



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Request for Information for the Uncrewed
Aircraft Systems (UAS) Services Supplier
(USS) Support Initiatives

RFI Closing Time:

2:00pm local time in the ACT on
Wednesday, 21 August 2024

Airservices Australia
ABN 59 698 720 886
(Airservices)



Request for Information

Closing Time

Time: 2:00pm local time in the ACT

Date: Wednesday, 21 August 2024

Airservices Contact

Name of Contact: Elliot Mendick, Senior Strategic Sourcing Specialist

Email: elliott.mendick@airservicesaustralia.com

This Request for Information (**RFI**) has been prepared and released by Airservices Australia (**Airservices**) for information gathering of market capabilities and insight to inform how Airservices may develop support initiatives for Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (**UAS**) Service Suppliers (**USS**) operating in the open market in Australia.

This document provides background information and outlines preliminary thoughts and ideas for discussion with interested parties.

Airservices is not committed contractually in any way to any party that is interested in, or that responds to, this RFI. Nor is Airservices liable for any costs of compensation or any expenses incurred by parties in submitting a response to this RFI.

Following analysis of the information received from the market Airservices may seek internal approval to proceed with support initiatives for USSs in Australia.

Airservices may elect, at its sole and absolute discretion, whether to proceed with a separate support initiatives process after having completed this market research activity (i.e. the RFI process), and if it does, the type, nature and scope of any process it will follow will be shared with parties invited to participate.



Table of Contents

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 1

1 Background 4

2 Introduction 5

3 UAS Services Supplier Requirements 6

4 RFI Response Information 8

5 General 8

6 Response preparation 9

7 Response lodgement 10

8 Provision of Information by Airservices 10

9 Matters concerning responses 11

10 Review of information provided 12

11 Miscellaneous 13

12 Timelines 13

13 Appendix A – RFI Response Document 14

USS Support Initiatives

Request for Information

1 Background

- 1.1 As Australia's civil Air Navigation Service Provider (**ANSP**), Airservices is responsible for providing safe, efficient, secure and environmentally responsible services for all Australian administered civil airspace, including equitable access to that airspace.
- 1.2 The *Air Services Act 1995* requires Airservices to provide the air traffic service within Australian administered airspace. The Air Services Regulations 2019 includes that Airservices provide advice and information that is necessary for the safe and efficient conduct of flights as part of that air traffic service. The Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (**CASR**) Part 172 Manual of Standards then places the provision of that information on the Air Navigation Service Provider, that is Airservices Australia.
- 1.3 Airservices is legally obligated to ensure that current airspace users required to, or choosing to, use our services are protected in airspace that may be shared by new airspace users, including Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (**UAS**) and Advanced Air Mobility (**AAM**) operators. With the ever-increasing use of airspace, particularly low-level airspace, we are also legally obligated to ensure that new airspace users are safely integrated into Australia's overall air traffic management system.
- 1.4 This integration requires an effective UAS Traffic Management (**UTM**) solution. Globally, a core element of most UTM models is a Flight Information Management System (**FIMS**).
- 1.5 Airservices' delivery of Australia's FIMS and its role in the UTM ecosystem is detailed in the former Australian Government's National Emerging Aviation Technologies (**NEAT**) Policy Paper released in May 2021. The paper and other background information is available at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/aviation/emerging-aviation-technologies>. FIMS is also referenced in the Aviation Green Paper, available at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/publications/aviation-green-paper-towards-2050>
- 1.6 FIMS will provide back-end data exchange and decision-making capabilities to support many of the services in the UTM ecosystem. To access UTM services and data, end-users and UAS operators will need to utilise a UAS Service Supplier (**USS**). USS will provide the front-end solution for UTM services that involve FIMS, as well as potentially other UTM services which do not require FIMS capabilities to operate.
- 1.7 Airservices is in the early stages of development of the FIMS with our strategic partner Frequentis Australasia. As such, much of the detailed technical specifications for services, capabilities and interfaces remain in development at the current time. However, it is envisaged that a USS will provide UAS operators with access to digital services to plan for UAS flights, submit flight plans, provide position information, receive relevant information about nearby UAS operations, request access to controlled airspace, and receive alerts about potential conflicts and communications to enhance safety.
- 1.8 There will be an overarching set of minimum requirements for all operational USSs (e.g. cyber and data security requirements, safety assurance, minimum standards,



etc.) that will require government oversight. The extent of these requirements is expected to vary depending on the specific services a USS intends to deliver. These requirements are also subject to change as the UTM ecosystem evolves and matures, and safety regulations develop.

