



**Partial Review of Local
Plan Policies for
the main
MIP Industrial Park Sites**

Final Draft

MEPA

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1 Scope and Introduction

- 1.1 The Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) in consultation with the Malta Industrial Parks (MIP) and in line with the ongoing MEPA Reform Process recommendations for the updating of policy guidance is following a Partial Review of Local Plan Policies for the main large MIP Industrial Park Sites in terms of Article 48 of Act X of 2010. The scope of this Partial Review is to introduce a policy clarification that harmonises the provisions of the various approved Local Plans especially in view of discrepancies that exist in terms of height limitation related provisions. This is in line with MEPA's reform goal to ensure greater consistency.
- 1.2 A number of Local Plan policies cover the Large MIP Sites (*refer to main policies in Table I, page 7*). These policies are found in the approved Central Malta Local Plan (CMLP), the South Malta Local Plan (SMLP), North Harbours Local Plan (NHLP), Grand Harbour Local Plan (GHLP) and the Gozo and Comino Local Plan (GCLP). Development within MIP Sites is presently guided by various Local Plan policies that contain different parameters and thresholds. These policies need to be streamlined not only for policy consistency and efficiency and clear direction, but also to allow for better industrial development especially when consolidation and upgrading opportunities arise.
- 1.3 This Partial Review exercise is also intended to run in parallel and eventually assimilate with the direction and guidance established once MIP finalize individual Master Plans for each large MIP Site. MIP has in effect communicated to MEPA plans for individual Master Plans for each main MIP Park Site.

Background

- 1.4 MIP Sites are prime national economic and employment zones. These areas focus the main inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) into the Maltese Islands characterized by Multinational Companies (MNCs). These sites have a long history of development dating to the 1970s and have changed through time from the earlier experience of industrial manufacturing factories (textiles, furniture, etc)

to today's varied and changed scenario of knowledge intensive industries (business/science/technology parks, bio-med and IT computer services centres). Globally, industrial areas are increasingly characterized by self sufficient Aeropoli, Portopoli, Logistics Centres, Knowledge Cities and Business Parks. These sites include substantial diversity and additional supportive uses, including exhibition/convention space, ancillary offices/storage facilities, and varied employee facilities including sports facilities, catering/food courts, child caring and other such HR related facilities that did not exist or were not considered way back in the 1970s but which today characterize the setting of the most advanced work environments. The main MIP parks thus need to assimilate major improvements to the Park Sites in terms of economic and environmental changes in order to continue to operate in a dynamic and competitive global market.

The exercise is intended to facilitate the continued efficient operation of MIP Parks, as well as updating and simplifying the policy framework specifically with issues concerning building height relaxation and diverse land uses, whilst however also providing an opportunity for environmental and design improvements within these MIP Sites.

General Objectives of this Guidance

- 1.5 The general objectives of the Partial Review are as follows:
- (1) Introduce a greater degree of consistency between the approved Local Plans in relation to the main MIP Industrial Parks;**
 - (2) Facilitate wealth creation and employment generation in these areas and streamline planning issues to this effect;**
 - (3) Promoting quality eco-design which accommodates the intended industrial process in aesthetically pleasant and environmentally efficient structures integrated with a well-designed urban design context.**

The general principle followed is that:

The planning system needs to be flexible enough to allow for growth, thereby promoting efforts that lead to a flexible response to global economic situations, but also benefiting from environmental, eco-design and knowledge human capital improvements.

