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## Mr Kevin Leo-Smith



(<https://grassland.org.za/who-we-are/members/leo-smith-kevin>)

[kevin/@images/f65bebd-f65bebd-de27-4db3-a0de-93806778cab5.jpeg](#)

Completed a B.Sc. Agriculture (major Animal Science) in 1978. Completed 2 years military service which included 1 year working with rural communities teaching scientific agricultural practices in both the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal.

Commenced a mixed farming business on a family farm in 1980 doing dairy, irrigated crops, cattle and game ranching. This farm was 671 ha in extent. Started various agri-business setting up Agri-Plan Estates in 1981, a specialist farm sales consultancy. This business developed rapidly to become the leading farm sales agency in the KwaZulu Natal midlands. I subsequently set up several other associated agri-businesses including Plan Group (commodity price forecasting consultancy), Irri-Plan Irrigation and a specialist magazine Livestock Farming/Veeboerdery.

Conceptualised Phinda Private Game Reserve around 1986 and then with partners brought it to reality in 1989.. This large scale and pioneering project led to the development of Conservation Corporation Africa (CC Africa) with partners including Trevor Coppen, Alan Bernstein and Dave Varty. Today this business is known as & Beyond and is second largest safari company in the world.

In February 1997 I partnered with a prominent Motswana businessman, who had secured a 232,000ha concession in Northern Botswana, to start Kwando Safaris. I established and ran this company until early 2006. Under my leadership the business established 5 luxury safari camps (76 beds) and built and air charter company with 7 airplanes to link guests to the camps. By 2006 it was a very successful business with very high occupancies and a total staff compliment of 140 with only 4 expatriate staff.

In August 2006 linked up again with Alan Bernstein, who was CEO of Sustainable Forestry Management Ltd based in London., to start up SFM Africa Ltd. based out of Johannesburg. In this role I was responsible for the development of terms conditions, privacy protection (privacy policy), Africa primarily

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focussed on climate change mitigation through conservation forestry with a specific focus on the 630,000 ha Grande Mayumba Project in Gabon. This large scale project involved complex corporate finance as well as the development of a 200,000 ha sustainable forestry business with sawmill and associated activities, complex green bond financing proposals, small port and quarry development, green field sugar cane project including a sugar factory, other agriculture and safari tourism.

Regrettably due to high level corruption the company has been forced to cease operations there and we are now involved in formal arbitration against the Government of Gabon through the Paris Chamber of Commerce.

I am also CEO of the immedia Ecosystem a digital tech company in Durban to assist the company to scale their new tech platform, called fabrik, globally. Together with a corporate finance specialist Don Millar and a corporate lawyer Steve Raney we have formed Safari Investment Advisory a boutique advisory company for larger scale safari and wildlife investments.

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