



Dear SAHRA,

Please accept this letter motivating for the addition of Recognise Sambo and Maryke Horn to the current Sterkfontein Caves research permit (Permit ID 3963; Site 9/2/233/0004) as co-permit holders. The addition of two early career researchers to the permit contributes to the long-term research and succession plan for the site, which focuses not only on the excavation of new fossil- and stone tool-bearing deposits in the caves, but also on the integration of the new and legacy datasets into unified, accessible resources. Both proposed additions to the permit are developing cutting-edge analytical skillsets that will contribute fundamentally to the implementation and management of the current and future research projects at the site.

Recognise Sambo is a PhD student at Wits University and is developing a specialism in non-hominin faunal analyses, specifically for palaeoecological reconstructions. In addition to Recognise's multiproxy approach to faunal research, Recognise has worked for several years on the curation of the Sterkfontein legacy assemblages housed at the Evolutionary Studies Institute and has made instrumental contributions to the organization and accessibility of those large and important collections. Recognise's responsibilities as a co-permit holder will include: contributing to the integration of legacy and newly excavated assemblages to ensure consistency in standards of documentation and accessibility; training of technical staff, visiting researchers and students in curation standards of the site; and participating in the development of educational and outreach activities for Sterkfontein.

Maryke Horn is a PhD student at Wits University and is developing a specialism in three dimensional GIS spatial analysis and virtual database management for archaeology and palaeoanthropology. Maryke has extensive experience excavating at Sterkfontein as one of Prof Stratford's post-graduate students and has taken on a senior teaching role on Sterkfontein-based field schools. Maryke is trained in excavation, documentation and sampling in archaeological sites and is ideally qualified and experienced to contribute to ongoing excavations and management of derived digital documentation. Maryke's responsibilities as co-permit holder will include: working with technical teams in excavation and documentation of the various Sterkfontein sites; coordinating the collection and sharing of digital resources with collaborators and visiting scientists; contributing to the accessibility of legacy and newly excavated assemblages (in close collaboration with Recognise and current permit holders); training of technical staff, visiting researchers and students in excavation standards of the site; and participating in the development of educational and outreach activities for Sterkfontein.

Together, Recognise and Maryke will contribute significant and valuable skillsets to the core Sterkfontein research team. Through their research and management, they will contribute significantly to the modernization, integration and cohesion of the rich and diverse Sterkfontein research projects, while ensuring the continuation of standards of practice and research integrity at the site.

Sincerely,

Dominic Stratford

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