- 1.7 Through the introduction of this policy, MEPA and MIP will also continue to promote projects that sustain economic growth, create wealth and support environmental efficiency and eco-design improvements. In many cases this is envisaged to imply a shift from past industrial experience and a move towards new paradigms of MIP Industrial Park Design, Promotion and Management.
- 1.8 In this respect, the policy is applicable primarily to the following reasoned cases, that is, development proposals that:
 - a) Continue to support the planning principle of the efficient use and optimization of the limited industrial land resources;
 - b) Support MIP park site management and administration improvement initiatives;
 - c) Where possible to cater for the provision of suitable open spaces and adequate park site boundary treatment to achieve a higher quality premises coupled with an improved external boundary treatment;
 - d) Support initiatives that lead to the consolidation of park sites as high investment potential areas and major investment nodes;
 - e) Facilitate where possible the self sufficiency of park sites with the required technological, infrastructural (electricity/water/sewage) and environmental/eco-design upgrading including introduction of renewable

energy generation facilities complemented by better energy management and resource efficient initiatives;

- f) Facilitate where possible the easy access to public transportation, comprehensive transport management (e.g. green transport plans, controlled marshalling/servicing areas, electric vehicles (EV) bus circuit, employee/park site visitor pedestrian priority lanes etc.) within the park site.

2 Existing Local Policy Background and Pending Issues

- 2.1 The existing approved policy background for MIP Sites has evolved through the assessment of the differing characteristics of these areas mostly from an area specific location assessment of needs. This has led in instances to the use of increasingly specific Local Plan policies with under certain circumstances an element of inconsistencies for MIP Sites consideration as a whole. Moreover, the analysis has taken place at different points in time and under different administration and policy scenarios, further contributing to inconsistencies.
- 2.2 In fact, an assessment of the existing industrial planning policies clearly brings to light differences in planning parameters such as building heights with areas having specific heights (e.g. Marsa MIP Site with 12 metres maximum building height) and other areas that have a more flexible building height regime (e.g. 14 metres). This exercise is intended to address these differences introducing flexibility similar to policy considerations as per Policy 14.3 of the DC 2007 (Third Para) where appropriate and in the national interest as per (a) to (f) above.
- 2.3 The following main approved Local Plan policies guide planning for main MIP Industrial Park Sites, namely:

Local Plan Policy Guidance on Main Malta Industrial Parks			
Local Plan	Local Plan General Policy	MIP Site	Site Specific LP Policy
South Malta Local Plan	SMCM 08 Industrial Areas	Marsa	SMMR 01
South Malta Local Plan	SMCM 08 Industrial Areas	Bulebel	SMZN 02
South Malta Local Plan	SMCM 08 Industrial Areas	Hal Far	SMHF 01
Central Malta Local Plan	CG15 Industrial Areas	Mriehel	BK04 as amended in PC 57/10
Central Malta Local Plan	CG15 Industrial Areas	Mosta Technopark	CG15
North Harbours Local Plan	NHCI 02 Industrial Area	San Gwann	NHSG 04
Grand Harbour Local Plan	GDO4 Upgrading Existing Industrial Estates	Kordin	GI01, GI03, GI07, GI10
Gozo and Comino Local Plan	GZ-CMRC-7 Large Scale Industry	Xewkija, Gozo	GZ-Xwkj-1

Table 1: Existing Approved Local Plan Policies for main MIP Sites

2.4 As per procedure, an SEA Proforma Screening has been compiled with the recommendation that an SEA is not required since this Review exercise is a policy clarification of existing policy and considers already approved industrial areas and development potential as approved in existing Local Plans.

3 Recommended Standard General Policy for main MIP Park Sites

- 3.1 In order to streamline the processing of development planning applications within the existing main MIP Park Sites, the following standard general policy is recommended to complement the policies indicated in Table 1 above.

IA-GNRL-1 Industrial Development within Malta Industrial Park Sites

Until such time that MIP draws up master plans for the following Industrial parks referred to in the Table indicated in Appendix 1, MEPA will consider applications for industrial development and their supporting and ancillary facilities. The proposals should:

- a) Observe established relevant legislation and policies which regulate industrial development and incorporate and address them through the submitted project;
- b) Seek to achieve a high quality design, wherever possible and unless design entails specific corporate design feature requirements and considerations that are acceptable to MIP, which whilst addressing industrial and operational requirements, results in a project which valorizes the external context within and around the relevant Industrial park. The proposal should not unnecessarily overwhelm in terms of bulk and mass the rest of the Industrial Park context and should respect any nearby environmentally sensitive areas should these happen to occur nearby;
- c) Promote and introduce quality green improvements incorporated in the design in accordance with national relevant approved guidelines and legal provisions issued from time to time. Relevant measures should contemplate a good provision of open space coupled with an aesthetically pleasant and environmentally efficient structures that contribute positively to the property as well as its surrounding context, unless otherwise provided through available common, open space areas;
- d) Ensure that the proposals satisfactorily address carrying capacity issues especially those relating to traffic generation, parking and services unless otherwise provided through available common infrastructural services/transport and parking facilities;
- e) Efforts should be made in cases of redevelopment to reduce features and activities that could lead to bad

neighbourliness, noise, visual, safety related or pollution related effects within the site and on nearby areas thereby minimizing negative adverse impacts;

- f) Include supporting and ancillary uses which complement and upgrade the Industrial activity whilst the main focus being retained on the Industrial activity;
- g) Promote the introduction of boundary and other main Industrial Park lighting proposals that introduce outdoor illumination with luminaries that are energy efficient, have an upward light ratio of 0%, low-wattage, low level, full cut-off lighting. This measure is to be especially followed in the context of illumination that is directly adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas and directly facing the Outside Development Zone areas. In general, external illumination should be kept to the barest minimum; and
- h) There is a presumption against development within existing areas that are not intended for development, including specifically zoned green areas and/or buffer areas indicated within the approved Local Plans.

The policy is intended to complement Local Plan policies, LN 457 of 2011 (DNO procedures) and also DC 2007, Part 14 guidance. The policy follows recommendations of the ongoing Reform Process being followed by MEPA, and also the requests arising from consultations with MIP, on the need to update industrial policies and introduce flexibility where appropriate. The policy also notes MIP's intention to prepare master plans for the main MIP Park Sites in future.

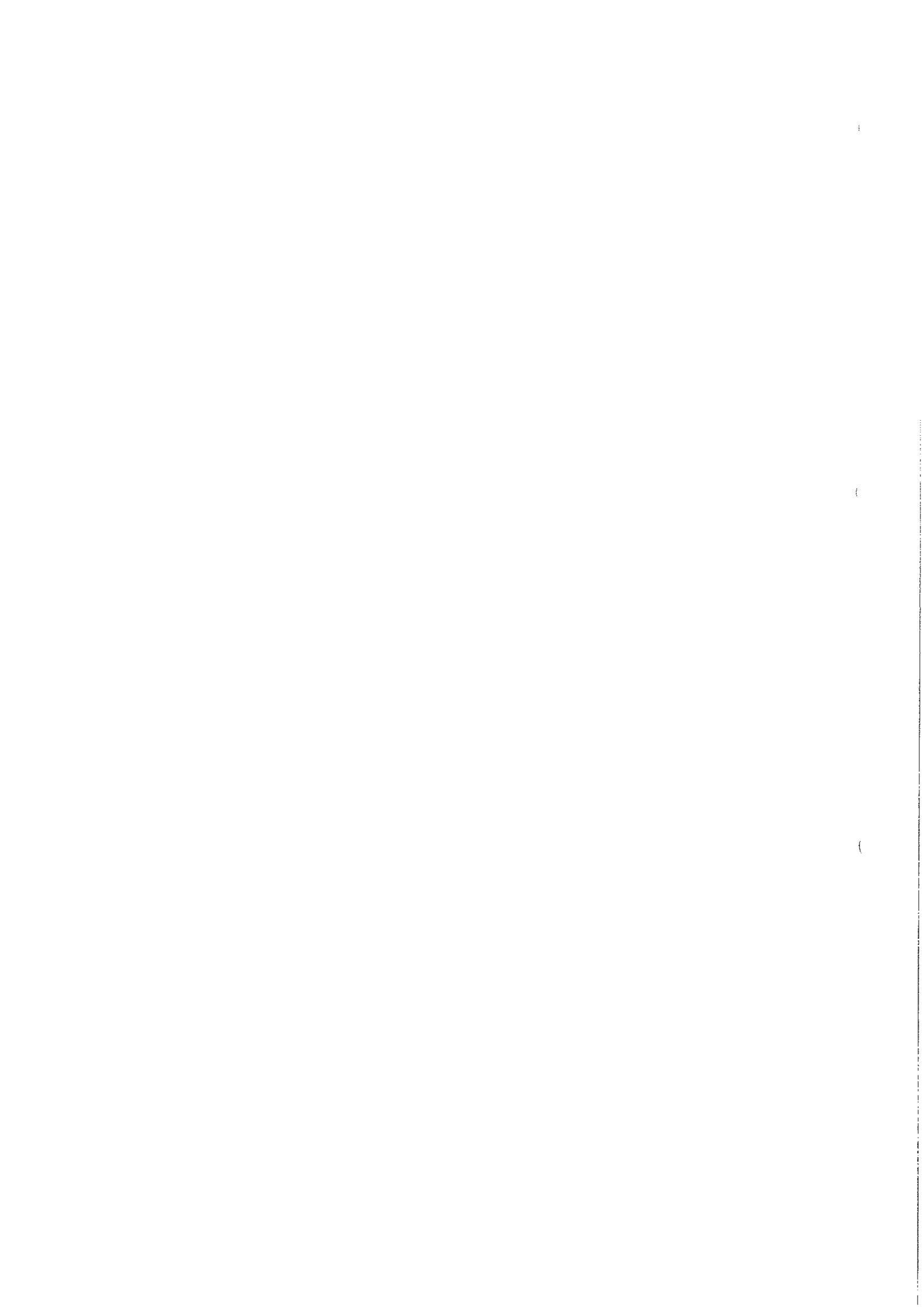
The policy amendment is intended to provide an interim guidance which takes into account recent developments in the industrial sector and sustainable development thus supporting investment that leads to wealth creation and employment generation whilst promoting quality eco-design, aesthetically pleasant and environmentally efficient structures integrated within the main MIP Park Sites.

