

The Executive Chairperson  
Planning Authority  
St. Francis Ravelin,  
Floriana

Date: 08 November 2024  
ERA Ref: EA/00034/24

Dear Sir, Madam,

PA Ref.: TRK289962  
Description: Demolition of existing boundary walls, site clearance, and excavation to the required levels, followed by the construction of an extension to the existing Sewage Treatment Plant. The extension will include a pre-treatment area, a new water plant room, thickening and dewatering facilities, a ferric dosing kiosk, a subterranean sludge holding reservoir, and an MBR area. The proposal also includes the deviation of an existing public rural road and the construction of traditional rubble walls along the site perimeter.  
Location: Site at Iċ-Ċumnija, Il-Mejjieli, Mellieħa.

### Introduction

Reference is made to the application in caption and the Project Description Statement (PDS) that was referred directly to ERA on 24 October 2024. The proposal involves the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), through the construction of an additional treatment unit. The existing WWTP was subject to an environmental impact assessment in 2005 by the then MEPA in relation to PA/06044/03.

The proposed extension falls within the scope of Schedule I of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46), notably in terms of Category II, Section 13.0.2.1 (Changes to, or extension of, projects [...] covered by Category II [...]), and the associated section 4.2.2.1 (Waste-water treatment plants, not falling within Category I). Furthermore, the site is situated within the area of influence of a number of protected Natura 2000 sites designated under the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44) and the treated water is discharged into a water body covered by the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100). In this regard, the proposal was screened in terms of S.L. 549.46, S.L. 549.44 and S.L. 549.100, respectively.

### Environmental assessment - Screening

Screening (refer to Annex I) has determined that that no further assessment is required in terms of the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46) and the Water Policy Framework Regulations (S.L. 549.100).

With respect to the Flora, Fauna, and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44), a targeted study (Appropriate Assessment) is required to evaluate any potential effects from increased operational light and noise emissions onto the surrounding protected sites (notably in relation to the Għadira reserve as well as seabirds and their coastal habitat), and from any (accidental) malfunctioning of the plant and resulting spillages/run-off to the surrounding downstream areas (notably the Għadira reserve and its catchment area). Terms of reference for the above-mentioned study are included in annex II to this report.

### Other aspects

An updated table with operational limit values for the upgraded facility is to be provided, in line with the update to the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) which is due for adoption in the near future (Table 5 in the PDS refers, as well as para 6.3 in Annex I).

### Way-forward

ERA will issue its final position once the requested information above are duly submitted for ERA's assessment.

Yours faithfully,

Yves De Blick  
Senior Officer Environmental Assessment  
f/Director Regulatory Affairs

### ***Disclaimer***

*The above assessment results, the ensuing conclusions and recommendations are without prejudice to any required changes or updates should the development proposal be eventually modified again 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 assessment would need to be reopened.*