

Feedback to CCC Consultation Report.

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February 2008

Congratulations on a comprehensive Report full of good and executable recommendations. The following are some comments related to the Report:

Recommendation 19:

The recommendation that significant financing should be made available for R&D&I in Reverse Osmosis energy conservation is limiting. WSC should not only seek ways of making their Reverse Osmosis more efficient but also look at other possible technologies for the production of water. For example the development of Solar Desalination technologies should be followed, and an ongoing effort should be made to prototype/test promising technologies under development worldwide. In theory, the use of the sun for desalination is a process that can achieve high efficiencies.

Recommendation 23:

A long term view taking into consideration the European Commission's Mediterranean Solar Plan should be considered in designing the specifications for this project so that it is can accommodate a possible future extension of the grid connection to North Africa.

Recommendation 37:

Government should act to promote energy efficient housing through incentives not only through information dissemination and regulation. The ingrained construction practices can only start to be changed once contractors have successfully gained experience in building the first zero energy housing, which requires a rethinking of construction practices from the ground up. One idea would be to offer a 50-80% discount on the property sales tax for buildings (apartments, houses, offices, etc.) certified as zero-energy for a limited time period (e.g. 1-3 years).

I include a reference to the ISOMAX-TERRASOL Zero-Energy Building Technologies¹ as one available technology for zero energy houses that can easily be implemented in Malta but requires a total rethink in the way a house is planned and constructed.

Recommendation 37:

The Maltese Government should look seriously at incentivising "Geothermal Space Conditioning through the use of ground-coupled heat pumps", an efficient technology for the heating/cooling of buildings. Ground-coupled and ground-water heat pump systems have been installed in great numbers in at least 30 countries, for a total thermal capacity of more than 9500 MWt (in 2003). The majority of these installations are in the USA (500,000 installations for a total of 3730 MWt), Sweden (200,000 installations totalling 2000 MWt), Germany (40,000 installations totalling 560 MWt), Canada (36,000 installations totalling 435 MWt), Switzerland (25,000 installations totalling 440 MWt), and Austria (23,000 installations totalling 275 MWt)².

A good overview of this technology can be found in the document "What is Geothermal Energy?"² in the Section entitled "Direct Heat Uses".

