REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) IN RESPECT OF STEEP AREA EXTRACTION SOLUTIONS FOR FORESTRY HARVESTING CLEARFELL AND THINNING OPERATIONS

RFI NUMBER:	**RFI 001/2026**
BRIEFING SESSION:	**NONE**
CLOSING DATE AND TIME:	**06 November 2026 AT 12H00**

SUBMISSION VIA EMAIL: TENDERS@SAFCOL.CO.ZA

1. DISCLAIMER

This **Request for Information (RFI)** is for information purposes only and does not constitute a formal tender or commitment to procure services. SAFCOL reserves the right to issue a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) based on responses received.

2. ISSUANCE OF RFI

2.1. South African Forestry Company SOC Ltd ("SAFCOL") invites you to submit an RFI to submit information for the works/goods/services as stated in the specification.

2.2. This RFI is a stand-alone information-gathering and market-testing exercise, intended solely to inform and assist SAFCOL's further deliberation and development of a strategy for identifying and implementing suitable steep-area extraction solutions for forestry harvesting, clear-fell and thinning operations. SAFCOL seeks information from qualified and experienced service providers regarding steep-area extraction solutions suitable for its plantations.

2.3. This RFI aims to understand the market capabilities, technologies, methodologies and innovative solutions available for the safe, efficient and sustainable extraction of timber from steep terrain, including solutions applicable to clear-fell and thinning operations across SAFCOL's plantations.

2.4. The objective of this RFI is to identify qualified and experienced entities with the capability to provide suitable steep-area extraction solutions for SAFCOL's plantation operations, including solutions for clear-fell and thinning activities. The information obtained will assist SAFCOL in assessing available technologies, methodologies, equipment and potential service delivery models, including options for direct procurement, contracted services or mutually beneficial arrangements, to determine the approach that best meets its operational requirements.

3. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

3.1. SAFCOL has delegated the responsibility for this RFI to Lungile Moeketsi, (email: Lungile.Moeketsi@safcol.co.za) to whom all enquiries, questions and requests for information regarding this RFI may be directed. Please note that all questions and requests for information must be submitted to Lungile Moeketsi on or before **02 November 2026 at 16h00.**

3.2. Each **RFI Response must be submitted electronically in PDF format to Tenders@safcol.co.za** . All RFI submissions must be properly indexed, legible, complete and capable of being opened and accessed without difficulty.

3.3. RFI Responses must be submitted to SAFCOL no later than **12h00 on 06 November 2026**.

3.4. RFI Responses reaching SAFCOL later than the date and time specified above may, in SAFCOL's sole discretion, not be considered by SAFCOL.

3.5. The Respondent is required to complete the RFI Response and provide all information requested in terms of this RFI.

3.6. All correspondence and any other documentation and oral communication exchanged between the Respondent and SAFCOL shall be in English.

3.7. SAFCOL reserves the right to request additional information or clarification from any Respondent in relation to its RFI Response, as it may, in its discretion, deem necessary, whether or not such information was specifically requested in this RFI. SAFCOL may also require a Respondent to provide or present supplementary information relating to its RFI Response.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1. SAFCOL is a state-owned forestry company listed as a Schedule 2 major public entity in terms of the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999. It was established in 1992 following the promulgation of the Management of State Forest Act 128 of 1992 to promote the development in the long term of the forestry industry according to accepted commercial management practice in South Africa. Through its wholly owned subsidiary, Komatiland Forests (KLF), SAFCOL conducts its forestry operations and manages plantation assets in various regions of the country.

4.2. The Tactical Harvesting Plan identifies the compartments scheduled for harvesting and thinning over the next five-year period. It determines the planned volumes, timing, location, terrain conditions, tree size information, and operational requirements needed to select appropriate harvesting and extraction systems. The plan is used to guide resource planning, contractor requirements, equipment selection, procurement decisions, safety planning, and the implementation of suitable solutions for both conventional and difficult steep area terrain operations.

4.2.1. Current environment

SAFCOL consist of 15 plantations situated from Makhado in Limpopo province down to Vryheid in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). Table 1 below displays the relevant plantations that may utilise difficult steep area terrain extraction solutions for both clearfell and thinnings.

