



GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Status: Five (5) Year Fixed-Term Contract

Location: Pretoria Head Office

Grade: F-Band

Reporting Line: SAFCOL Board of Directors

Organisation Context

SAFCOL (South African Forestry Company SOC Limited), the country's state-owned forestry enterprise, is seeking an exceptional Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) to lead the organisation into its next era of commercial excellence, socio-economic impact, and sustainable growth. This is a unique opportunity for a visionary and values-driven executive to champion both financial performance and developmental transformation in alignment with national priorities.

Purpose of the Role

As the GCEO, you will serve as the strategic, operational, and financial leader of SAFCOL, accountable for delivering sustainable value to both shareholders and broader stakeholders. Reporting directly to the Board of Directors and chairing the Executive Committee (EXCO), you will provide decisive leadership across all business units to ensure long-term viability, sectoral relevance, and developmental impact. You will be accountable for implementing the 5-Year Corporate Strategy and Annual Performance Plan (APP), ensuring alignment with the Shareholder Compact and SAFCOL's dual mandate: commercial performance and inclusive development.

The Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) serves as SAFCOL's principal executive leader and is accountable to the Board of Directors for the organisation's overall strategic direction, governance, operational performance, financial sustainability, and stakeholder management.

The incumbent will lead the implementation of SAFCOL's Corporate Strategy, Annual Performance Plans (APPs), and Shareholder Compact, ensuring alignment with national development priorities while delivering sustainable shareholder value. The GCEO will provide leadership across all business operations, champion organisational transformation, and position SAFCOL as a globally competitive forestry and natural resources enterprise.

Key Accountabilities

1. Lead the development and execution of SAFCOL's long-term corporate strategy and turnaround initiatives.
2. Drive commercial growth, financial sustainability, and return on investment across the Group.
3. Oversee strategic capital projects, infrastructure development, and innovation initiatives.
4. Ensure robust financial governance, regulatory compliance (including PFMA and King IV), and clean audit outcomes.
5. Driving transformation, advancing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives and land restitution efforts to empower historically disadvantaged communities.
6. Drive and enhance strong partnerships with key stakeholders, including government, unions, communities, and commercial partners.
7. Cultivate a high-performance, ethical, and inclusive organisational culture through strategic human capital development.
8. Oversee and manage risk, while ensuring transparent and effective reporting to the Board and stakeholders.
9. Represent SAFCOL nationally and internationally to drive collaboration, influence policy, and strengthen sector leadership.

Key Accountabilities/ Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the formulation, execution, monitoring, and review of SAFCOL's long-term strategic objectives.
- Drive organisational renewal, growth, turnaround initiatives, and business optimisation strategies.
- Position SAFCOL as a leading forestry, timber, renewable resources, and environmental sustainability organisation in Africa and globally.
- Identify and pursue strategic growth opportunities, acquisitions, partnerships, and diversification initiatives.



Financial Sustainability and Commercial Performance

- Deliver sustainable revenue growth, profitability, operational efficiency, and shareholder value.
- Lead financial turnaround and restructuring initiatives where required.
- Ensure prudent stewardship of organisational assets and resources.
- Drive investment attraction, capital raising, and innovative financing solutions for strategic projects.
- Oversee the effective management of multi-billion-rand budgets and capital expenditure programmes.

Governance, Risk and Compliance

- Ensure compliance with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Treasury Regulations, Companies Act, King IV/V Corporate Governance Principles, and all applicable legislation.
- Maintain sound systems of governance, internal controls, enterprise risk management, and ethical leadership.
- Drive clean governance and clean audit outcomes.
- Foster a culture of accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct.

Operational Excellence

- Oversee all forestry, processing, conservation, environmental, and commercial operations.
- Drive operational efficiencies, productivity improvements, and technology-enabled business transformation.
- Ensure effective management of strategic assets, infrastructure, and capital-intensive projects.
- Promote innovation, digitisation, and operational resilience.

Transformation, Sustainability and Development

- Champion Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE), employment equity, skills development, and inclusive economic participation.
- Lead land restitution, community forestry, and socio-economic development initiatives.
- Advance Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) priorities and sustainable forestry practices.
- Promote climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, carbon management, and sustainable resource utilisation.

Stakeholder Management

- Build and maintain strategic relationships with government departments, regulators, investors, organised labour, communities, industry bodies, development finance institutions, and commercial partners.
- Serve as SAFCOL's principal spokesperson and representative nationally and internationally.
- Influence policy development and strengthen SAFCOL's strategic positioning within the forestry and natural resources sectors.

Human Capital Leadership

- Build a high-performance, accountable, ethical, and inclusive organisational culture.
- Lead executive talent management, succession planning, leadership development, and organisational capability enhancement.
- Promote employee engagement, labour stability, and organisational effectiveness.

