



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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CaseID: 14566

Date: Tuesday November 17, 2020

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Interim Comment

In terms of Section 38(8), 38(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Glencore Operations South Africa (Pty) Ltd

GOSA has appointed Golder Associates Africa (Pty) Ltd (Golder) as an independent environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) to undertake the regulatory application process for the proposed the expansion of the South Pit and Venture Dump discard facilities at their iMpunzi Mining Complex. The proposed South Pit Discard Dump will receive coarse discard from the Phoenix Plant. The South Pit is a previously mined-out area and has been partially rehabilitated. The existing Venture Discard Dump footprint will be expanded and the facility will be modified into a co-disposal facility to accommodate both coarse and fine (slurry) discard. A new return water dam (RWD) will be constructed as part of the development of the Venture Co-disposal Facility. The co-disposal facility will receive coarse discard and slurry from the ATC Plant, which sources coal from opencast workings and from discard dump reprocessing. As part of the proposed discard expansion project, an existing haul road from the ATCOM Discard Dumps to the ATC Coal Processing Plant will be widened

Glencore Operations South Africa (Pty) Ltd appointed Golder Associates Africa (Pty) Ltd to undertake the Environmental Authorisation application for the proposed expansion of the South Pit and Venture Dump discard facilities at their iMpunzi Mining Complex in the Klipplaats 14 IS Portions 1 and 14, Kromfontein 30 IS Portions 2, 3, 12, 14, 20, 22, 23, and 28 and Blesbokfontein 31 IS Portion 2 in the Magisterial District of eMalahleni, Mpumalanga Province.

The SAHRA issued an interim comment dated 17/12/2019 which requested that heritage studies inclusive of the Archaeological and Palaeontological Impact Assessments be submitted to the case on SAHRIS.

On the 11/02/2020, the Final Scoping Report was submitted to SAHRA via email. A response was given to the email on the 17/02/2020 which noted the final Scoping Report and requested that the report be attached to the SAHRIS case. It was also requested of the EAP to submit the EIA document along with its appendices and the heritage specialist reports to the case on SAHRIS for further comments once the FSR has been accepted by the competent authority.

The applicant has failed to comply with the interim comment issued on the 17/12/2019 for the application and submitted only the dEIA with no assessment of the impacts to the archaeological and palaeontological



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heritage resources. However, these statements were not provided by a qualified heritage specialist as per the requirements of section 38 of the NHRA. The draft Environmental Impact Assessment (dEIA) documents were then submitted to the case on the 01/09/2020, which states that an Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment was not undertaken as the footprints of the above mentioned activities will largely be situated on previously mined-out areas. It also states that a Palaeontology Impact Assessment was not undertaken as the footprints of the above mentioned activities will largely be situated on already mined-out areas.

On the 01/10/2020, the SAHRA issued a Final Comment which noted that the assessment of impacts on archaeological and palaeontological heritage resources were not undertaken as required by 38(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA) and as part of the EA process as required by section 24(4)b(iii) of the NEMA. SAHRA advised the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) to reject the application for the expansion of the of the South Pit and Venture Dump discard facilities.

On the 23/10/2020, a Heritage Compliance Statement was submitted to the case on SAHRIS in response to the SAHRA's Final Comment.

APelser Archaeological Consulting cc (APAC cc) was appointed by Golder Associates Africa (Pty) Ltd (Golder) to provide a motivation for exemption from a full Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA).

The area would have been used in the past (pre-mining) mainly for agricultural purposes as is visible on aerial images (Google Earth) of the study area. Extensive mining activities over the last 20 years have had a major impact on the area, with little of the original natural landscape still intact. As a result of previous farming activities and the recent mining operations if any sites, features or material of cultural heritage (archaeological and/or historical) origin or significance did exist within the area, it would be have been extensively disturbed or destroyed.

It is deemed unlikely that any significant sites, features or material of cultural heritage (archaeological and/or historical) origin might exist in the study and proposed development area. Archaeological and historical sites features and material have been identified in the larger geographical area and this needs to be taken into consideration during any future actions related to the proposed development.

In 2014 and 2017, a Phase 1 PIA for the Extension of the Glencore Colliery on Steenkoolspruit 18IS and an

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HIA for the Opencast Pits at IMpunzi mine were undertaken, which stated the area underlain by Permian aged sandstone and interbedded shale as well as very well developed coal beds of the Vryheid Formation (Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup). The potential for finding well-defined plant fossils remains high and the sections of the study area that still need to be uncovered have thus been allocated a Moderate sensitivity for palaeontology. It is also recommended that for the current proposed development actions that a Phase 1 PIA is not required but that the recommendations made in earlier assessments by the various Palaeontology Specialists be adhered to.

Interim Comment

The SAHRA notes the Heritage Compliance Statement submitted to the case. It must be noted that a letter of exemption from undertaking palaeontological studies must be provided by a qualified palaeontologist.

A qualified palaeontologist must therefore be appointed to provide the Heritage Compliance Statement before further comments can be issued on the case. The Letter must comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA and the 2012 Minimum Standards: Palaeontological Component of Heritage Impact Assessments.

Please attach the PIA reports referred to in the Heritage Compliance Statement to the case as well for review.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

Nokukhanya Khumalo
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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Phillip Hine

Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <http://www.sahra.org.za/node/530984>

(, Ref:)

Terms & Conditions:

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.
2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.