- 1.9 A USS will not be limited in the services they offer – USS can offer market-driven services based on user needs, in addition to services that are part of the UTM ecosystem.
- 1.10 A USS will not be required to provide all available UTM ecosystem services and may provide only a subset of services. However, support initiatives recipients will be expected to meet the service requirements listed in Section 3.2 below.
- 1.11 The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (**CASA**) has the function of conducting safety regulation in accordance with the Civil Aviation Act 1980. As safety critical UTM services are developed, CASA will provide oversight of elements of the UTM ecosystem including services delivered by USS.

2 Introduction

2.1 Context

- (a) Airservices is engaging industry via this RFI for the purpose of further understanding the current market appetite for the development of USS capability and solutions. We are seeking insights for industry participation in the development and operationalisation of USSs in Australia, and the kinds of initiatives Airservices should consider that support USS in Australia.
- (b) Participation in Airservices support initiatives is **anticipated to be open for applications in September**, to run from late 2024 to December 2025. In this time, selected participants will be expected to collaborate across a broad range of stakeholders, including but not limited to, Airservices, CASA, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (**the Department**), and other industry bodies to ensure successful implementation of their USS solution in line with the launch of FIMS.
- (c) It is expected that through this collaboration support initiatives recipients will assist in the development of USS requirements, development and testing procedures and related documentation that will support integration of other USS with FIMS and the broader UTM ecosystem.
- (d) Additional USS may be invited to integrate with FIMS prior to launch, and it is expected that further USS will continue to join the UTM ecosystem after the launch of FIMS to provide a robust market of USS offerings to the sector.

2.2 Objectives

- (a) The objective of this RFI is to gather information from respondents to enable Airservices to better understand market capability, the range of options available, to further develop requirements and to identify parties who have the referenceable expertise, capacity, and experience to satisfy Airservices requirements below.
- (b) Airservices wishes to gain an understanding of current options available in the marketplace in sufficient detail to inform the development of its requirements for its support initiatives.



- (c) Airservices is seeking this information from respondents, either singular or partnered, who can provide a USS capability.
- (d) Airservices is seeking responses from industry that demonstrate contemporary thinking and solutions, harness innovation, collaboration, and flexibility, and are responsive to meet our current and emerging airspace management requirements.
- (e) Airservices intends to use the information obtained through this RFI process to develop its strategy for further market engagement and to identify any contribution(s) to be made by Airservices for this support initiative.
- (f) The USS solution would support operationalisation of FIMS capabilities. The list of USS services required to deliver this outcome includes, but is not limited to, those outlined in section 3.2 (a) below.
- (g) The deadline for USS operational go-live must align with, and be no later than, the FIMS go-live date in November 2025. A high-level roadmap is described in section 3.3 below.

3 UAS Services Supplier Requirements

3.1 Overview

- (a) The USS shall support UTM ecosystem stakeholders by providing end-users and UAS operators with services including a front-end interface for UTM services that rely on the Airservices-developed FIMS. As such, each USS will be required to integrate with the FIMS to assist in its role in the UTM ecosystem.
- (b) A functional USS will have the capability to perform a set of service requirements for the UAS operator as outlined in section 3.2 and will be fully compliant with any contractual, agreement, or regulatory requirements.
- (c) CASA will also be working collaboratively with other Civil Aviation Authorities (**CAAs**), Airservices, and potential aspiring USSs to aid in development of a regulatory assurance pathway.
- (d) It is important to note that the USS may have multiple integration points within the UTM ecosystem (e.g. with other supplementary data service providers).
- (e) Future USS capability development will support evolving airspace management capabilities that will progress towards an integrated airspace construct.

3.2 High Level Service Requirements:

- (a) An overview of the currently identified USS service requirements for potential support initiatives recipients to support services in 2025 is as follows:
 - (i) **Flight planning** – this is a USS service that, prior to flight, arranges and optimises intended operational volumes, routes and trajectories for safety, dynamic airspace management, airspace restrictions, and mission needs.
 - (ii) **Airspace authorisations within 3 nautical miles (3NM) of civil controlled aerodromes** – airspace authorisations currently hosted within CASA’s RPAS Platform will begin to be available in FIMS from the end of 2025. USSs will support an expanded airspace authorisation capability by enabling access to this service from FIMS.



