

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

**BASIC ASSESSMENT APPLICATION FOR THE MEDIUM DENSITY FIBRE
PLANT ON PORTION 60 OF THE FARM LOTHAIR, 124 IT, MPUMALANGA
PROVINCE.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

DEA REF NO: 14/12/16/3/3/1/661 and DEA/EIA/0001375/2012

DEA WASTE LICENSE REF NO: 12/9/11/L970/6

ENVASS REF NO: 055/12

DUE DATE FOR COMMENT: 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

1. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Background Information Document (BID) is to inform Interested and / or Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project, to explain the Basic Assessment process to be followed for the application, identify key issues associated with the proposed project and provide IAPs with an opportunity to comment and / or raise any concerns they may have regarding the planned project.

Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) can become involved in the project, thereby contributing to the Basic Assessment process. I&AP comment, issues, concerns and suggestions on any aspect of the proposed project, including the technical and public participation processes, will help to refine the environmental and technical studies and will ultimately assist the authorities to make an informed decision.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

In the manufacture of Medium Density Fibre (MDF) the particle size remains the same throughout, there isn't any layering of the product. The process is similar to the chipboard line up to the thermal mechanical pulping. At this stage the chips are pre-digested in a feeder prior to utilising low pressure saturated steam that softens the chips before the refiner. The refiner is a fixed plate and rotating discs with bar segments attached. The pre-digested chips are fed into the refiner under pressure from saturated steam at 8 bar. The two rotating discs are set at such distance apart fibre is trapped between the refiner blades and is reduced from chips to individual fibres. The refined fibre is then conveyed, pneumatically, to the dryer. At the blowline area formaldehyde is introduced. The dried material is batch fed onto a belt prior to being pressed in the daylight press. The board is again made oversized to allow for variations in the thickness. This results in similar losses to the chipboard process. Variability in density across the board is less than chipboard and the board is almost homogenous.

The same principles are used in the continuous process. The belt is fed with product that can be adjusted across its width to achieve a consistent product. There are multiple presses that compact the board to the final thickness and density. Again the ability to make online continuous adjustments, to achieve the correct density and thickness, improves the overall quality of the board.

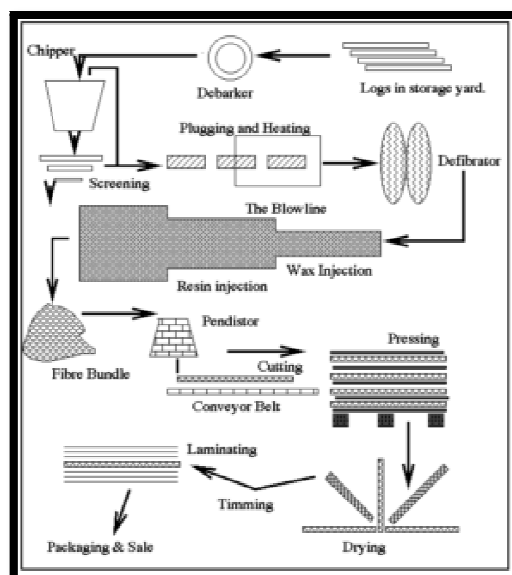


Figure 1: Schematic layout of MDF plant

3. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

The legal requirements that must be fulfilled before FX Veneer (Pty) Ltd may continue with the construction of the Medium Density Fibre plant is summarised below:

The Environmental Impact Assessment regulations (2010) promulgated in Chapter 5 of the national Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) provide for the control of certain activities that are listed in Government Notice (GN) R 544, 545 and 546.

The proposed project triggers listed activities in Government Notice R544 as follow:

1. The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity where the electricity output is more than 10 Megawatt but less than 20 Megawatt

9 (i) & (ii) The construction of facilities or infrastructure exceeding 1 000m in length for the bulk transportation of water, sewage or storm water: - with an internal diameter of 0,36meters or more; or with a peak throughput of 120 liters per second or more. Excluding where such facility or infrastructure are for bulk transportation of water, sewage or storm water or storm water drainage inside the road reserve; or where such construction will occur within urban areas but further than 32 m from a water course measured from the edge of the water course.

10 (ii) The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity, inside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of 275 kilovolts or more.

13 The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the storage and or storage and handling of a dangerous good, where such storage occur in containers with a combined capacity of 80 but not exceeding 500 cubic meters.

22 The construction of a road, outside urban areas with a reserve wider than 13,5 meters or more or, where no reserve exist where the road is wider than 8 meters, or for which an environmental authorisation was obtained for the route determination in terms of activity 5 in Government Notice 387 of 2006 or activity 18 in Notice 545 of 2010.

23 The transformation of undeveloped, vacant or derelict land to: Residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial, institutional use, inside the urban edge and where the total area to be transformed is 5 hectares or more but less than 20 hectares.

The proposed project triggers listed activities in Category A of Schedule 1 of the National Environmental Management Waste Act (Act 59 of 2008) Regulation 718

1 The storage including the temporary storage of general waste at a facility that has the capacity to store in excess of 100m³ of general waste at anyone time, excluding the storage of general waste in lagoons.