¹ <http://www.isomax-terrasol.eu/en/technologie/fundamentals.html>

² <http://iga.igg.cnr.it/geo/geoenergy.php>

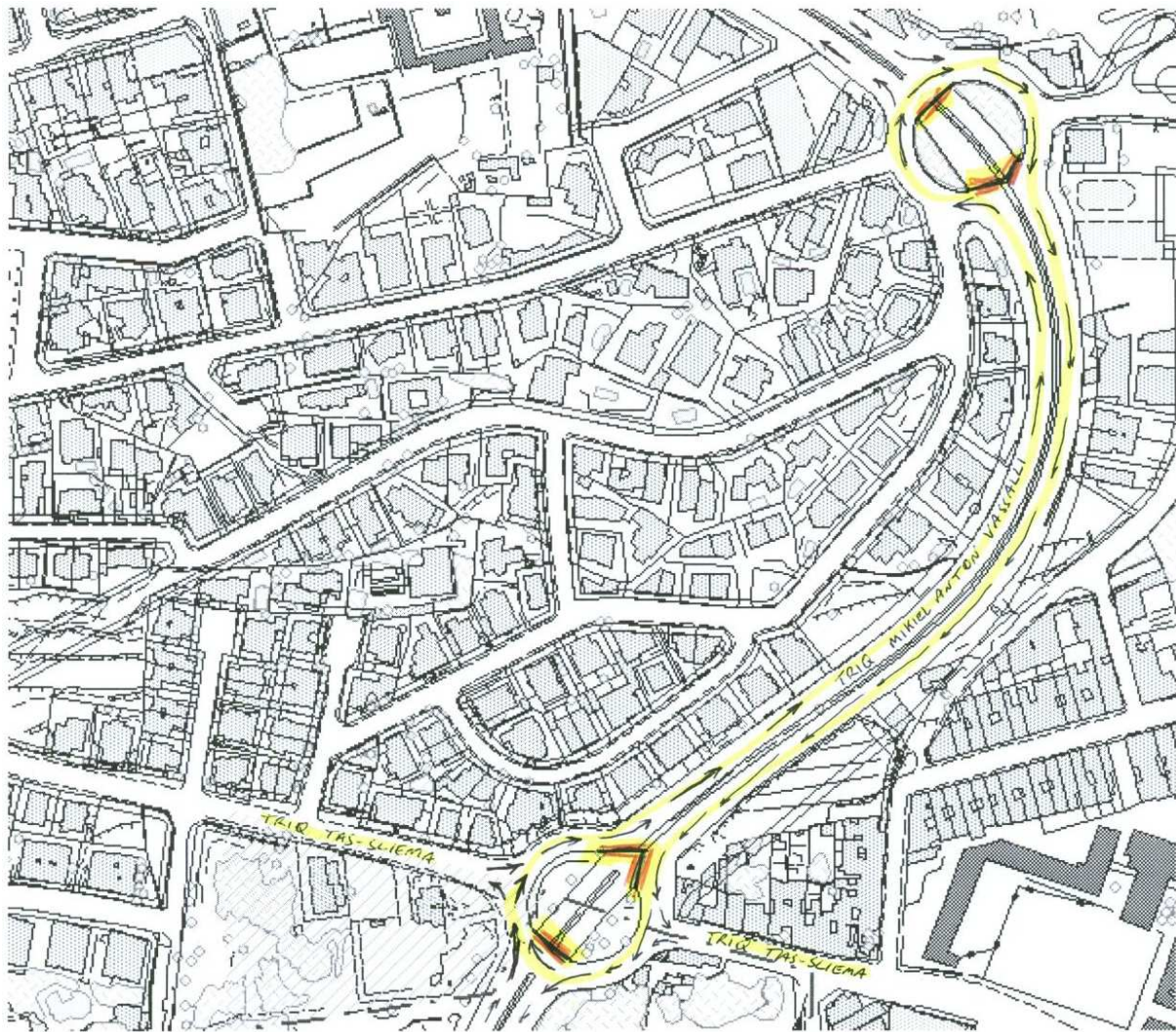
Recommendation 53:

Recommendation 18 includes a recommendation for Government to finance measures to develop an indigenous bio-fuel source through marine algae. It is pertinent to add a mention to this in section 04.3.6.

Recommendation 63:

Regarding Kappara Junction, traffic back-ups are caused primarily because of cars coming along Triq Mikiel Anton Vassalli from the direction of University (and along Triq Tas-Sliema from the direction of San Gwann) and turning into Triq Tas-Sliema towards Gzira. Since the latter road does not have the capacity to take the normal flow, cars are backed up into the round-a-bout, blocking cars progressing along Triq Mikiel Anton Vassalli in both directions.

The proposed scheme below may alleviate this problem by providing a much longer turning lane into Triq Tas-Sliema towards Gzira, and providing reasonable distances for merging of different traffic streams to occur. Appropriate lane signage would of course be necessary, including for example a dedicated left turn lane along Triq Mikiel Anton Vassalli into Triq Tas-Sliema towards Gzira.



Recommendation 68:

Many traffic jams in Malta during rush hour are caused by slow moving heavy vehicles clogging the road. One should consider alleviating traffic jams on arterial roads by banning heavy commercial vehicles from these roads during rush hour (07:30 – 09:00, 16:30 – 18:00).

A similar scheme is practised in certain cities in the USA (and possibly in other cities around the world), where heavy vehicles are not allowed to use certain highways and main roads during rush hour.

A similar rule may be enforced for Learning drivers who also tend to cause traffic congestion.

Recommendation 70:

Ways should be sought to make school transport more efficient and effective to ensure that more schoolchildren use it. Very often pick-up and drop-off times are unreasonable due to the limited number of mini-busses available and the current monopoly in this sector, and this encourages parents to drive their children to school themselves.

As indicated in the report, reducing the number of parents who bus their children to school would reduce congestion on the roads at peak hours.

Note:

JI stands for Joint Implementation and not Joint Implications as used in parts of the Report.