- (iii) **Constraint management: safety rules** – this is a messaging service where USSs will promulgate safety rules and operational/airspace restrictions to UAS operators.
 - (iv) **Initial conformance monitoring** – USS and FIMS will conduct activities to assess and understand monitoring and altering of non-conformance within the UTM ecosystem to assist UAS operators to adhere to their flight plans and build a compliance picture to support increased airspace access.
- (b) The list provided above is not exhaustive and will be subject to change or addition as development in the UTM ecosystem matures. Note: it is not expected that every USS participating in the UTM ecosystem will be required to provide all UTM ecosystem services, however, support initiatives recipients will be expected to meet all of the service requirements, which will be confirmed as part of the future market engagement process.
- (c) USS requirements are expected to be refined as part of the development process, involving stakeholders from CASA, the Department, Airservices, and the USS developer. Effective communication and multi-stakeholder collaboration during all phases of the development roadmap (section 3.3) will be a critical component to achieving a successful USS outcome.

3.3 Development Roadmap

Date	Activity
October 2024	Airservices anticipates solution development to commence following the selection of support initiatives recipients. FIMS/USS onboarding details will be available to industry.
Early 2025	Airservices will facilitate close collaboration between the support initiatives recipients, CASA, and the FIMS partner (Frequentis Australasia) to refine the USS requirements and develop testing and integration requirements and procedures.
March 2025	The FIMS environment will be open for first onboarding USS testing and integration.
March 2025 to October 2025	Systems development and CASA regulatory oversight activities such as testing, and assurance will take place during this period.
November 2025	Successful testing, integration, and regulatory assurance are to be completed, with the USS solution achieving operational acceptance for go-live.

3.4 Pricing

- (a) Airservices expects USSs to be commercially sustainable and able to charge users for services. There is an ongoing body of work related to the commercial model which will involve fundamental inputs from a USS perspective. Note: Airservices has no intention of commercialising or owning any USS solutions developed as part of the support initiatives.

4 RFI Response Information

4.1 Use of AusTender

- (a) AusTender is the Australian Government's procurement information system. Access to and use of AusTender is subject to terms and conditions. In participating in this process, Respondents must comply with those terms and conditions and any applicable instructions, processes, procedures and recommendations as advised on AusTender at:
<https://www.tenders.gov.au/?event=public.termsOfUse>.
- (b) All queries and requests for technical or operational support relating to AusTender must be directed to:

AusTender Help Desk
Telephone: 1300 651 698
International: +61 2 6215 1558
Email: tenders@finance.gov.au
- (c) The AusTender Help Desk is available between 9am and 5pm ACT local time, Monday to Friday (excluding ACT and national public holidays).

4.2 Responsibility of Respondents

- (a) Respondents who have registered and downloaded the RFI documentation via AusTender will be notified by AusTender via email of the issue of any addenda, clarifications or other notices in respect of the RFI documentation. It is in the interests of Respondents to ensure they have correctly recorded their contact details prior to downloading RFI documentation.
- (b) Respondents are required to login to AusTender and collect addenda, clarifications and other notices as notified.
- (c) If a Respondent has obtained RFI documentation other than from AusTender, they will need to visit AusTender, register as a user and download the RFI documentation for this RFI.

5 General

5.1 Nature of this RFI process

- (a) Respondents are invited to submit a response to the RFI to highlight their capabilities and relevant experience to inform any potential future activities.
- (b) There is no obligation to respond to this RFI and any information provided by Respondents is on a voluntary basis in accordance with the terms of this RFI.
- (c) Airservices may or may not use the RFI responses, the findings of the RFI and any subsequent information gathered for planning purposes including but not limited to creation of support initiatives documentation.
- (d) Where information is provided in response to the RFI which is commercial in confidence information, respondents are required to clearly identify this information in its response.

5.2 Interpretation of this RFI

- (a) In this RFI, unless the contrary intention appears:
 - (i) the singular includes the plural and vice-versa;



- (ii) the word 'includes' in any form is not a word of limitation; and
- (iii) 'Respondent' means a respondent or potential respondent to this RFI.

5.3 RFI process

- (a) Airservices may add to, vary, modify or amend this RFI or the RFI process at any time. If Airservices does so prior to the closing time specified on the cover page of this RFI, Airservices will issue a formal addendum to the RFI via AusTender.
- (b) If Airservices adds to, varies, modifies or amends this RFI after responses have been submitted, it may then seek amended responses.
- (c) Airservices may suspend, defer or terminate this RFI process at any time. Airservices will notify the Respondents of any decision to this effect.

6 Response preparation

6.1 Invitation to participate and nature of Invitation

- (a) Airservices invites organisations to respond in accordance with the terms of this RFI, to assist in Airservices' understanding of:
 - (i) possible solutions to meet the requirements set out in this document; and
 - (ii) issues that are relevant to the efficient and effective provision of solutions.
- (b) Information provided by a Respondent, including in any RFI response document, will be used by Airservices for the purposes described in this RFI and accordingly, information provided and participation in the RFI process will not be competitively evaluated.
- (c) This RFI is only a broad statement of the type of requirements Airservices has identified. Should this market research activity identify that appropriate solutions are available, a preliminary business case may be prepared. Airservices may then decide to proceed with a formal support initiatives process.

