SAFCOL
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ROOTED TOGETHER

A reflection of our passion for the communities we serve



TOP STORIES

TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION

Our Level 1 B-BBEE achievement is built on tangible initiatives that translate intent into measurable action.

Read more on page 2.

WOMEN IN FORESTRY
SIHLE SIVE TRADING CC

Sihle Sive Trading, is 100% Black women-owned and a valued beneficiary of SAFCOL's Women in Forestry Empowerment Programme.

Read more on page 6.



EDITORS' NOTE

Our valued communities, we are pleased to update you once again on what our collaboration has achieved.

In this edition of Rooted Together, we highlight the powerful impact of partnership, resilience, and shared growth across our communities and operations.

From youth and women owned enterprises breaking new ground in the forestry and manufacturing sectors, to community cooperatives turning opportunity into sustainable livelihoods, each story reflects SAFCOL's unwavering commitment to meaningful transformation.

Our work shows how strategic partnerships can boost economic participation, reduce vulnerabilities, and restore dignity in rural communities. These initiatives represent the real people behind our Level 1 B-BBEE achievement.

Progress is measured not only in hectares or contracts, but in lives changed and futures strengthened. We look forward to even more successes in 2026!

Warm regards,
Nokuthula

Level 1 B-BBEE Achievement

Powered by Real Action and Community Impact



For many years, SAFCOL has placed transformation at the core of its business strategy, demonstrating that commercial success and social impact can thrive together.

What began as steady, intentional progress has now culminated in a landmark achievement. After maintaining Level 2 B-BBEE status for three consecutive years, SAFCOL has proudly reached Level 1 B-BBEE for the very first time.

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This milestone is not the result of compliance, but of deliberate, people-centred investment that translates intention into tangible, measurable outcomes.

Our Journey to Level 1 B-BBEE

Youth Employment Service (YES) Programme:

- SAFCOL continues to combat youth unemployment by placing graduates in structured work-integrated learning opportunities across the organisation. Over the past four years, 87 young people have benefitted from the programme, with many securing permanent roles or establishing their own income-generating ventures across various sectors.

Enterprise & Supplier Development (ESD)

- Through mentorship, capacity building, and improved market access, SAFCOL empowers SMMEs that now play essential roles in silviculture, harvesting, logistics, furniture manufacturing, catering, cleaning, and maintenance. In the past five years, the organisation has supported more than 262 SMMEs, strengthening entrepreneurship and local economic participation.



Skills Development

- By investing in bursaries, learnerships, internships, artisan training, and technical forestry education, SAFCOL is nurturing the next generation of industry professionals. These initiatives benefit rural youth in particular, offering them recognised qualifications and pathways to sustainable employment.



Participatory Forestry and Community Partnerships

- SAFCOL's inclusive forestry model promotes shared value with communities. Initiatives such as groundnut and jugo bean farming at JDM Keet, community forestry management at Wilgeboom, and other agricultural and enterprise projects demonstrate how collaboration improves income, food security, and local economic resilience.

A Milestone with a Promise

Achieving Level 1 B-BBEE is more than a historic accomplishment, it is a commitment.

A commitment to continue unlocking opportunities, empowering communities, and proving that transformation is not an obligation but the foundation of sustainable, inclusive growth.

Together, we are building a future where transformation is lived, shared, and deeply rooted in everything we do.

Empowering Communities Through Beekeeping
The Thavhine Success Story



Thavhine Multipurpose Primary Cooperative, based in Levubu, Limpopo, established a beekeeping enterprise in 2021.

With an apiary site located at the Ratombo and Tshakhuma CPA farms, the cooperative operates with 150 hives donated by SAFCOL through its Enterprise Development Programme.

These farms, rich in fruit orchards, provide the ideal environment for cross-pollination and offer abundant forage for the bees.

SAFCOL's commitment to empowering communities has gone beyond providing resources. Through a collaboration with Madzivhandila Agricultural College, nine community representatives received training in modern beekeeping practices, equipping them with the technical skills needed to manage operations safely and efficiently.