Table 1: SAFCOL plantation distribution

Area	Plantation	Closest town
KZN	Ngome	Vryheid
Amsterdam	Roburnia	Amsterdam
Nelspruit	Berlin	Nelspruit
	Nelshoogte	Nelspruit
Sudwala	Uitsoek	Nelspruit
Sabie/Graskop	Bergvliet	Sabie
	Brooklands	Sabie
	Witklip	Wit rivier
	Tweefontein	Sabie
	Blyde	Graskop
	Wilgeboom	Graskop
Limpopo	Woodbush	Tzaneen
	Entabeni	Makhado

Table 2 and 3 show the annual average volume per plantation for difficult terrain extraction clearfell and thinning operations for the next five years respectively.

Table 2: Average annual difficult terrain clearfell volumes for the next five years.

Area	Plantation	Avearge Vol 30-40%	Avearge Vol 40-100%	Total
KZN	Ngome	1 221	1 186	2 407
Amsterdam	Roburnia	3 578	5 155	8 733
Nelspruit	Berlin	4 624	10 685	15 310
	Nelshoogte	5 061	9 562	14 623
Sudwala	Uitsoek	4 977	14 232	19 210
Sabie/Graskop	Bergvliet	4 281	10 749	15 030
	Brooklands	4 292	5 104	9 396
	Witklip	1 296	1 459	2 755
	Tweefontein	6 859	26 202	33 061
	Blyde	4 193	12 195	16 387
	Wilgeboom	2 005	3 914	5 918
Limpopo	Woodbush	5 755	11 553	17 308
	Entabeni	12 464	20 023	32 486
	Grand Total	**60 605**	**132 019**	**192 624**

Table 3: Average annual difficult terrain thinning volumes for the next five years.

Area	Plantation	Avearge Vol 30-40%	Avearge Vol 40-100%	Total
KZN	Ngome	205	205	409
Amsterdam	Roburnia	510	484	995
Nelspruit	Berlin	796	1 671	2 467
	Nelshoogte	699	744	1 443
Sudwala	Uitsoek	906	1 912	2 818
Sabie/Graskop	Bergvliet	2 019	3 606	5 625
	Brooklands	1 168	1 814	2 982
	Witklip	264	290	555
	Tweefontein	4 270	12 794	17 064
	Blyde	870	2 199	3 069
	Wilgeboom	352	570	922
Limpopo	Woodbush	1 079	1 138	2 217
	Entabeni	1 323	836	2 159
	Grand Total	**14 462**	**28 263**	**42 725**

Table 4 and 5 display the following tree average annual information:

- average tree volume for clearfell and thinnings
- maximum tree volume for clearfell and thinning
- average tree diameter for clearfell and thinnings
- maximum tree diameter for clearfell and thinnings

This information must be used as a guideline for the selection of suitable steep area extraction solutions for clearfell and thinning volumes.

Table 4: Clearfell tree size information

Area	Plantation	Average tree volume	Max tree volume	Average DBH	Max DBH
KZN	Ngome	0.940	1.466	33.9	42.11
Amsterdam	Roburnia	1.114	2.144	36.3	47.67
Nelspruit	Berlin	0.778	1.466	30.4	42.03
	Nelshoogte	1.301	1.770	38.3	44.46
Sudwala	Uitsoek	1.285	1.747	38.0	43.10
Sabie/Graskop	Bergvliet	1.141	2.100	35.8	46.45
	Brooklands	1.358	1.817	38.1	42.32
	Witklip	1.176	1.933	35.9	43.82
	Tweefontein	1.145	1.887	36.2	43.62
	Blyde	0.967	1.592	35.9	43.26
	Wilgeboom	1.050	1.817	35.9	43.13
Limpopo	Woodbush	1.114	1.820	36.2	44.91
	Entabeni	1.182	1.738	36.7	42.91
	Average	**1.122**	**1.792**	**36.0**	**43.83**

Table 5: Thinning tree size information

Area	Plantation	Average tree volume	Max tree volume	Average DBH	Max DBH
KZN	Ngome	0.208	0.499	21.7	29.28
Amsterdam	Roburnia	0.122	0.391	18.6	27.39
Nelspruit	Berlin	0.136	0.330	19.4	25.55
	Nelshoogte	0.179	0.443	21.0	28.68
Sudwala	Uitsoek	0.119	0.375	18.4	27.53
Sabie/Graskop	Bergvliet	0.228	0.533	21.9	28.58
	Brooklands	0.207	0.496	21.0	28.70
	Witklip	0.152	0.328	19.8	26.31
	Tweefontein	0.201	0.672	21.2	31.92
	Blyde	0.143	0.339	19.5	27.33
	Wilgeboom	0.128	0.332	18.5	26.13
Limpopo	Woodbush	0.196	0.528	21.6	30.99
	Entabeni	0.236	0.708	21.7	32.20
	Average	**0.174**	**0.459**	**20.3**	**28.51**

4.2.2. Existing systems

SAFCOL harvest majority of its annual volume with own harvesting systems and teams that consist of:

- Cut to length mechanised clearfell and thinning operations,
- Motor manual ground base grapple, cable skidder clearfell and thinning tractor operations.
- Outsourced difficult steep area terrain operations, consisting of excavator based shovel yarder, sky line and cable yarding operations in clearfell operations.
- Limited yarding operations in thinnings.
- Handroll operation in thinning operations.
- Manual preparation with forwarder extraction in thinning operations.

