Specialist : Wood /Lumber

Status : Permanent
Location: Research Centre (Sabie)
Grade: D2
Reporting line: Senior Manager: Research and Development

Role Mandate
To provide expert technical support on wood quality, timber processing, and utilisation by assessing wood properties, ensuring quality control, and delivering advisory services to optimise timber value.

Key Accountabilities
- Collaborate with the Specialist: Tree Breeding to develop and implement wood-quality breeding strategies for pine and eucalypt species
- Conduct research projects addressing operational and strategic needs
- Integrate wood-quality objectives into the broader tree-breeding programme
- Manage sampling and laboratory analysis for progeny, provenance, and CAMCORE trials
- Select and assess trees prior to thinning, evaluating growth potential, stem form, and branching
- Analyse thinning material to identify within-family trends and genotype performance
- Evaluate wood-quality attributes including density, radial variation, spirality, shrinkage and acoustic properties
- Generate and interpret wood-quality data for CAMCORE trials and hybrid material
- Study natural growth phenomena affecting quality (e.g., resin defects, compression wood, juvenile wood) and assess genetic, environmental, and operational influences
- Investigate factors affecting wood properties, including silviculture, site, genetics, and log storage
- Assess impacts of increased growth rates on wood and sawmilling properties
- Address emerging wood-quality issues through targeted investigations
- Identify and assess new wood product opportunities, including feasibility and processing requirements
- Design, develop, and test wood products using SAFCOL and academic resources
- Compile annual research work plans in collaboration with internal stakeholders
- Coordinate trial sampling schedules aligned with breeding and thinning operations
- Prepare and manage the annual operational budget for wood-quality research
- Produce monthly progress reports and comprehensive project technical reports
- Prepare annual performance reports comparing planned and actual outcomes
- Engage with plantation and sawmill managers to support trial sampling, transport, and processing of research material
- Build and maintain networks with wood-quality experts, research facilities, and universities
- Support knowledge transfer to operational teams and stakeholders
- Manage postgraduate research programmes and co-supervise MSc projects
- Ensure publication and dissemination of research outputs

Minimum Requirements
- Grade 12
- Master's Degree (MSc) in Wood Science, Foresty or Wood Technology (NQF Level 9)
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in forestry or wood quality research, of which at least two (2) years must be in technical research related to wood science, wood properties, or wood product development.
- Valid drivers' license

Leadership
- Self-Awareness
- Operational Delivery
- Commercial Insight
- Driving Change
- Strategic Thinking
- Business Acumen

Behavioural
- Problem Solving
- Result driven
- Planning and Organising
- Attention to Detail
- Passionate
- Stakeholder Engagement and Management

Technical
- Tree Breeding & Wood Quality Improvement
- Wood Science & Laboratory Analysis
- Environmental & Operational Research
- Wood Product Development
- Forest Management

SAFCOL Group is an equal opportunity company with the focus on gender equality and people with disabilities.
Employment Equity will be taken into consideration in terms of all appointments within SAFCOL.
By submitting your CV to SAFCOL, you hereby give permission to circulate your information to the interview panel members for this vacancy only. Your information will not be used for any other position/purpose and will be disregarded after an offer has been made.

Ms Magdeline Selopyane, Human Capital Practitioner, magdalinerecruitment@safcol.co.za **Tel no: 013 754 2700**
Closing date: 12 February 2026
Should you not have received a response within 30 days of the closing date, please consider your application unsuccessful.