2 The storage including the temporary storage of hazardous waste at a facility that has the capacity to store in excess of 35m³ of hazardous waste at anyone time, excluding the storage of hazardous waste in lagoons.

8 The recovery of waste including the refining utilisation or co-processing of the waste at a facility that has the capacity to process in excess of three tons of general waste or less than 500kg hazardous waste per day, excluding recovery that takes place as an integral part of an internal manufacturing process within the same premises

11 The treatment of effluent, wastewater or sewage with an annual throughput capacity of more than 2 000 cubic metres but less than 15 000 cubic metres.

18 The construction of facilities for activities listed in Category A of this schedule

The proposed project triggers listed activities in the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) Section 21:

21a Taking water from a water resource;

21b Storing of water

21c Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse

21i Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse

21g Disposing of waste in a manner which may detrimentally impact on a water resource

These activities may not commence until Environmental Authorisation has been received from the National Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). Therefore, a Basic Assessment process must be undertaken in order to apply for Environmental Authorisation. Environmental Assurance (Pty) Ltd has been appointed to undertake the required environmental processes.

4. THE STUDY PROCESS

- **OBJECTIVES OF THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The objectives of the Basic Assessment process are to provide:

- i. Interested and Affected parties (I&APs) with adequate information to understand the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts of the proposed project; and opportunities for them to comment on the project and the process;
- ii. The applicant with information that will assist them to incorporate effective mitigatory measures into the design and execution of the project; and
- iii. The approving authorities with sufficient information to serve as a basis for effective decision making.

- **PHASES OF THE BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Public and stakeholder participation in the Basic Assessment process is widely recognised as being an essential component of the Basic Assessment process. Public Participation is of crucial importance in gathering information,

issues, concerns and local knowledge, and in contributing towards designing and implementing the project in a manner that will promote minimisation of negative impacts and optimisation of benefits.

The public participation process during the Basic Assessment process will enable interested and affected parties (I&APs) to review the findings of the independent studies that are undertaken. Environmental Assurance (ENVASS) will correspond directly with registered I&APs during the Basic Assessment process to keep them informed of progress and the timing of opportunities to be involved.

The study will include the following steps in order to meet the requirements of Section 54 of NEMA:

Basic Assessment phase:

- Register project with DEA;
- Contact key I&APs;
- Compile a BID and distribute to I&APs;
- Advertise the proposed project in order to inform the broader public about the project and to invite I&APs to raise any issues or concerns regarding the proposed project;
- Undertake specialists studies:
 - Geohydrological Assessment;
 - Surface Water impact Assessment;
 - Traffic Impact Assessment;
 - Heritage Impact Assessment; and
 - Ecological and Biodiversity Impact Assessment.
- Make Draft Basic Assessment Report available for 40 days comment period;
- Assimilate I&AP comments and prepare Final Basic Assessment Report;
- Make Final Basic Assessment Report available for 21 days comment period;
- Finalise report and submit to decision making authorities.

5. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Please complete the enclosed comment and registration sheet or contact Environmental Assurance by mailing or faxing a letter, telephone or e-mail.

In terms of the EIA Regulations, your attention is drawn to your responsibilities as an I&AP:

- In order to participate in this Basic Assessment process, register yourself on the project database (see attached Registration form);
- Inform any other parties (neighbours, friends, colleagues, etc) who may be interested and / or affected by the proposed project about the Basic Assessment process and encourage them to become involved;
- Ensure that any comments regarding the proposed project are submitted within the timeframes that have been approved or set by the approving authority; and
- Disclose any direct business, financial, personal and or other interest which you may have in the approval or refusal of the proposed Medium Density Fibre factory.

Should you wish to deliver any issues of concerns / comments with regards the proposed development, please register as an I&AP, by completing and submitting the attached registration and Comment sheet on or before 30 September 2012. Your registration in this matter will ensure your active participation and involvement throughout the Basic Assessment process.

Queries regarding this matter should be referred to:

Environmental Assurance

Ilze Ueckermann

394 Tram Street

Tel: (012) 460 9768

Fax: (012) 460 – 3071

Cell: 079 527 5775

Email: ilze@envass.co.za



6. KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR THE MEDIUM DENSITY FIBRE PROJECT

The following key issues and potential impacts have been identified:

- Impact on natural vegetation;
- Heritage Impacts;
- Economic Impacts;
- Traffic Impacts; and
- Surface and Ground water impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
For the proposed
MEDIUM DENSITY FIBRE PROJECT
ENVASS Ref Nr: BA-055a - 12



DEA Reference number: 14/12/16/3/3/1/661 and DEA/EIA/0001375/2012
Waste License Reference number: 12/9/11/L970/6
ENVASS Reference number: 055/12
REGISTRATION AND COMMENT SHEET

Title: _____ Name: _____

Surname: _____

Company name / Interest _____

Postal or Residential address _____

Area: _____

Postal code: _____

Tel: () _____

Mobile: _____

Fax: () _____

Email address: _____

Please mark with a X to indicate whether you would

like to participate in the EIA process:

Yes, I would like to participate in this EIA	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, I am not interested in participating	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTS. (You are welcome to attach separate sheets)

The following issues must be addressed by the EIA:
