



Environmental Impact Assessment

Screening according to Schedule III of S.L. 549.46

Appropriate Assessment

Screening according to S.L. 549.44

Water Policy Framework

Screening according to S.L. 549.100

ERA Ref.: EA/00001/26

PA Ref.: PA/05472/24

Project Title: Refurbishment works at the quay of Wied iz-Zurrieq and surrounding areas. Redevelopment of ticket booth for Blue Grotto operators. Construction of public toilets and boatyard for local fishermen. Development of parking area and kitting area for scuba divers.

Location: Site at Wied Iz-Zurrieq, Triq Congreve, Qrendi.

Screening date: 19th January 2026

I. BACKGROUND

1. Outline of Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal seeks to refurbish and reorganise existing facilities at Wied iz-Zurrieq to improve safety, accessibility and functionality for boat tour operators, divers and fishermen. Works include the:
- Demolition and reconstruction of the small ticket booth;
 - Construction of a covered boat storage area beneath existing road level;
 - Reorganisation of the diver parking and kitting area; and
 - Refurbishment of the quay and access staircase (Figures 1-3).
- 1.2 Structural works involve rock excavation beneath the road to accommodate the new facilities, construction of reinforced concrete foundations, walls and roofing, and the demolition and rebuilding of the deteriorated quay surface and staircase. Quay resurfacing will include the removal of damaged concrete, installation of reinforcement and casting of a new deck. Silt curtains and spill-prevention measures will be implemented to protect the marine environment.
- 1.3 The reconfiguration of the site also includes roofing over part of the boatyard to support the diver parking area above, installing new surface finishes, and upgrading access routes. Works will be carried out during the winter period in phased sequence to minimise



disruption. Excavated rock which will be transported for recycling and construction material will be retained within the existing footprint and not onto undisturbed land.

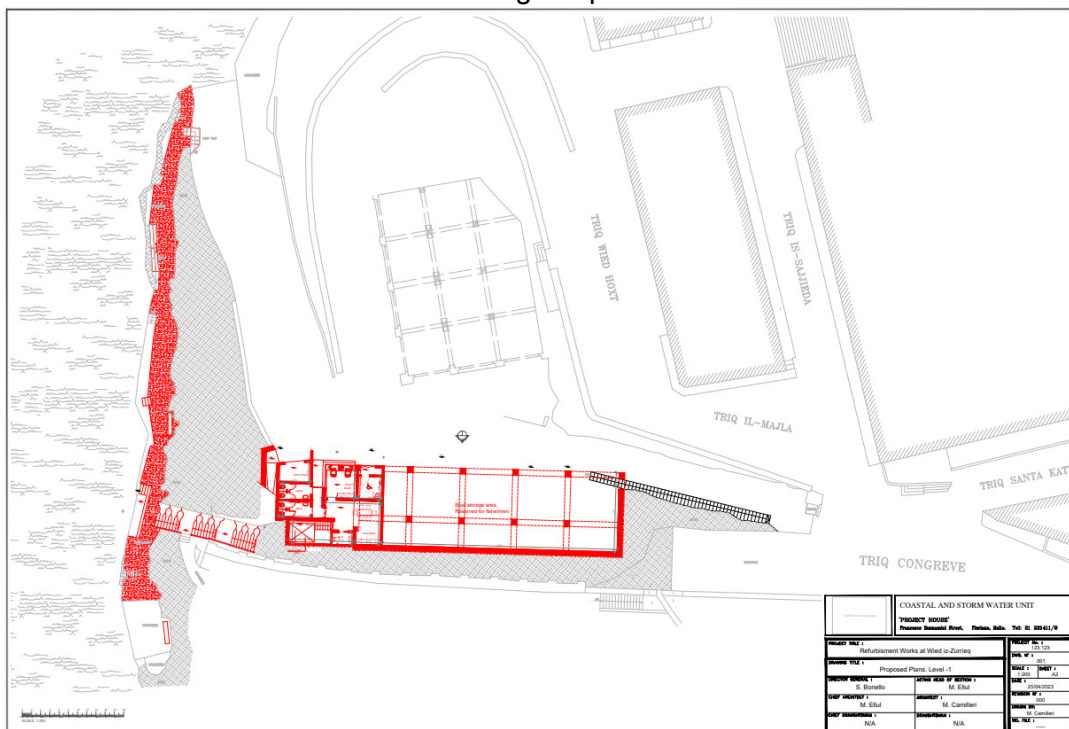


Figure 1: Proposed level -1 (Source: PDS Dated November 2025).