6.2 Response preparation

- (a) Respondents are requested to ensure that the information provided is accurate, complete and current.
- (b) In responding to this RFI the Respondent acknowledges that:
 - (i) Airservices may approach other suppliers (including suppliers that have not responded to this RFI) to provide information relevant to the requirement, including information the same or similar to that requested by this RFI;
 - (ii) Airservices may conduct other industry engagement activities and future processes in relation to the requirement, which the Respondent may or may not be invited to participate in; and
 - (iii) providing a response to this RFI does not of itself entitle, qualify or disqualify the Respondent to be invited to participate in any future industry engagement activity or future process.
- (c) Any response, including all attachments and supporting documentation, should be written in English.
- (d) All measurements should be expressed in Australian legal units of measurement unless otherwise specified by Airservices.



6.3 Responsibility for Respondent Costs

- (a) The Respondent's participation in the RFI process is at the Respondent's own cost.
- (b) Airservices will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the Respondent in its participation in the RFI process.

6.4 Airservices Contact

- (a) The point of contact for matters relating to this RFI process is Elliot Mendick whose details are:

Name: Elliot Mendick

Email: elliot.mendick@airservicesaustralia.com

7 Response lodgement

7.1 Lodgement of responses

- (a) Respondents are to lodge their responses by emailing them to the elliot.mendick@airservicesaustralia.com, using the response template in Appendix A by 2:00pm AEST on 21 August 2024.
- (b) Respondents are to include any evidence or additional comments in the response document to confirm compliance with requirements.
- (c) Responses lodged after the closing time specified may or may not be considered by Airservices.

7.2 Clarification Questions

- (a) Respondents can submit questions and clarifications by sending an email to elliot.mendick@airservicesaustralia.com with the subject 'USS Support Initiatives RFI Clarification Questions'. Questions can be submitted up to 5:00pm AEST on 14 August 2024. Airservices may respond to clarification questions but does not commit to do so.

8 Provision of Information by Airservices

- (a) All information contained in this RFI, or provided by Airservices during the RFI process, is provided on the following conditions:
 - (i) it is intended to assist Respondents to engage in the RFI process and should only be used by the Respondent for the purpose of participating in the RFI process;
 - (ii) although believed to be accurate at the date of release to the Respondent, the information may change; and
 - (iii) Airservices will not be liable for any loss arising from any information or representation provided, or not provided, by Airservices during the RFI process.
- (b) Airservices may circulate a Respondent's questions and Airservices' response to those questions to all other Respondents without disclosing the source of the questions or revealing any confidential information of a Respondent.
- (c) Respondents should identify in their question what, if any, information in the question the Respondent considers is confidential information.

9 Matters concerning responses

9.1 Airservices treatment of Respondent Confidential Information

- (a)** The Respondents should note that Airservices may need to use and disclose information contained in any RFI response document or provided by it as part of this RFI process for the purposes described in this RFI.
- (b)** Subject to paragraph 9.1(c), paragraph 9.1(d) and the use and disclosure of any such information for the purpose of informing and conducting any support initiatives processes after the RFI process, Airservices undertakes to keep confidential all 'Respondent Confidential Information' (as defined in paragraph 9.1(c)):
 - (i)** contained in any RFI response document provided to Airservices by a Respondent prior to completion of the RFI process; and
 - (ii)** provided by a Respondent during an Information Sharing Seminar.
- (c)** The Respondent should clearly identify information contained in any RFI response document, or provided by it as part of this RFI process (including during an Information Sharing Seminar), that the Respondent considers is 'respondent confidential information'.
- (d)** The obligation of confidentiality in paragraph 9.1(b) does not apply if the confidential information:
 - (i)** is disclosed by Airservices to its advisers, officers, employees or contractors to conduct the RFI process, or for the purposes described in this document;
 - (ii)** is disclosed to Airservices internal management personnel, to enable effective management or auditing of the RFI process;
 - (iii)** is disclosed by Airservices to the responsible Minister;
 - (iv)** is disclosed by Airservices in response to a request by a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia;
 - (v)** is disclosed by Airservices within a Commonwealth, state or territory agency or department;
 - (vi)** is disclosed as agreed with the Respondent;
 - (vii)** is authorised or required by law to be disclosed; or
 - (viii)** is in the public domain otherwise than due to a breach of the relevant obligations of confidentiality.

