

# MAPA THE SHOW MUST GO ON ...

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc across the world's industries, shutting down operations and leading to the mass furloughing and laying off of workers and contractors. However, due to its massive importance to the country of Chile as well as to the global pulp and paper industry, Arauco's MAPA project has continued, although in a much-adapted way.

"We have had to completely rethink the way we work on the MAPA project as well as across all of our operations," says Charles Kimber, Vice President, Commercial & Corporate Affairs, Arauco. "The virus has made us look very hard and deep at ways we can adapt our complete working environment to keep the health and safety of all of the many people connected to our operations at the forefront."

The working environment Kimber alludes to is not just a normal operation, particularly in the case of the MAPA project. Here 8,000 workers from 40 companies and a multitude of disciplines and trades go to work at the site near the central Chilean city of Concepcion every day. Fortunately, Arauco was acutely aware at the beginning of the pandemic in China and was able to start work on preparing for the inevitable consequences.

"We employ 25,000 people in Chile and we also have another 10,000 employees

working elsewhere around the world, including a commercial office in China where we have important customers. We had eyes on the ground there as the COVID-19 situation developed and worsened in December, and by January we were already making preparations for what would almost certainly come to Chile.

"We then followed the situation as it developed in Europe and began looking closely at our IT infrastructure to make sure that key employees in our offices could continue working from home. As the pandemic developed further, in March we moved 3,000 key workers from our offices and they continued to work from home."

## MAPA – A MAJOR REORGANIZATION

The MAPA project was a whole new challenge on its own when it came to the virus, which demanded the complete reorganization of the working environment.

Kimber continues, "In early March, we had around 8,500 people working at the site and we decided that if we were to continue with the project, new, stringent working methods and conditions would have to be put into place.

"On March 20<sup>th</sup> we announced, together with the main suppliers and construction companies, to all the project companies involved that we were going to introduce a short pause for two weeks as we needed to reorganize, and implement new health and safety procedures due to the virus."

In the two-week period, the company completely overhauled its working practices to take into account the threat from the virus – from the transportation of workers in and out of the project site, to a new working environment within the project – that took into account all the safety procedures and practices to ensure minimum threat from contagion or spread.



**CHARLES KIMBER**  
Vice President,  
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Arauco

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Work continues on civil works at the MAPA project in Chile; the mechanical installation stage is next.

"The MAPA project is by no means a small endeavor," says Kimber. "For example when it comes to transportation, we have more than 280 buses bringing people in and out every day. And then there is the challenge of allowing 5,000 people coming in at the same time with our already stringent security measures at the entrance to the project.

"We had to rethink and redesign the whole working environment, at that same

time as keeping our momentum up to continue with the project."

Arauco, through its HR and dedicated Health & Safety divisions, redesigned the MAPA working model to take into account the unprecedented threat of COVID-19. From social distancing on buses and transportation to new gates and doors at the entrances, to new canteen measures and sanitary conditions, adaptation took place from top to bottom of the project.

"Despite the seriousness of the virus, we didn't want the additional safety measures we were putting in place to be seen just as something extra or additional to our own stringent health and safety measures," explains Kimber. "Our HR and Health & Safety leaders created a systematic code of working that integrated seamlessly into our existing way of working and simply made it part of normal working procedure."

## THE ART OF COMMUNICATING

After the brief two-week pause, in early April 2,000 workers began construction and working once again on the project, followed by the full 8,000 in the following weeks. One of the challenges Arauco has mastered during the pandemic is of communicating the new measures and working practices to the 40 or so companies working on the project, along with the 8,000 employees and contractors. "We were intent on not making this a vertical instruction coming from Arauco," says Kimber. "This needed to be horizontally communicated, to engage each and every person associated with the project.



As a unique added extra to getting important messages out about safe working practices during the virus, Arauco team members came up with their own COVID-19 rap.





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The new measures have been positively and enthusiastically accepted by the MAPA project teams.

We have been very pleased with the way the new measures have been positively and enthusiastically accepted. The feedback we have is that workers feel very safe within the project environment, even safer than on the outside."

Arauco has utilized many different communication tools to relay the new working

procedures, as well as engage all people working on and around the MAPA project. As well as a daily newsletter and regular email updates, there is also a dedicated WhatsApp group with more than 3,000 members.

"Communications have become very complex with online and mobile devices, so we have used all the channels at our

disposal to make sure that everybody is involved and the message of keeping safe is reinforced.

"As well as daily updates, we have been posting videos and launching competitions. We even have a COVID-19 rap that has proved very popular and has even gone viral in Chile."

#### MORE CHALLENGES AHEAD

The next stage of the MAPA project is the installation of key equipment and will include bringing skilled technicians from other countries to take part. "This is our next challenge," says Kimber. "We will be bringing in 60-70 skilled technicians from countries including Finland, Austria, Brazil, and Uruguay to install our new equipment at the mill.

"We have already risen to this challenge and have been working very hard at a high level with the government in Chile. Due to the stringent measures and procedures we have put in place, we have full support to go ahead and continue with the next stage of the MAPA project."

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## ANDRITZ – ON SCHEDULE WITH DELIVERY

ANDRITZ is a major supplier to the MAPA project. The scope of supply to the mill includes a complete wood processing plant, fiberline, black liquor evaporation plant, and complete white liquor plant.

While COVID-19 has had an impact on the overall schedule of the project, deliveries of key equipment continue to take place. At present, civil works are being readied and all areas are moving to the mechanical installation phase. Harri Makkonen, ANDRITZ Project Director for MAPA says, "All purchasing is now complete, and we are on schedule with our delivery. We are now moving towards the site supervision part of the project.

"There have been some effects of COVID-19 hampering our progress, mainly due to ongoing manufacturing delays in China, as well as delays with South American sub-suppliers. We have also experienced some delays in shipping due to ship availability and access blockages at ports abroad, as well as inland transportation because of travel restrictions at origin. However, considering the extent and seriousness of the virus, we are continuing to get things done and we are content with our progress."



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