SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (sUAS)
LEVEL III sUAS
REQUEST FOR INFORMATON

DESCRIPTION: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is conducting market research through a Request for Information (RFI) on the current availability and technological capabilities of vendors to provide Level III Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (SUAS) to enhance USBP's SUAS Program.

THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO AWARD A CONTRACT ON THE BASIS OF THIS RFI OR TO OTHERWISE PAY FOR INFORMATION RECEIVED. This RFI is issued solely for information, planning purposes, and market research only; it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP. This research does not commit the Government to contract for any supply or service. CBP will not pay for any costs associated with responding to this research. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any full future full and open competition RFP. If a solicitation is released, it will be posted to the SAM.gov (https://sam.gov) website. All submissions become the property of the Government and will not be returned. The information obtained from industries responses to this RFI may be used in the development of an acquisition strategy and future RFP.

INTRODUCTION: The U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) and Air and Marine Operations (AMO) are sub-components of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) whose mission is to prevent the illegal flow of people and contraband into the U. S. via air, land, and sea. The USBP's primary mission is to conduct law enforcement activities along the U. S. border and between the official U.S. ports of entry. As the nation's single, unified border agency, USBP's mission is vitally important for the protection of the American people and the national economy. USBP represents the first line of defense of America's borders. One of USBP's strategic objectives is to establish and maintain effective control of air, land, and maritime borders with the appropriate mix of infrastructure, technology, and personnel. AMO deploys aircraft and maritime vessels to air and marine branches and units throughout the country to provide rapid air and marine response capabilities. It interdicts unlawful people and cargo approaching U.S. borders, investigates criminal networks and provides domain awareness in the air and maritime environments.

USBP is a sub-component of CBP, whose mission requires the capability to conduct surveillance into the land and maritime domain where threats originate, enter, and/or transit into the United States illegally between ports of entry. Moreover, USBP requires flexible and scalable surveillance (detection and identification) capabilities that enable the deployment of surveillance assets/systems as dictated by risk. There are current gaps in the surveillance capability and capacity of detection and identification that drive a need to provide an increased level of situational awareness of items of interest (IoI) illegally entering the United States. The sUAS PMO intends to identify maturing technologies that can enhance USBP operational capabilities leading to increased situational awareness and execution of mission essential tasks.

PURPOSE: USBP and AMO are interested in learning more about the Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL) and Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of Level III sUAS solutions. This RFI is specifically interested in Level III sUAS to support tactical field operations.

CURRENT STATUS: Drone technology continues to rapidly advance and has the potential to fill gaps in various operational areas across the CBP operational domain, expanding friendly force situational awareness and safety. The sUAS PMO is interested in exploring VTOL solutions that can adapt to employment modality (i.e., varied deployment capabilities from vehicles/vessels/stationary); host multiple sensors and/or communications; demonstrate extended periods aloft; and provide persistent recording of video and still imagery, not only internal to the SUAS, but also distributed to team awareness kit (TAK) devices. Use cases include, but are not limited to, vessel-born intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) operations along a river edge, surveillance tower augmentation, check-point operations, perimeter security, and avenue of approach deterrence.

Request for Information (RFI): CBP requests that vendors detail their product's ability to fulfill the capabilities identified below, in sequence and in a written response. Submission instructions are provided at the end of this RFI.

NOTE: The capabilities listed below do not constitute explicit CBP requirements and may be adjusted prior to any potential future request for quote. Additionally, any quantities and details are notional and do not constitute potential RFP quantities. Therefore, vendors should not consider them as final or representative of CBP's requirements.

1. Operations

a. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) compliance – CBP is interested in systems that meet all current FAA requirements.
b. Minimal personnel requirements – CBP seeks a lightweight solution that can be employed by one, or maximum of two, personnel. This includes transportation, setup, and deployment of the system.
c. Autonomy – CBP is interested in systems that may be left unattended and/or operated autonomously, with minor to no agent input.
d. Artificial intelligence/machine learning – CBP is interested in systems able to consistently execute redundant tasks — such as real-time processing of video and still images — to detect, identify, classify, and track IoIs illegally entering the United States. CBP is interested in systems with onboard autonomy or ground control station (GCS) based autonomy. This may also include real-time (or near real-time) change-detection capabilities during the same or previous flights.
e. Interoperability – Describe any prior experience maximizing interoperability between:
    1) Your drone solution and one or more companies' router(s) for wireless data uploads;
    2) Your drone solution and other SUAS that stream and/or upload video recordings; and
    3) Your drone solution and TAK.