4 APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of Main MIP Sites where the amended policy IA-GNRL-1 is applicable:

<u>MIP Main Site</u>	<u>Locality</u>	<u>Local Plan Area</u>
Marsa Industrial Estate	Marsa	South Malta Local Plan
Bulebel Industrial Estate	Bulebel, Zejtun	South Malta Local Plan
Hal Far Industrial Estate	Hal Far, B'Buga	South Malta Local Plan
Mriehel Industrial Estate (MIP part only)	Mriehel, B'Kara	Central Malta Local Plan
Mosta Technopark	Mosta	Central Malta Local Plan
San Gwann Industrial Estate	San Gwann	North Harbours Local Plan
Kordin Industrial Estate	Kordin, Paola	Grand Harbour Local Plan
Xewkija MIP Industrial Areas	Xewkija, Gozo	Gozo and Comino Local Plan



Main MIP Sites Policy Review – Phase 1 Submissions
(2 weeks) July-August, 2012

Subject	Respondent/ Date	Summary of Comments Received	Ref. No	Response
To consider including sites for Policy GP03 of the Grand Harbour Local Plan (2002)	James Croucher DLP Planning Ltd 20/07/2012	Clients support objectives of review. However in seeking consistency in policy regarding Policy GP03 GHLP (2002) this should be included in review exercise. The GP03 safeguarded site shares the attributes to MIP sites and a common policy approach should be adopted. If not included then future policy requirements would not be consistent and would potentially result in a lesser policy requirement and in light of the proximity of unrelated residential properties, tourism areas of the Grand Harbour and other sensitive receptors a less robust policy context. Finally the partial review should reflect climate change and renewable energy obligations.	mip-ph1-001	Comment Noted. The policy review being followed applies specifically to MIP Industrial Park Sites and not the area covered by Policy GP03 of the GHLP (2002).
Control Light Pollution in Industrial Areas	Perit Alexei 23/07/2012	Given that most industrial areas use high wattage exterior illumination, the Light Pollution Awareness Group recommends that MEPA imposes a requirement for exterior lighting to be full cutoff and downward pointing. Improper lighting has become a major eyesore at night and disrupts the surrounding environment. Lighting should be strictly limited to developed part of site, lighting has to be peripheral inward and screened by landscaping and be downward pointing having 0% upward light output ratio with no luminaire globes or up-lighters accepted.	mip-ph1-002	Comment Noted. The Policy being followed promotes environmentally efficient structures and a good eco-design. This includes proper lighting.
Introduce LED Solar Powered	Henry J. Borg, Managing Director,	Agrees with the objectives stating that these are logical with the last point of promoting quality eco design clearly explaining the environmental road map that the Organization must achieve. Encourages MEPA to maintain standards and also MIP to consider in its design the introduction of LED lit	mip-ph1-003	Comment Noted.