4.2.3. Current challenges

The following are current challenges:

- Availability of skilled difficult steep area terrain harvesting and thinning service providers
- Fluctuating markets and timber demand

- Procurement processes
- Increasing difficult steep area terrain volume
- Exchange rate and the cost of equipment
- Limited difficult steep area terrain harvesting and thinning solutions

4.2.4. Strategic objectives

SAFCOL's strategic direction places strong emphasis on business growth, customer centricity, excellence in forestry operations, a future-fit organisation, financial sustainability and responsible forest management. The RFI for difficult steep area extraction solutions directly supports these strategic goals by enabling SAFCOL to identify practical, safe, and commercially viable technologies that can improve harvesting productivity in areas where conventional systems are limited.

The RFI will assist SAFCOL to advance operational excellence by exploring mechanised and technology-enabled solutions that can improve asset productivity, increase harvesting efficiency, reduce operational bottlenecks, and strengthen the company's ability to meet planned harvesting volumes. It also supports employee safety by reducing exposure to high-risk manual or motor-manual operations in difficult terrain, while promoting safer, more controlled extraction methods.

In addition, the RFI contributes to financial sustainability and business growth by identifying solutions that may reduce dependency on limited specialist contractors, improve cost predictability, support better utilisation of forestry assets, and strengthen SAFCOL's ability to supply customers consistently. By requesting information on local support, maintenance, spares, training, pricing, and total cost of ownership, the RFI will also help inform future procurement decisions and ensure that potential solutions are practical to implement and sustainable over the long term.

The initiative further supports SAFCOL's future-fit and innovation objectives by encouraging the evaluation of modern steep terrain technologies, including excavator-based shovel and grapple yarders, cable yarding systems, winch-assisted harvesting, tethered machines, and skyline systems. These solutions align with SAFCOL's broader focus on technology adoption, research, operational improvement, and responsible forest management, while also creating opportunities for industry benchmarking, supplier development, skills transfer, and improved environmental performance

The phased mechanisation expansion project initiated in 2023 provides SAFCOL with a clear opportunity to improve operational safety, enhance harvesting efficiency, and reduce dependence on higher-risk manual and motor-manual methods. Accordingly, it is important that suitable solutions for difficult steep area terrain are actively investigated to support the continued expansion of mechanisation within SAFCOL's harvesting strategy.

5. SCOPE OF WORK

The exercise should include the following:

5.1. **Market Analysis**

- Identification of established suppliers/OEMs operating within South Africa that can supply the required equipment for steep area extraction for clearfell and thinnings

- Availability of equipment and technologies specifically designed for steep slope operations, for example:
  - excavator based shovel and grapple yarders,
  - cable yarding systems,
  - winch-assisted harvesting,
  - tethered machines and
  - skyline systems ect.
  - any other steep area extraction solution

- Local support capabilities:
  - Location of local support
  - maintenance,
  - spares and
  - training.

5.2. **Industry Benchmarking**

- Benchmarking against industry best practices in similar terrain conditions for:
  - local and, where relevant,
  - international operators with SA presence

- Performance metrics such as:
  - productivity (m^3/hour),
  - safety performance,
  - operating costs, and
  - environmental impact.

- Case studies of successful implementations within:
  - South Africa and
  - elsewhere

5.3. **Commercial & Compliance Review**

- Budgetary pricing and total cost of ownership
- Availability of:
  - leasing,
  - rental, or
  - contract-based solutions

6. SCOPE OF INFORMATION REQUESTED

Respondents are requested to provide information regarding the following:

6.1. **Organisational Information**

- Are you an established appointed suppliers/OEMs operating within South Africa that can supply the required equipment
- Provide Company Profile

6.2. **Experience**

Please provide:

- Number of Projects completed

- Similar projects
- Client references
- Case studies
- Lessons learned

6.3. **Functional and Technical**

- Availability of equipment and technologies specifically designed for steep slope clearfell and thinning operations
  - excavator based shovel and grapple yarders,
  - excavator based shovel loggers
  - cable yarding systems,
  - winch-assisted harvesting,
  - tethered machines and
  - skyline and high lead systems.
  - any other steep area extraction solution

- Local support capabilities:
  - maintenance,
  - spares and
  - training.