2. System

The system must:

a. IP 54 minimum rating on aircraft, payload and GCS.
b. NDAA compliant Robust C2 with automated frequency hopping to resist jamming. Users must be able to select desired bands. Fully autonomous and fully functional.
c. Hardened GPS/alternative navigation for use in GNSS denied environment both day and night.
    1) Flight up to 400' AGL during hours of darkness in GNSS denied flight. (optimal)
    2) Threshold: Position Navigation and timing resiliency capable of launching operating autonomously navigating and returning home with degraded spoofed jammed or no GNSS during daytime operations.
d. Ground Control Stations connections to aircraft should not be disrupted by USBP Vehicle or handheld radio.
e. US based repair center.
f. All components must fit into an SUV (Chevrolet Tahoe or similar).
g. Operating temperature range: 0° F to 115° F is optimal.
h. Minimum 1-year warranty.
i. Must be capable of TAK integration and provide aircraft location, operator location and CoT bidirectional. Optimal: Fly remotely through the Common Operating Picture Interface.
j. Must be able to stream video to a video management server over RTSP and other standard protocols. Should also include KLV metadata in the video stream.
k. Manufacturer software support for a minimum of 5 years.
l. CBP must be able to review and analyze flight logs from both the aircraft and the GCS.
m. System should have the ability to receive and display ADSB in on the GCS optimal will include ADSB out.
n. The operator shall have the ability to perform off-line operations simulations on the GCS to include failure simulations.
o. User selectable beacons, such as Remote ID, ADS-B out, IFF, etc.

3. Interoperability

a. SUAS is capable of being flown using commonly available universal GCS hardware with core airborne ISR capability.
b. Software: SUAS flight control software/hardware uses common, open sources, communication protocols and interface.
c. Logs: Aircraft and GCS logs will be in a common open-source format.

4. Flight

a. 1.5 – 3 hrs. flight time with 5lb payload.
b. Flight mode optional.
c. Wind tolerances: Minimum 25 mph sustained launch/recovery with gusting to 35 during operations; 45mph optimal.

5. Range

a. 10 miles minimum (mobile GCS); 20+ fixed location.

6. Sensor Payload

a. EO and IR.
    1) EO Resolution – 3840 x 2160 (optimal) with x30 optical zoom (minimum).
    2) Live video feed to GCS 1920 x 1080 (minimum).
b. Recorded video on aircraft 3840 x 2160 (optimal).
c. IR Resolution – 640 x 512 (minimum) with x8 digital zoom (minimum).
d. Autonomous IOI.
e. Detect and track.
f. EO sensor capable of reading a license plate at 200 yards.
g. IR sensor capable of classifying a human at 1-mile (threshold), 2-miles (optimal)
h. Have co-witnessed IR laser pointer with IR visible beam to 2 miles (via night vision device).
i. If the system uses multiple payloads, they must be easily swappable in the field. Mounting and integration allows for quick payload replacement with tools provided with kit.
j. IR laser features include hardware and software safety features to protect the operator.

7. Data Management

a. The operator shall have the capability to define flight duration and define failsafe parameters for an aircraft during loss of communications and /or GPS.
b. Onboard systems maintenance tracking (airframe and component hours.

8. Automation

a. System must be capable of autonomously detecting both humans and vehicles and display these IoI's by placing a box around them.
b. System will track IoI's designated by the operator.

9. User Interface

a. GUI will be simple to use with all effort being made to decrease operator cognitive load.
b. Operators will have the ability to acquire maps in the field.
c. 8-inch display screen at minimum.
d. GCS password protection selected by end user.

10. Batteries

a. Aircraft and hand controller batteries must be charged from a vehicle. Peak draw will be below 1000 watts.
b. Operator will quickly and easily be able to verify proper seating of batteries into the system through audio, visual, or tactile feedback.
c. Batteries will have a visual display depicting their current charge level.

d. GCS will have a removeable battery (optimal) GCS will maintain time and date when battery is removed.
e. Hot-swap batteries are optimal.

11. Deployment

a. System assembly, boot up and launch under threshold – 10 minutes, optimal – 5 minutes.
b. Launched and operated by no more than 2 personnel

NO-COST VENDOR DEMONSTRATIONS

CBP may select one or more vendors, based upon assessment of the information provided, to conduct no-cost vendor demonstration of Level III sUAS. The desire, timing, and location(s) of possible demonstration(s) has not been determined.

RESPONSE: Your firm is requested to submit its response to the following attachment:

Attachment A – Vendor Company Data

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS: Interested vendors should submit responses via email on or before 5:00 PM EST on December 12, 2025 to USBPPMODSUAS@cbp.dhs.gov with the following:

White paper addressing Capabilities 1 – 11 above
Attachment A – Vendor Company Data

NOTE:

- Responses shall not exceed 15 pages plus Attachment A. Excess pages will not be reviewed.
- Responses shall be submitted using Microsoft Word, 12 pt. font, single line spacing.
- Marketing documentation not specific to this RFI will be discarded without review.
- CBP will maintain vendor confidentiality with all documentation.
- Questions for the Government: Questions for the Government regarding this RFI may submitted prior to 5:00 PM EST on November 21, 2025 at USBPPMODSUAS@cbp.dhs.gov. The Government will respond to applicable questions on or before 5:00 PM EST on December 2, 2025. The Government will not respond to media or unrelated inquiries.