traffic signs in all Estates.	Smart Light Systems Co. Ltd. 20/07/2012	Solar Powered traffic signs in all estates thus showcasing its green credentials.	
Responsibility of Industrial Estates Area	Kenneth Brincat, Executive Secretary, Gormi Local Council 07/08/2012	<p>The Local Council believes that consultation should be carried out with the Local Councils with a direct invitation and not through public adverts. Our main concern is at Tal-Handaq Industrial Area whereby MIP is insisting that certain areas do not fall under their responsibility whereby according to Government Notice 788 published in the Government Gazette (22 July 2005) attached such areas are excluded from Local Council responsibility. This results in these areas being considered as no man's land, neglect and dire need of upkeep.</p> <p>The LC is insisting that the approved Local Plans in relation to MIP Industrial Areas are consistent with the Government Notice mentioned above.</p>	<p>LATE SUBMISSION</p> <p>It is noted that the policy review applies to main large MIP Industrial Parks as per Table in Appendix 1 which excludes Tal-Handaq industrial area in this review exercise.</p>

Main MIP Sites Policy Review – Phase 2 Submissions
(6 weeks) October-November, 2012

Subject	Respondent/ Date	Summary of Comments Received	Ref. No	Response
Industrial area policies phase 2	Perit Alexei Pace obo Light Pollution Awareness Group	We are sending our additional feedback in relation to the industrial area policy. Please find attached a composite image which shows (in false colour) a photo shot at night of the Maltese Islands from the space. The areas in red indicate those places where the amount of light pollution is highest. The second part of the image shows the location of MIP's industrial zones. It comes as no surprise that these locations coincide with some of the areas	mip-ph2-001	Refer to reply as per MIP-ph1-002 above.

	14/11/2012	<p>which are most heavily light polluted.</p> <p>Given that most industrial areas use high wattage exterior illumination, the Light Pollution Awareness Group would recommend that MEPA impose a requirement for any installed exterior lighting to be full cutoff and downward pointing. This is important especially in cases of industrial parks in ODZ areas.</p> <p>Improper exterior lighting has become a major eyesore at night in Malta and Gozo. The use of full cutoff lighting would alleviate these problems. Sky glow, or wasted light which ends up illuminating the night sky is of disruption to the surrounding environment.</p> <p>Industrial parks shall not be a source of light pollution at night. To this effect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> any exterior lighting should be strictly limited to within the developed part of the site. No light shall trespass onto neighbouring properties. The lighting has to be from any peripheral landscaping inward, so as to be screened as much as possible by the landscaping itself, and most importantly – All exterior lighting installed on site is to be of the downward-pointing, full cut-of type having 0% upward light output ratio. No luminaire globes or uplighters shall be accepted. This shall apply especially to all floodlighting and road lighting (irrespective of whether it is HPS, Metal Halide or LED). <p>Do not hesitate to contact us should you require any clarification and/or information.</p>	
Objection	John Saliba 19 th November, 2012	<p>With reference to the above mentioned subject and as group of residents next to the Xewkija industrial estate Gozo, and aware of the present illegal developments within the same industrial estate, may I suggest that the recommended standard General policy proposal for main MIP park Sites should specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Observe present Green Areas as shown in the present Local Plans. 	<p>mip-ph2-002</p> <p>Objection in respect of Xewkija Industrial Estate Gozo interface with adjacent residences needs to continue to be assessed in terms of the approved Local Plan</p>

