Sappi Saiccor recently upgraded to the Extended Automation System 800xA, ABB’s new automation platform – an improvement that fits into the mill’s continuing, successful growth.

Reducing the environmental footprint
In 1994, Sappi Saiccor invested more than USD 250 million to expand and upgrade the mill’s facilities, increasing pulp production capacity from 450,000 to 585,000 t/y and enhancing product quality. The upgrade significantly reduced the mill’s environmental footprint.

In 2001, ABB supplied engineering and delivered a millwide control system.

Improved availability and profitability
In 2006 the Sappi Group invested in a USD 46.5 million expansion that will increase Sappi Saiccor’s pulp capacity from about 600,000 tons per year to 800,000.

In combination with this project, ABB won a USD 32 million order from Sappi to be a single-solution provider. ABB’s control system will have five redundant AC800M controllers for 2,500 S800 I/O channels and 10 Process Portal operator workplaces along with extensive Profibus communications. The order includes 2,700 smart instruments and 600 smart...
motor controllers as well as Information Management, Asset Management and DTM (Device Type Management) functionality. Five control rooms received new operator systems.

Ken Toward, Divisional Engineer - Instruments at Sappi Saiccor, praises the system’s flexibility, software design and ease to configure and run. He believes that Sappi Saiccor obtained a lot for its money.

“Since we have been using ABB’s control systems, we have seen an improvement in the availability and reliability of our control systems,” says Toward, who describes the automation platform as “outstanding.”

He is also highly positive about storing, displaying and retrieving process and historical data. ABB’s System 800xA makes it possible to maintain continuous contact with all parts of the process in real time, and all the data are stored for future documentation and traceability.

Toward says his cooperation with ABB – “from management to the men on the factory floor” – has run very smoothly.

“We have been working together since 1994, but the technicians from ABB do not try to control us, and we really work as a team,” he says. “We always know to whom we can turn if ever a problem occurs. The service technicians are always really professional.”

**Future capacity**
The new application solutions have the capacity to handle the mill’s future expansion. Open standards make it easy to integrate new systems, which Sappi Saiccor also regards as a major advantage. And because the system is being upgraded in stages, operating breakdowns are minimized.

Sappi Saiccor’s system changeover has been remarkably smooth. The plant’s systems are operating in parallel and several generations are running at the same time – without any disruptions.

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