6.4. **Performance**

- Benchmarking against industry best practices in similar terrain conditions for
  - local and
  - where relevant, international operators with SA presence.

- Performance metrics such as:
  - productivity (m^3/hour),
  - safety performance,
  - operating costs and
  - environmental impact.

- Case studies of successful implementations within:
  - South Africa and
  - Elsewhere

6.5. **Pricing Information**

Provide indicative information only.

Include:

- Budgetary pricing
- Total cost of ownership (e.g training, maintenance, support etc)
- Availability of
  - leasing,
  - rental, or
  - contract-based solutions

Pricing submitted in response to this RFI is for planning purposes only.

7. QUESTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS

Please respond to the following:

7.1. **Business**

1. Describe your solution.
2. What differentiates your offering?
3. What experience do you have?
4. What implementation methodology do you recommend?
5. What project risks should be considered?

8. RESPONSE FORMAT

Responses should include the Executive summary and the scope of Information Requested.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Respondents must clearly identify and appropriately mark any information contained in their RFI Response that they consider to be confidential, proprietary or commercially sensitive, and provide the basis for such classification where applicable. SAFCOL will handle all submissions and information received in accordance with applicable legislation, including requirements governing access to information, records management, protection of personal information and confidentiality. Submission of information as part of this RFI does not guarantee that such information will remain confidential where disclosure is required by law or by a competent authority.

10. RESPONDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONDITIONS

10.1. Participation in this RFI is entirely voluntary, and submission of an RFI Response does not create any obligation on the part of SAFCOL to procure any goods or services from the Respondent.

10.2. Submission of an RFI Response does not confer, establish or create any preferred supplier, approved supplier, pre-qualification or other preferential status for the Respondent with SAFCOL, nor does it create any expectation or entitlement to participate in any future procurement process.

10.3. SAFCOL reserves the right to contact any Respondent for purposes of seeking clarification, additional information or further details regarding its RFI Response. Any such engagement shall not be construed as an award, appointment or commitment by SAFCOL.

10.4. Information submitted by Respondents may be evaluated and used by SAFCOL for purposes of understanding market capabilities, assessing available solutions and informing the development of future procurement strategies, specifications, terms of reference, tender documentation and/or other procurement processes.

10.5. SAFCOL reserves the right, at its sole discretion and subject to applicable legislation and its policies and procedures, to amend, clarify, suspend or withdraw this RFI, in whole or in part, at any time without incurring any liability to Respondents.

10.6. The submission of an RFI Response shall be at the Respondent's own cost and risk, and SAFCOL shall not be liable for any costs, expenses or losses incurred by a Respondent in preparing or submitting an RFI Response or participating in any engagement arising from this RFI.

11. B-BBEE AND SUPPLIER DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Information Required	Respondent Response	Supporting Documentation (if available)
B-BBEE Status Level	Level ___ / Non-compliant	Valid B-BBEE Certificate, Sworn Affidavit or applicable verification document
Black Ownership	___%	B-BBEE Certificate/Sworn Affidavit and/or CIPC documentation
Black Women Ownership	___%	B-BBEE Certificate/Sworn Affidavit and/or supporting ownership documentation
Black Youth Ownership	___%	B-BBEE Certificate/Sworn Affidavit and/or supporting documentation
Ownership by Persons with Disabilities	___%	B-BBEE Certificate/Sworn Affidavit and/or applicable supporting documentation
Local Content / South African Ownership	___%	Supporting documentation, where available
Other relevant B-BBEE or transformation information	Please specify	Supporting documentation, where available

Note: *The information requested above is for market research, planning and procurement strategy development purposes only. It will be used by SAFCOL to understand the B-BBEE and transformation profile of potential service providers and to inform the development of future procurement requirements and specific goals, where applicable. Submission of this information does not constitute an evaluation, pre-qualification, allocation of preference points or determination of supplier status, and will not confer any preferential or other procurement status on the Respondent.*

ANNEXURE A: RESPONDENT RESPONSE FORM — STEEP AREA CLEARFELL EXTRACTION SOLUTIONS

Respondents must complete this section only for proposed steep area extraction solutions suitable for clearfell operations. Please type responses in the spaces provided, tick the relevant options where applicable, and attach supporting documents. If a section is not applicable, please indicate “Not applicable” and provide a short reason.