Minimum Requirements

- A relevant postgraduate qualification (NQF Level 9 or higher) in:
 - Business Administration
 - Commerce
 - Finance
 - Economics
 - Forestry
 - Agricultural Economics
 - Natural Resource Management
 - Environmental Management
 - Engineering
 - Law
 - Public Administration



- Economics, Forestry, or a related field
- An MBA, MBL, or equivalent Master's degree
- Minimum of 15 years' senior management and leadership experience.
- A minimum of 7–10 years' experience at Executive Committee level, C- suits or in a Managing Director, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, or equivalent executive leadership role.
- At least 7–10 years' executive-level experience leading and managing businesses in complex, multi-stakeholder environments, with accountability for strategic and operational performance.
- Strong financial literacy and strategic financial management capabilities, with demonstrated accountability for large organisational budgets or P&L responsibilities.
- Proven track record of financial leadership, including driving profitability, managing multi-billion-rand budgets, and raising capital.
- Experience executing large-scale infrastructure, forestry, natural resources, or manufacturing projects.
- Knowledge of the legislative environment governing state-owned companies (PFMA, Treasury Regulations, King IV).
- Strong experience engaging diverse stakeholders, including unions, communities, shareholders, and regulatory authorities.
- Demonstrated leadership within large, complex organisations operating in highly regulated environments.
- Proven experience leading a state-owned entity, listed company, multinational corporation, or large commercial enterprise.
- Proven track record of organisational turnaround, restructuring, growth, and transformation.
- Extensive experience managing large-scale operations and capital-intensive assets.
- Demonstrated accountability for significant balance sheets, profit-and-loss responsibilities, and investment portfolios.
- Experience engaging Boards of Directors and shareholder representatives at a strategic level.
- Strong experience engaging diverse stakeholders, including unions, communities, shareholders, and regulatory authorities.
- Certification in Executive Development or leadership programmes from recognised institutions will be an added advantage.
- Proven experience in and/or understanding of State-Owned Company governance frameworks, e.g., PFMA, will be an added advantage.
- Proven experience in leading and delivering successful corporate turnaround and business transformation initiatives.
- Professional membership with a recognised forestry professional body will be an added advantage.

Professional Qualifications (Advantageous)

Professional registration or membership with one or more of the following:

- Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA)
- South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP)
- Legal Practice Council (LPC)
- South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA)
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
- Project Management Institute (PMI)
- Institute of Risk Management South Africa (IRMSA)
- Institute of Directors South Africa (IoDSA)

Core Competencies

- Proven track record in leading complex organisations, driving strategic growth, overseeing capital-intensive projects, and delivering sustainable operational performance
- Proven track record in leading financial turnaround strategies, managing multi-billion-rand budgets, and securing investment capital
- A demonstrable record in delivering capital-intensive infrastructure, forestry, natural resources, or agro-processing projects will be an added advantage



- Solid record of executive leadership, delivery of large-scale projects and capital-intensive of projects in comparable industries
- Proven stakeholder engagement and management experience, including with government, regulators, communities, financiers, unions and other strategic stakeholders
- Strategic vision and strong commercial acumen
- Ethical and inclusive leadership, with a strong commitment to commercial governance, transformation and sustainability
- Financial stewardship, corporate governance, and risk management expertise
- Political savviness, stakeholder diplomacy, and high emotional intelligence
- Innovation, change leadership, and performance-driven decision-making

Leadership and Strategy

- Visionary and transformational leadership
- Strategic thinking and execution
- Business growth and commercial acumen
- Enterprise leadership and organisational transformation

Financial and Commercial Management

- Financial stewardship
- Investment and capital allocation
- Corporate finance and funding strategies
- Revenue growth and profitability management

Governance and Risk

- Corporate governance expertise
- Risk management and regulatory compliance
- Ethical leadership and accountability
- Board and shareholder engagement

Stakeholder Management

- Political acumen and stakeholder diplomacy
- Government relations
- Community engagement
- Labour relations and social partnership management

Operational Excellence

- Operational optimisation
- Infrastructure and capital project oversight
- Performance management
- Innovation and digital transformation

Personal Attributes

- High integrity and ethical conduct
- Sound judgement and decision-making
- Resilience and adaptability
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Results-oriented and performance-driven
- High emotional intelligence

Preferred additional expertise

- Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
- ESG and Sustainability Reporting
- Climate Change and Carbon Markets



- International Trade and Market Development
- Corporate Restructuring and Turnaround Management
- Development Finance and Infrastructure Financing
- Land Reform and Restitution Programmes
- Mergers, Acquisitions and Strategic Partnerships
- Renewable Energy and Bioeconomy Initiatives
- Forestry Certification Systems (FSC, PEFC or equivalent)
- Knowledge of State-Owned Entity Governance

Why SAFCOL?

SAFCOL manages over 185,000 hectares of commercial forestry across South Africa as one of the country's most significant natural resource portfolios. This is a genuine turnaround opportunity for an executive who wants to leave a legacy: rebuilding commercial performance, driving transformation, and repositioning a national asset for long-term relevance. If you are energised by complexity, scale, and purpose, this mandate was built for you.

Application Process: Qualifying individuals should submit a comprehensive CV, certified copies of qualifications, and a covering letter outlining alignment with the role requirements. Applications to be submitted to: <https://www.ditto.jobs/jobs/4084641728/> SAFCOL is an equal opportunity employer committed to transformation and diversity.

Closing date: 21 July 2026.

Should you not have received a response within 30 days of the closing date, please consider your application unsuccessful. Prospective candidates must be citizens and will be subject to mandatory security screening and background verification checks.

For enquiries, please contact: Kate Modingoana - kate@edgexec.co.za