered in the design of the park, such as noise barriers between the road and the park.
- 6.6 No dust emissions are envisaged during the operational phase of the project.
- 6.7 With regards to traffic flow, a significant reduction in heavy good vehicles is envisaged as a result of the change in the use of the site. The proposal entails the construction of 365 car parking spaces, resulting in an AADT of 512 trips. When considering the existing AADT, the net AADT from the proposed development is projected at 22 trips. In this regard, no significant environmental impacts are envisaged from an air quality perspective.

Ecology

- 6.8 During construction, the proposal will entail the uprooting of 9 pine trees, whereas, 7 cypress, 3 olive and 2 tamarisk will be transplanted. In view of the proposed interventions on protected trees, the applicant is to submit an application for an environmental permit.
- 6.9 The greening project entails the soft landscaping of approximately 14,500m² of the site, with several mature trees and species, including Cypress, Oak, Pine, Carob, Judas trees, rosemary, sage, English lavender, amongst others leading to an increase in pollinators. In this regard, a positive impact is expected.
- 6.10 Supplementary features aimed to enhance biodiversity are being incorporated in the project, such as the integration of bird nest boxes, bird feeding stations, bee blocks and hedgehog houses.
- 6.11 A body of water is also being integrated in the proposal with a filtration system designed to maintain the cleanliness and quality of the water. The deepest part, with a depth of 6m, has been designed to prevent the water from overheating during the summer months, while also providing a wider range of habitat types. The inclusion of a rich and healthy ecosystem in such project is considered positive.

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

- 7.1 The PDS states that all the efforts will be made to ensure that all water remains within the site boundaries, effectively mitigating the risk of water infiltration beyond the project perimeter, reflecting the current situation.
- 7.2 In this regard, the project will not result in a modification of the characteristics of the water body or affect the ecological status of water body *Il-Magħluq tal-Baħar* - MT0000023. In view of this, no further submissions are required.

III. ERA CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

The above screening concludes that the proposed development does not require an EIA in accordance with Regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46) and further assessment in terms of the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100), as long as various preventive and/or 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.

The conditions annexed to this document (Annex II) are to be included as part of the development permission.

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.

The Project Description Statement (PDS), the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, and any supplementary environmental information (including studies) submitted to ERA, will be made accessible to the public on the ERA's website. In case of any personal or commercially sensitive information not intended for public visibility, kindly also submit a redacted version obscuring the information in question, together with the original unredacted version