



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) FOR DIFFICULT-TERRAIN FORESTRY CLEARFELL OPERATIONS

RFI NUMBER: RFI 002/2026
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 assist SAFCOL in obtaining current market information and developing an understanding of available solutions for safe, productive and commercially viable forestry clear-fell operations in difficult terrain.
- 2.3. SAFCOL seeks information on available technologies, equipment, services, methodologies and supplier capabilities that may support timber harvesting and extraction in difficult terrain clearfell operations. For purposes of this RFI, difficult terrain primarily refers to slopes of 40% and above, with a smaller proportion of harvesting volumes occurring on slopes between 30% and 40% that may present challenges to SAFCOL’s current harvesting systems.
- 2.4. The objective of this RFI is to identify and assess available difficult-terrain solutions and the readiness and capability of the market to provide such solutions for SAFCOL’s difficult terrain clear-fell operations. The information obtained will assist SAFCOL in understanding available technologies, operational approaches, supplier capabilities, commercial models and practical industry solutions, and will inform possible future procurement planning and the development of appropriate requirements and specifications.

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 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 terrain operations.

4.2.1. Current environment

SAFCOL consist of 15 plantation 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 terrain extraction solutions for clearfell.

Table 1: SAFCOL plantation distribution

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

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

Area	Plantation	Average Vol 30-40%	Average 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 displays the following tree average annual information:

- average tree volume for clearfell
- maximum tree volume for clearfell
- average tree diameter for clearfell
- maximum tree diameter for clearfell

This information must be used as a guideline for the selection of suitable difficult terrain extraction solutions for clearfell volumes. No volumes can be guaranteed due to market fluctuations

Table 3: 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

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 operations,
- Motor manual ground based grapple and cable skidder clearfell operations.
- Outsourced difficult terrain operations, consisting of excavator based shovel yarder, sky line and cable yarding operations in clearfell operations.

4.2.3. Current challenges

The following are current challenges:

- Fluctuating markets and timber demand
- Procurement processes
- Increasing difficult terrain volume
- Exchange rate and the cost of equipment

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 terrain clearfell 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.

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.

5. SCOPE OF WORK

The exercise should include the following:

5.1. Market Analysis

- Identification of established difficult terrain service providers operating within South Africa that can supply the required services and or equipment for difficult terrain clearfell

- Availability of equipment and technologies specifically designed for difficult terrain clearfell operations, for example:
 - shovel and grapple yarders,
 - shovel loggers
 - cable yarding systems,
 - winch-assisted harvesting,
 - tethered machines
 - any other difficult terrain extraction solution
 - ground based extraction systems
- Identification of potential emerging difficult terrain service providers

5.2. Industry Benchmarking

- Performance metrics such as:
 - productivity (m³/hour, m³/day, m³ per shift) and
 - operating costs – R/m³

5.3. Commercial & Compliance Review

- Proposed pricing for various difficult terrain clearfell systems available
- Availability of leasing/rental of various difficult terrain clearfell equipment for example:
 - shovel and grapple yarders,
 - shovel loggers
 - cable yarding systems,
 - winch-assisted harvesting,
 - tethered machines and
 - any other difficult terrain extraction solution
 - ground based extraction systems

6. SCOPE OF INFORMATION REQUESTED

Suppliers are requested to provide information regarding the following:

6.1. Service provider organisational information

- Are you an established service provider operating within South Africa that can supply the required service of difficult terrain clearfell operations
- Provide Company Profile

6.2. Difficult terrain experience

Please provide the following information:

- Number of Projects completed in the last 15 years
- Similar projects currently busy with
- Client references for difficult terrain clearfell operations delivered not older than 15 years

6.3. Functional and Technical

- List all the available equipment and technologies specifically designed and available for difficult terrain clearfell operations for example:
 - shovel yarders,
 - shovel grapple yarders
 - shovel loggers
 - cable yarding systems – high lead and sky line systems

- winch-assisted harvesting,
- tethered machines and
- any other difficult terrain extraction solution

6.4. Performance

- Performance metrics such as:
 - productivity (m³/hour, m³ shift or day),
 - safety performance – supply a safety management program

6.5. Pricing Information

Provide indicative information only for

- R/m³ for difficult terrain systems
- Availability of
 - Leasing/renting - R/machine hour for difficult terrain extraction equipment for renting

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?