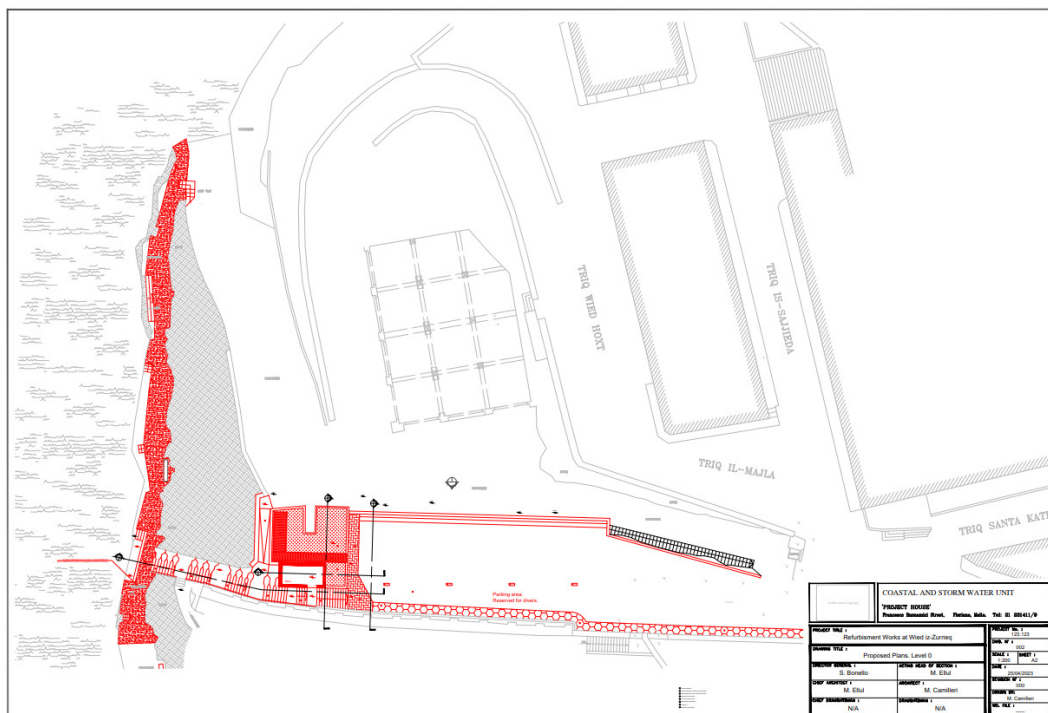


Figure 2: Proposed Ground level (Source: PDS Dated November 2025).



Figure 3: Photomontage of the proposed development (*Source: EApps PA/05472/24/114b*).

2. Site context

2.1 The site of the proposed project is located outside the development zone on the southern side of Qrendi at Wied iz-Zurrieq that is accessed via Triq Congreve (see Figure 4-5). The site, as existing, mainly consists of a concrete quay and access staircase with a total area of c. 1,000m².

2.2 The site is situated along a small inlet within the coast which forms part of Wied iz-Zurrieq, while the surrounding areas include agricultural land, garrigue and a small built up area for residential, fishing, commercial buildings and a Grade 1 military tower named it-Torri ta' Xutu.