A. Respondent and company details	
Registered company name	
Trading name	
Company registration number	
VAT number / Tax number	
CSD supplier number	
Contact person, telephone and email	
Physical address	
Describe your solution.	
What differentiates your offering?	
What experience do you have?	
What implementation methodology do you recommend?	
What project risks should be considered?	

B. Type of respondent - Please tick applicable option(s)
☐ OEM ☐ Dealer / Distributor / Agent ☐ Contractor / Service provider ☐ Manufacturer ☐ Other
Specify which brands you are representing/supporting/distributing
If other, please specify

C. Proposed clearfell steep area extraction solution
Solution name / equipment model
Clearfell steep area extraction solution category
☐ Excavator based shovel yarders ☐ Excavator based grapple shovel yarders ☐ Shovel logger with falling head – purposed built or excavator based ☐ High lead system ☐ Skyline system ☐ Winch-assisted ☐ Tethered extraction ☐ Synchro winch ☐ Other steep area extraction solution – describe other below:
Short description of proposed steep area clearfell extraction solution/s – you can propose more than one steep area clearfell extraction solution

D. Steep area clearfell extraction solution technical capability and performance
Key technical specifications - Include make, model, carrier, minimum excavator operating weight requirement for excavator based extraction solutions, minimum engine power requirement for excavator based extraction solutions, slope capability, extraction distance, extraction method, payload capacity, line pull, reach, amount of winches, break system, operating system, extraction distance, anchoring requirements, attachments, uphill and downhill capability, intermediate support capabilities, Record the various extraction solutions below with all the required machine specifications
Steep area clearfell extraction solution 1
Steep area clearfell extraction solution 2
Steep area clearfell extraction solution 3
Steep area clearfell extraction solution 4
Suitability for clearfell tree specifications - Explain how the solution handles clearfell stem size, payload, slope, extraction distance, landing requirements and production targets.

Will the proposed extraction solution be capable to handle the tree size specifications and conditions supplied in the terms of reference	☐ Yes ☐ No

Expected clearfell productivity - Provide expected productivity rates for various proposed solutions.	
m³/hour:	

Clearfell operating assumptions and limitations State assumptions, site requirements, constraints and limitations.

E. Support, safety and implementation	
Local support capability - Branches, technicians, workshops, spares, field service response times and training support.	
Branches – record all your branches with locations throughout SAFCOLs representation	
Technicians	☐ Yes ☐ No Total number technicians:
Workshops	☐ Yes ☐ No
Field services	☐ Yes ☐ No
Field service response time	
Training support – describe the type of training	☐ Yes ☐ No
Safety features and risk controls - Describe safety features, risk controls and safe operating requirements.	
Environmental considerations - Describe soil impact, erosion prevention, fuel use, road and landing requirements.	
Implementation approach - Provide lead times for manufacturing / delivery time, commissioning period and training requirements and period	
Manufacturing time / Delivery lead time	
Commissioning period - Infield	
Training required – explain what training will be required	☐ Yes ☐ No

Training period - days	

F. Experience, pricing and attachments - Relevant experience and references – List similar projects and case studies with client references and lessons learned	
List similar projects and Case studies - Local	
Did you supply any steep area extraction clearfell solutions local?	☐ Yes ☐ No
How many?	
Describe the type/brand/model of steep area clearfell extraction equipment that was delivered locally, as well as the tree size and lessons learnt	
Client references: Record l**ocal** client names and contact numbers	
List similar projects and Case studies – Outside SA	
Did you supply any steep area extraction clearfell solutions outside SA?	☐ Yes ☐ No
How many?	
Describe the type/brand/model of steep area extraction equipment that was delivered outside SA, as well as the tree size	

Client references: Record client names and contact numbers Outside SA
Indicative pricing
Supply price - ZAR
Delivery cost - ZAR
Training cost - ZAR
Maintenance/support labour rate – R/hr
Travel rate - R/km or travel amount/trip
Commercial options available
☐ Purchase ☐ Lease ☐ Rental ☐ Rent-to-own ☐ Managed service ☐ Contract-based solution ☐ Other
Supporting documents attached
☐ Company profile ☐ Technical brochure / Specifications ☐ Case studies ☐ References ☐ Pricing schedule ☐ Compliance documents ☐ Other

Confidential information included?
☐ No ☐ Yes Identify section(s): _____

G. Declaration by respondent	
I confirm that the information provided in this response form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that SAFCOL may use the information for market intelligence, planning and possible future procurement purposes.	
Name and designation	
Signature	
Date	