Additional technical mentorship, supported by lumber donations from Timbadola Sawmill, has enabled the cooperative to construct and repair hives, building resilience and capacity for future growth.

The cooperative also completed Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) training, ensuring that the honey produced meets the highest standards for public consumption.

This positions Thavhine to supply local markets with quality products while contributing to food safety and community well being.

While the journey has not been without challenges, the foundation laid is solid. The skills, infrastructure, and knowledge gained through this initiative have unlocked significant potential.

The honey is currently being sold to local households and tuckshops.

With improved access to formal markets, one of the challenges the cooperative is still working to overcome, Thavhine Multipurpose Primary Cooperative has the potential to transform this project into a beacon of sustainable enterprise, creating jobs, supporting local agriculture, and driving economic growth in Levubu

THE GROWTH of Sinikiwe Ithuba Primary Cooperative





Sinikiwe Ithuba Primary Cooperative is a 100% black youth-owned enterprise based in Umjindini, Barberton, Mpumalanga.

Formed by a group of young people who successfully completed a furniture manufacturing learnership programme, the cooperative embodies the determination and vision of young people transforming skills into sustainable enterprise.

Their passion for craftsmanship led to the establishment of a business dedicated to producing high-quality furniture.

A standout feature of the cooperative is its strong representation of women, six of its eight members are women, making it a 75% Black women-owned enterprise.

This positions Sinikiwe Ithuba as a beacon of economic inclusion and empowerment in rural Mpumalanga.

Through SAFCOL's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme, the cooperative received targeted business development support, including funding from the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

Their growth was further strengthened through assistance from the Small Enterprise Development Finance Agency (SEFA), which provided promotional materials and facilitated the cooperative's participation in exhibitions hosted by the Department of Small Business Development, offering them a platform to showcase their exceptional craftsmanship.

True to their name "we have been given an opportunity", Sinikiwe Ithuba recently reached a major milestone: they were appointed the preferred service provider for labour services in the production of school desks for Ithole Primary School in Amsterdam, a SAFCOL Corporate Social Investment (CSI) beneficiary.

The cooperative is currently manufacturing 100 school desks, contributing directly to improved learning conditions for the school's learners.

Under a mentorship programme arranged by SEFA at Furntech, members of the cooperative have been actively involved in cutting components for the desks, which will be assembled and delivered upon completion.

This partnership not only sharpens their technical expertise but also strengthens their competitiveness and readiness for future opportunities within the furniture manufacturing sector.

Sinikiwe Ithuba Primary Cooperative stands as proof that when technical skills, meaningful support, and unwavering determination come together, young people can turn opportunity into lasting economic impact.



Sihle Sive Trading:
Growing Women-Led Excellence in Forestry

Sihle Sive Trading was founded by Ms. Qinisile Mdhluli, who joined the SAFCOL ESD Incubation Programme in 2018.

The business is 100% Black women-owned and is one of the beneficiaries of SAFCOL's Women in Forestry Empowerment Programme. Sihle Sive Trading provides silviculture services.

Although the business initially operated as an emerging contractor in both silviculture and harvesting, SAFCOL later appointed the company to a three-year silviculture contract at the Belfast, Berlin, and Blyde plantations.

The company currently holds contracts at the Blyde and Berlin plantations.

Their passion for forestry has driven the company's growth from being classified as an Exempt Micro Enterprise (EME) to a Qualifying Micro Enterprise (QSE).

Through their strong forest management expertise and support received from SAFCOL's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) Programme, Sihle Sive Trading secured silviculture contracts with Mountain to Oceans (MTO) within the forestry sector from 2022 to 2025.

The company also mentors other Black women-owned forestry enterprises, aligning with SAFCOL's broader economic transformation strategy.

Sihle Sive Trading participated in the SAFCOL ESD Incubation Programme's Short Learning Programme (SLP) in the 2019 cohort, delivered in partnership with the University of Mpumalanga. The programme covered essential aspects of entrepreneurship and business management.