2.3 The following environmental designations of national importance are of relevance to the site in question:

- Partially within Diversi Rdumijiet which is an Area of High Landscape Value as per Government Notice (G.N.) 400 of 1996;
- Irdumijiet Ta' Madwar il-Kosta miċ-Ċirkewwa sa Bengħisa which is an Area of Ecological Importance as per G.N. 400 of 1996;
- Within Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ix-Xaqqa sa Wied Moqbol which is a Special Protection area as per G.N. 681 of 2018;
- Within Rdumijiet ta' Malta which is a Special Area of Conservation as per G.N. 1522 of 2019;
- Adjacent to Żona fil-Baħar fil-Lbiċ which is a Special Protection area as per G.N. 682 of 2018; and
- Adjacent to Żona fil-Baħar fl-inħawi ta' Għar Lapsi u ta' Filfla which is a Special Protection area as per G.N. 682 of 2018.

In addition, the site is within 2 terrestrial and 2 marine Natura 2000 sites (see section 4 below).



Figure 4: Close-up aerial orthophoto showing the location of the site (in blue) and its surroundings (Source: PA Geoserver, 2018).



Figure 5: Aerial orthophoto showing the location of the site (in blue) and its surroundings (Source: PA Geoserver, 2018).



3. Case history

3.1 This site has been previously subject to the following relevant Planning Applications:

- PA/02087/04 – Minor embellishment works at Wied iz-Zurrieq, works including resurfacing of existing jetty, scarifying footpath along existing ramp, temporary canvas shelter (summer season), signage, lighting, construction of boat parking steps, concrete making good in fisherman's area, reconstruction of existing stairs to sea and handrails. – Approved; and
- PA/03925/16 – Minor maintenance work on passageway at Wied iz-Zurrieq, Qrendi – Approved.

4. Screening Criteria

4.1 EIA Screening

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

- a) 6.3.2.3 *Development on the coast or in the sea, not covered by Category I, with a footprint of 500m² or more.*

Therefore, the proposal is screened in terms of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46).

4.2 Appropriate Assessment Screening

The proposal lies immediately adjacent to the following marine Natura 2000 sites:

- MT0000111: Żona fil-Baħar fil-Lbiċ which is a Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance; and
- MT0000102: Żona fil-Baħar fl-inħawi ta' Għar Lapsi u ta' Filfla which is a Special Areas of Conservation of International Importance.

The project falls within the following terrestrial Natura 2000 sites:

- MT0000031: Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ix-Xaqqa sa Wied Moqbol which is a Special Protection Area of International Importance; and
- MT0000024: Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla taċ-Ċirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla taċ-Ċirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa which is a Special Area of Conservation of International importance.

4.3 Water Policy Framework Screening

The proposed development falls within the scope of the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100), being located within coastal water body MTMTC 108 – I- Irdumijiet ta' Malta.

5. Documents used for screening

- a) Project Description Statement (PDS), dated November 2025; and
- b) Photomontages, dated January 2026.



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 sea use

6.1 The proposed development involves the refurbishment and reorganisation of a number of existing facilities including the upgrading of the ticketing booth, the boat storage construction and the quay/staircase works, leading to minor intensification. The proposed works will be contained within already developed land, apart from the boat storage which will be protruding further inland outwards to the existing one. Given that the proposed land uses will remain as existing, no significant impacts in terms of land use are envisaged.

6.2 With respect to sea uses, noting that the proposed development will be contained entirely within the existing footprint and will not introduce new uses, no significant impacts are envisaged in this regard either.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

6.3 The proposed development will exceed the existing levels, intensifying the visual prominence of the proposed interventions on site, however, it is unlikely that this increase will significantly affect the visual amenity of the area, noting the existing baseline. The same applies for the landscape.

6.4 On the other hand, the southern facing boundary wall currently presents a negative element in terms of visual amenity. As such, it should be treated in such a way to enhance its appearance and render it more compatible with the surrounding environment. In this regard, a visual, showing proposed interventions on the boundary wall, is required.

Construction-phase Impacts

6.5 The proposal is expected to generate dust, noise and vibrations during the construction phases, especially during demolition and excavation. Such potential impacts are temporary and can be minimised at source as long as the requirements outlined in the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09) are properly adhered to. Apart from hoarding as to control catch dust and debris, it is advised to also integrate hoarding as a noise barrier to abate and reduce noise impacts towards sensitive receptors.