9.2 Treatment of Airservices Confidential Information

- (a)** Respondents are to:
 - (i)** treat any information provided to Respondents by or on behalf of Airservices in connection with the RFI process (excluding this RFI document) as confidential information belonging to Airservices; and
 - (ii)** accordingly, not disclose or use that information except as strictly required for the purpose of developing a response in accordance with the RFI.



9.3 Ownership and Airservices use of documentation and information

- (a) Any RFI Response Document provided to Airservices, and any information provided to Airservices as part of this RFI process, becomes the property of Airservices.
- (b) The Respondent provides information including the RFI response documents to Airservices on the basis that Airservices may use, retain and copy the information for purposes described in this document, including for support initiatives planning purposes.
- (c) Subject to paragraph 9.1, Airservices may disclose all or part of a RFI response document or information it receives in the course of the RFI process, for the purposes described in paragraph 9.3(b).
- (d) Notwithstanding this paragraph 9.3, ownership of intellectual property in the information contained in the RFI response document and any other material provided by a Respondent remains unchanged.
- (e) Intellectual Property should be treated with the strictest confidence. A participant should clearly indicate if any part of its response constitutes intellectual property, in the sense of property recognised and protected by law. Any claim by a participant that information constitutes intellectual property will be assessed and a participant may be asked to establish its propriety interest before the claim is accepted.

10 Review of information provided

10.1 Review of RFI response documents and other information provided

- (a) RFI response documents and other information provided in response to this RFI will not be competitively evaluated. Consistent with the terms of this RFI, responses will be reviewed and considered by the Commonwealth as an information source, for the purposes described in this RFI.
- (b) In reviewing the RFI response documents and other information provided, Airservices will be considering the responses to questions in Appendix A.
- (c) Any participation in the RFI process or any reliance on any document or information released as part of the RFI process by any person (or any independent consultant or professional adviser retained by that person to review the same) or organisation shall be entirely at the person's or organisation's own risk.
- (d) Participants are discouraged from providing unsolicited offers or any marketing material on the capabilities of their organisation. This information will not be considered.

10.2 Follow-up

- (a) Airservices may follow-up Respondents for the purposes of further discussions and or clarifications at any stage during the RFI process.

11 Miscellaneous

11.1 No contract or undertaking

- (a) This RFI is an invitation for Respondents to provide information to enable Airservices a greater understanding of the current market appetite for the development of USS capability and solutions.
- (b) No binding contract (including a process contract) or other understanding (including any form of contractual, restitution rights, or rights based upon similar legal or equitable grounds) will exist between Airservices and a Respondent in relation to the information provided during the RFI process.

11.2 False or misleading statements

- (a) Respondents must not make false or misleading statements and should note that Division 137.1 of the Criminal Code, a Schedule to the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth), makes it an offence to knowingly provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth entity.

11.3 Public Statements

- (a) The Respondent must not make any public statements or provide any information to the media or any other third party in relation to the RFI process without the prior written approval of Airservices.

12 Timelines

Date	Objective
29 July 2024	RFI released via AusTender
14 August 2024	RFI questions close
21 August 2024	RFI closed



13 Appendix A – RFI Response Document

Instructions:

Respondents are required to respond to the following questions.

Respondents may choose to provide answers to the following questions in the tables provided or in a separate document.

Supporting material may also be provided in relevant format.

Company and contact details

Registered Business Name:

ABN:

Primary Contact Name:

Address:

Contact Phone:

Email:

1. Provide a brief company overview detailing core competencies and where these are provided, along with any capabilities and/or partnerships deemed to be of significance in providing the services requested in this RFI, with details of recent arrangements with other customers with similar requirements (if available).

2. Describe your organisation’s capability, capacity, approach, and methodology to:

- develop a software solution in accordance with the guidelines contained within the Australian government’s Information Security Manual;
- ongoing maintenance and support including software development; and
- host the solution on an Australian based network with secure Australian data storage.

3. Please describe how you will deliver the following:

- management of confidential information safely and securely in a time critical operational environment;
- adherence to acceptance requirements; and
- adherence to the delivery timeline detailed in 3.3 of this RFI.



4. Please outline the methods and tools your organisation employs to ensure clear and effective communication across a diverse range of stakeholders, providing examples of successful collaborations.

5. Please detail your approach to interpreting evolving technical/functional requirements and how they would be implemented in the integration of your USS into a fully functioning FIMS, when operational.

6. Please outline the key challenges you foresee in entering the USS market in Australia. What types of support initiatives would most effectively help organisations address these challenges (examples might include grants, access to subject matter experts, regulatory support, etc).

Other comments or detailed plans you want to share

Please include any details that you consider would assist Airservices in better understanding the current market capability, interest, and future opportunities etc.