# SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

**TOWARDS A THEMATIC FRAMEWORK**

Through a system of grading, the National Heritage Resources Act, no 25 of 1999 (NHRA) manages the heritage resources of South Africa in the three tiers of Government, based on the significance of the resource.

The Grading System, as described in Section 7 of the NHRA and further elaborated in the Grading System and Criteria Regulation published on 30th May 2003, establishes the appropriate level for the administration of formal protection and management of the resource. The determination of the significance of a resource is, therefore, an important step in the formal protection thereof.

SAHRA is in the process of revising the grading system with the aim of ensuring greater coordination between the heritage authorities. How these resources are assessed for significance is an important step in this revision. Therefore, a coordinated approach to the determination and assessment of the significance is required, through considering the significance within a national framework of themes.

It is not the aim of a National Thematic Framework to restrict the determination of significance through a strict system of categorising and oversimplifying the complexity of our heritage "landscape". At the same time, though, they are not so broad that they are completely open ended and vague.

These themes must be considered as a guide and flexible.  A heritage resource can meet more than one theme or sub-theme.  The identification of these themes is meant to assist in drafting a complete and inclusive significance of the resource, and to identify any linkages to other resources or groups of resources.  Further, the National Thematic Framework ensures representativity in the heritage resources that are formally acknowledged, protected and interpreted by identifying any gaps.

The themes and sub-theme cut across the types of heritage resources, grading levels and categories of significance as per section 3 and 7 NHRA.

| 3. Themes | Sub-Themes |
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| **3.1. Beginnings of Earth and its Evolution (Development of the Natural Environment)** | 3.1.1.  Geological evidence of early earth |
| | 3.1.2. Climatic, geological & topographic events |
| | 3.1.3. Evolution of floral/ faunal species |
| | 3.1.4. Evolution of landscapes and environment (ecosystems) |
| | 3.1.5. Meteorites |
| | 3.1.6. Hominid Evolution |
| **3.2. Advent of our people (origins of humanity and early interactions)** | 3.2.1. Development of modern human (development of cognitive behaviour) |
| | 3.2.2. Migration of people (arrival and settling) (examples: precolonial migrations, European migrations, labour |
| | 3.2.3. Settlements and settling of people (settlement patterns) (examples: precolonial settlements/citadels, urbanisation, |
| | 3.2.4. South Africa's earliest inhabitants |

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| **3.3. Shaping of South African Democratic State (Political Landscape and Governance)** | 3.3.1. Military<br>(examples: Wars of resistance, conflicts between different peoples, |
| | 3.3.2. Interactions of different peoples (Integration, adaptation and coexistance) |
| | 3.3.2. Resistance and Liberation Heritage<br>(including the formation of resistance movements, unions, |
| | 3.3.3. Systems of Governance in South Africa (traditional, colonial, Apartheid, democratic) |
| | 3.3.5. Emergence and development of South African National Identity |
| | 3.3.6. Developments towards building a nation / democracy<br>(examples: development of judiciary and South Africa's Constitution, |
| **3.4. Living Heritage (Development and Expression of Social, Cultural and Traditional Values)** | 3.4.1. Religious/Spiritual |
| | 3.4.2. Traditions, Beliefs, Customs and Values (including Rites of Passage) |
| | 3.4.2. Development/ Expression of Social and Cultural Practices<br>(examples: rituals, pilgrimage, festivals, dance, etc) |
| | 3.4.3. Artistic Expression<br>(examples: performing arts, traditional arts, fine arts, outsider art etc) |
| | 3.4.4. Sports and Traditional Games<br>(examples: development of sporting codes, events, traditional games |
| **3.5. Economic/Industrial Developments** | 3.5.1. Agricultural developments |
| | 3.5.2. Slavery |
| | 3.5.3. Labour<br>(examples: migrant labour, trade union developments, workers' |
| | 3.5.4. Industrial and Technological Developments<br>(including but not limited to mining, manufacturing, construction, |
| | 3.5.5. Trade between dfferent groups<br>(examples:  precolonial trade, Dutch East India Company, Colonial |
| | 3.5.6. Exploration and Mapping |
| **3.6. Education** | 3.6.1. Education developments |
| | 3.6.2. Missionary Education |
| | 3.6.3. Education disparities |
| **3.7. Science and Technology** | 3.7.1. Scientic Contribution |
| | 3.7.2. Technological innovations |