<p>MIP Industrial Park Sites</p>	<p>Marco Abela Chief Officer – Policy and Forward Planning, Malta Enterprise 7th December, 2012</p>	<p>MIP should abide to and not totally disregard such a legislation, reference enforcement 55/12 Xewkija Industrial Estate and a PA application on same site which has still not been published.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. No developments whatsoever should be undertaken by MIP within the 100mt distance to dwelling and specifically to the detriment of residences which were built and occupied prior to the developments of the Industrial estate itself, reference Xewkija industrial estate/Saint Elizabeth Street Xewkija. 3. Eliminate and not just reduce activities, which lead to bad neighbourliness, noise, smell, safety related or pollution related effects within the site and on nearby areas. 4. Any General parking areas proposals should not be made in breach of local plans or to the detriment of neighbouring residencies. <p>Overall MIP should show Corporate Responsibility and respect legally binding contracts with local councils, with reference to Xewkija local council contract dated October 2002. Suggest that MEPA includes to any permit issued, such a general condition regarding third parties contracts.</p> <p>May we humbly ask and recommend that any present or future applications by MIP will not be favourably considered by the above mentioned partial review of local plan policies for the main MIP industrial park sites. This will unravel the green areas/buffer zones around industrial zones. The consequences of the proposed review will be dire.</p> <p>Reference is made to the above-mentioned policy statement issued by MEPA.</p> <p>With respect to the policy, MIP would like to express it's agreement with the overall scope of the document (which we understand will be superseded once the Master Plans for the industrial estates are submitted by MIP), but would like to raise the following issues which we believe require further clarification:</p>	<p>mip-ph2-003</p>	<p>requirements and the spirit of good eco-design and environmentally sustainable principles required for consideration under this policy review as per Conditions (a) to (e). There is a presumption against the use of land not intended for development including zoned green or buffer areas.</p> <p>It is not the intention of the policy being a general policy to focus on site specific details which would be better examined in the respective master plans for each specific Park Site area.</p>	<p>LATE SUBMISSION</p> <p>MEPA notes the overall positive response from ME regarding the policy review.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The developments which this policy will govern will regard new factories on individual plots by individual firms within the estates. Thus, the requirements listed in (c) and (d) need to be adjusted to take into account the availability of central, common open spaces as well as common transport infrastructure/parking. • In addition to the bullet above, it is understood that upgrading and refitting of currently built factories are exempt from the provisions of these policies as they are not considered to be development, as is current practice unless the works will entail a significant change in the structures, build and outline of the sites. • In (b) there is reference to high quality design, which is a very subjective matter and which may restrict the development of sites by companies using their corporate design and features. Also, let's not forget that the developments are in industrial zones where functionality and corporate image are more important than general aesthetics. • Also in (c) there is a reference to energy efficient structures. MIP would like confirmation that the requirements on new buildings referred to in this policy are in accordance to the energy efficiency guidelines and requirements issued by the national relevant authorities, as required and outlined in article (a). • Finally, point (e) is a bit confusing as reducing to the lowest possible degree may signify the need to exceed the current legal standards with respect to noise, etc., which is something which MIP cannot accept to impose on its clients. Furthermore, limitations on the types of activities should not be included as these are governed by operating licences and regulations, not planning. MIP believes that the provisos mentioned in article (a) should suffice. 	<p>MEPA may consider also adequately planned common open space and infrastructural/services/transport and parking facilities.</p> <p>MEPA may also consider design features that entail specific corporate design feature requirements acceptable to MIP and required by the respective company.</p> <p>Green upgrading initiatives to follow national relevant approved guidance and legal requirements issued from time to time.</p> <p>Policy to support measures to reduce pollution and minimise on negative adverse impacts in cases of redevelopment.</p>
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