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: SERVICE PROVIDER RESPONSE FORM — DIFFICULT TERRAIN CLEARFELL SOLUTIONS

Service providers must complete this section. 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	
Indicate your preference of geographical area as described in Table 1: KZN, Amsterdam, Nelspruit, Sudwala, Sabie/Graskop, Limpopo It can be only one area or a combination of areas	
☐ KZN ☐ Amsterdam ☐ Nelspruit ☐ Sudwala ☐ Sabie/Graskop ☐ Limpopo	
Record your reasons for selecting above geographical area/s	
Select your preference between a fix 3 to 5 year contract period or a panel for 5 years ☐ 3 -5 year contract period ☐ 5 year panel	
Describe your solution/s.	
What differentiates your offering from other difficult terrain harvesting systems?	
What implementation methodology do you recommend?	

B. Type of respondent - Please tick applicable option(s)

- ☐ Service provider
- ☐ Dealer / Distributor / Agent
- ☐ Manufacturer
- ☐ New entrant/start up
- ☐ Other – describe below if other

C. Proposed difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution technical specifications, capability and performance

Key technical specifications - Include make, model, carrier, minimum excavator operating weight for excavator based extraction solutions, minimum engine power 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,

Select and record the various extraction solutions below with all the required machine specifications and production output in m³/hour or m³/shift or m³/day

Record any ground base cable or grapple skidder equipment available for difficult terrain extraction

Clearfell difficult terrain extraction solution category

- ☐ Shovel yarders
- ☐ Grapple shovel yarders
- ☐ Shovel logger with falling head
- ☐ High lead system
- ☐ Skyline system
- ☐ Winch-assisted
- ☐ Tethered extraction
- ☐ Synchro winch
- ☐ Ground base cable/grapple skidder systems
- ☐ Other difficult terrain extraction solution – describe other below:

Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 1

Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 2	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 3	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 4	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 5	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 6	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 7	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 8	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 9	
Difficult terrain clearfell extraction solution 10	
Record any ground base cable or grapple skidder equipment available for renting	
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 cost, production and annual volume requirement - Provide expected system rates for various proposed solutions as well as the daily production rates for the above mention average tree volumes as well as the requited annual volume to justify the system selection.			
System number	System harvesting rate – R/m³	Daily production – m³/day	Annual volume requirement – m³/year
System 1			
System 2			
System 3			
System 4			
System 5			
System 6			
System 5			
System 6			
System 7			
System 8			
System 9			
System 10			
Record any ground base cable or grapple skidder equipment available for renting - record the various machines and dry rate per machine hour			
Machine	R/mhr	Machine	R/mhr

Clearfell operating assumptions and limitations State assumptions, site requirements, constraints and limitations.			
D. Experience - Relevant experience and references – List similar projects and case studies with client references and lessons learned			
List similar projects – Local			
Did you supply any difficult terrain extraction clearfell solutions local?			☐ Yes ☐ No
Client references: Record local client names and contact numbers not older than 15 years. Indicate the period of the contract period for each reference			
Reference name – Company name	Contract period	Contact name	
Record, if any lessons learnt from previous projects			
Commercial options available for difficult terrain clearfell equipment available for renting – service providers do have difficult terrain equipment and ground skidding equipment available to rent out			
☐ No ☐ Rental			
Describe equipment what is available for renting and indicate the rate without supplying diesel			

Confidential information included?

☐ No ☐ Yes

Identify section(s):

E. 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