6.6 In terms of waste generation, demolition waste and excavated rock will be generated during the works. Such waste generation is not considered significant as long as efforts are done to maximise the reuse of such material (on- or off-site) and all the waste is managed in accordance with the Waste Regulations (S.L. 549.63).

6.7 During works, due to the site bordering the sea, loose material may end up in the sea if not properly managed and contained. In addition, run-off may contain dust-laden material, which in turn may contaminate the marine environment. Measures should be taken to ensure proper site management and to strictly avoid spillages beyond the site and into the sea, including during adverse weather. Such measures, together with other relevant



environmental aspects, shall form part of a Works Method Statement, to be submitted prior to commencement of works on site.

Operation-phase Impacts

6.8 During operations, there is no envisaged significant increase in traffic in view that the proposed land uses will not change from what is existing. In this regard, it is not expected to significantly affect the ambient air quality and the noise climate of the surrounding area. It is however recommended that efforts are made to promote alternative sustainable modes of transport, such as cycling (e.g. through inclusion of bicycle racks and shelters).

6.9 With respect to waste management, the only source of operational waste will originate from the proposed ticketing booth on site, including organic waste, general municipal waste, etc. Such wastes are not considered significant, as long as these are handled and disposed of in accordance with the relevant Waste Regulations (S.L. 549.63).

6.10 In terms of lighting, the project in question does not include additional light fixtures to what currently exists on site; therefore, no significant impacts are expected.

7. Screening in terms of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44):

As mentioned in section 4.2 above, the proposal lies within two marine protected areas and two terrestrial protected areas (Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA)). The project includes the refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing uses on site that are proposed to remain within developed land.

Given that the proposal will be contained within the already developed area, with only the boat storage protruding further inland, no significant negative impacts are envisaged on the protected area or its habitats or species for which it was designated. Subject that all appropriate pre-emptive and mitigation measures are implemented to prevent overspill onto the coast and into the sea.

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

The marine waters are situated within protected coastal waterbody MTMTC 108 – I- Irdumijiet ta' Malta, which includes the waters along the west and southwest coast of Malta.

The proposal does not involve any operational discharges to sea, as the quay only serves to moor vessels for embarking and disembarking and such use would remain unchanged. The proposed works, construction of new concrete deck, ticket booth and boat storage will be localised (introduction/dispersion of construction material/dust into the sea). Notwithstanding, such effects should be adequately contained through preventive containment measures, including silt curtains and hoarding.

In this regard, the project is unlikely to prejudice the maintaining of the high-quality status of the water body and no further assessment in terms of the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100) (i.e. Article 4.7 assessment as per Water Framework Directive, 2000/60/EC) is required.



9. Permitting requirements

Since the proposal involves interventions within a protected area the proposed development qualifies for an Environmental Permit. In this regard, The permit holder shall submit an application for an Environmental Permit for the proposed intervention in a protected area on <https://eris.eraportal.org.mt/>.

10. Further Submissions (Reserved Matters)

- A visual showing proposed interventions on the boundary Wall facing southwards towards the sea (refer to para 6.4); and
- Works Method Statement (WMS), addressing potential construction-phase related environmental impacts, such as material spillages/polluted run-off into the marine environment, dust and noise generation, light emissions, etc. The WMS shall duly consider adverse weather conditions (e.g. heavy rainfall, strong winds, rough seas, etc.), identify measures to mitigate impacts, propose contingency measures in case of impacts occurring, and outline an environmental monitoring plan to ensure adequate adoption of the various measures. (This is a reserved matter and is to be submitted to ERA prior to commencement of works. The WMS should also take into consideration the outcome of the required further submissions as requested in this screening report).

III. ERA Conclusion and Recommended Way Forward

The above screening concludes that the environmental impacts of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant to the point of warranting further detailed studies. No further assessment in terms of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44) and the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100) is required. ERA does not object to the proposal from an environmental point of view, subject to the conditions in Annex II.

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.