This training contributed significantly to the cooperative's ability to grow into a reputable and competitive forestry contractor.

Empowerment Support Received

- Participated in SAFCOL's Supplier Development Programme (forestry tools, protective clothing, and mentorship).
- Awarded forestry tools by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in partnership with SAFCOL.
- Supported and mentored Mochochomba as a subcontractor.

Completed compliance and safety training, including:

- First Aid
- Supervisor Training
- SHE Rep
- Herbicide Application
- Firefighting

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Community Collaboration Cultivates Sustainability at Wilgeboom Plantation

In March 2024, a transformative partnership took root at SAFCOL's Wilgeboom Plantation.

Three community-owned enterprises, Humene Trading & Projects, LHM Forestry & Projects, and Ohlagile Mogau Letago Holdings (Pty) Ltd, joined forces with plantation manager, the late, Mr. Piet Thwala to undertake essential silvicultural work, including weeding and clearing invasive coppice species.

These enterprises are owned by land claimants, making the collaboration both economically and socially meaningful.

What makes this initiative remarkable is its circular economic model. Instead of discarding the cleared materials, the enterprises repurpose them for sale in the informal market as banana poles and firewood.

This enables them to recover operational costs and generate income, all without SAFCOL incurring any expenditure. It is a true win-win: waste is reduced, while local economic resilience is strengthened.

Working closely with the Wilgeboom management team, the businesses have maintained high service standards.

To date, they have cleared approximately 10.5% of the plantation, significantly reducing SAFCOL's future maintenance costs.

Many of the workers bring previous experience from private forestry companies, adding valuable expertise to the partnership.

Beyond operational efficiencies, the social impact has been profound.

The initiative has created employment for 42 local community members, providing sustainable livelihoods despite modest profit margins. Notably, timber theft has dropped dramaticallyfrom 40 hectares per year to under 4 hectares, due to increased visibility in the plantation and enhanced community involvement.

Residents now feel more empowered to report illegal activities, strengthening trust and shared responsibility. Through SAFCOL's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) Programme, the participating enterprises received targeted support to improve their readiness and compliance. Capacity-building interventions included:

Supervisor Training

- Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Representative Training
- First Aid Level 1 & 2
- Basic Business Skills Training (facilitated by SEDFA)
- Provision of Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) and chainsaws

These resources enabled the enterprises to deliver quality work safely and efficiently. As their engagement at Wilgeboom comes to a close, the success of this model presents a compelling opportunity for replication across other SAFCOL plantations.

This initiative demonstrates how strategic collaboration can unlock shared value, enhancing operational efficiency, empowering communities, and promoting environmental stewardship across the forestry sector.



BRIDGING HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY IN CHIEF ALBERT LUTHULI MUNICIPALITY



Communities across Fernie Ward 3, Mayflower Ward 7, and Glenmore Ward 11 within the Redhill and Blairmore cluster of the Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality are celebrating a significant milestone with the completion of newly constructed timber footbridges by SAFCOL .

For many years, residents in these rural areas faced daily hardships when crossing rivers, particularly during the rainy season when water levels rose and crossings became dangerous or completely impassable.

Learners often missed school, and elderly residents struggled to access clinics, shops, and essential community services due to unsafe routes. The construction of the new timber footbridges has transformed this reality.

The bridges now provide a safe, reliable, and convenient route for all community members, especially schoolchildren and the elderly, who are among the most vulnerable.

Where children once had to remove their shoes to wade through rivers, they can now reach school dry, on time, and without fear.

Elderly residents can also move freely between villages and service points, improving mobility, independence, and overall quality of life.

Beyond their physical purpose, these bridges symbolize connection, progress, and dignity. They link not only communities separated by rivers, but also people to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

The project has strengthened unity and safety within the wards and demonstrates SAFCOL's commitment to improving rural livelihoods and enhancing the well-being of the communities it serves.

As residents walk across these new bridges each day, they carry more than their belongings, they carry hope, dignity, and the promise of a better-connected future for their communities.