



3 March 2023  
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South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)  
11 Harrington Street  
Cape Town  
2001

**Attention: Natasha Higgitt**

Dear Ms. Higgitt

**Case ID 20245: Request clarity regarding Heritage Impact Assessment and Paleontological Impact Assessment for the proposed Sappi Project Khula**

Thank you for the feedback from SAHRA. We do, however, request further clarity with regards to the need for the HIA and palaeontological assessment. Further detail/clarity on the project is provided below.

There are two components to the proposed Project Khula (refer to Appendix A for the detailed layout plan).

**1) Activities within the boundary of the Mill**

The upgrade of Paper Machine 2 (PM2) and ancillary infrastructure to accommodate market demand. The Mill is investigating two alternatives, which will produce either 185 kilo tons per annum (ktpa) of Brown Paper using Fibreline #2 or 215ktpa using the Fibreline #2 process, with a portion of the fibre being groundwood pulp; the latter option is the preferred alternative. Newsprint production will be gradually phased out. The proposed upgrades will only occur within areas already transformed within the existing industrial footprint of the Mill and will not involve any greenfield sites. There are no buildings or structures older than 60 years that will be affected by the proposed changes.

**2) Outside the boundary of the Mill:**

Temporary laydown areas will be required during the construction phase of the project (refer to Appendix A – Site Layout Plan). These sites will be the areas where working material that can't be prebuilt are brought to site to get ready for installation at the Mill. The only excavation potentially required would be for the installation of a fence around Area 3, otherwise there will be no earthworks/ disturbance of soils. There is limited capacity within the boundaries of the Mill for these laydown areas and as such several sites have been identified in close proximity to the Mill; several of these sites have been utilised as laydown areas for past projects. All laydown areas identified have been previously disturbed and appear to be devoid of structures older than 60 years and/or grave sites. The following brief description of each site is provided (refer to Appendix A for cross referencing):

- **Area 1: The Existing Laydown Area** – This site was previously used as part of GoCell project when the mill converted existing bleaching Softwood to Chemical cellulose in 2011 and has been completely transformed.
- **Area 2: The Nursery** – The Nursery laydown area is part of Sappi Forestry operations and is used for composting (refer to Plate 2) and is completely transformed.

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- **Area 3: Forestry offices and adjoining land** – This site includes four pieces of land (refer to 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d in Appendix A) in close proximity to the east of Ngodwana Mill, close to the Forestry management offices. The portion of land to the west of the road (i.e. 3a) has previously been cultivated and the land to the east (i.e. 3b, 3c and 3d) falls within the boundaries of the Forestry management offices.
- **Area 4: New Jabulani** – This area has been utilised in the past as a laydown area for larger equipment, piping and a make-shift store and as such is completely transformed.

With regards to the requirements of Section 38(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act no. 25 of 1999) (NHRA), the table below provides the reasoning for the listed activities not to be triggered.

**Table 1: Review of the relevance of Section 38(1) activities with respect to Project Khula**

Activity	Applicability to Project Khula
<i>38. (1) Subject to the provisions of subsections (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development categorised as—</i>	
<i>(a) the construction of a road, wall, powerline, pipeline, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier exceeding 300m in length;</i>	The areas within the Mill affected by the proposed project are completely transformed.  The only potential trigger activity is the installation of a fence around laydown areas outside of the boundaries of the Mill. The proposed project Laydown areas 1, 2 and 4 are already fenced and therefore should not require any linear installations. Laydown area 3a will need to be fenced, however, each of the four sides of the fenceline will be less than 300m in length.
<i>(b) the construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length;</i>	No such structures will be required.
<i>(c) any development or other activity which will change the character of a site—</i>	The activities within the Mill will be permanent and will be aligned with the current character of the site.
<i>(i) exceeding 5 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent; or</i>	Whilst the laydown areas may slightly alter the character of the site this will only be temporary during the construction phase of the project. Upon completion of the project the sites will return to the original character.
<i>(ii) involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof; or</i>	
<i>(iii) involving three or more erven or divisions thereof which have been consolidated within the past five years; or</i>	
<i>(iv) the costs of which will exceed a sum set in terms of regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority;</i>	
<i>(d) the re-zoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> in extent; or</i>	The Mill will not require rezoning. The laydown areas will be temporary, only required during the construction phase, and as such should not require rezoning.
<i>(e) any other category of development provided for in regulations by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority, must at the very earliest stages of initiating such a development, notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development.</i>	This was undertaken with the submission of the Background Information Document to SAHRA.

Whilst it is understood that the Mill and surrounding area is within an area of moderate paleontological sensitivity, based on the above the likelihood of encountering and potentially impacting heritage resources would be very low. As such, it is difficult to understand why a Heritage Impact Assessment and Paleontological Impact Assessment would be required.

In light of the above, SAHRA is requested to provide further justification for the need for such studies.

Yours faithfully,

**SRK Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd**

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 Senior Environmental Scientist

## Appendix A – Site Layout Plan

