

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department acting through Border Force**

**Request for information**

**Trial use of**

**Drones/Unmanned Aerial Vehicles**

August 2023

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**Definitions:**

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| **Expression or Acronym** | **Definition** |
| BF | Border Force |
| UAV | Unmanned Aerial Vehicle |
| RFI | Request for Information |

**Company Information:**

Border Force is a professional law enforcement command within the Home Office. It is responsible for securing the UK border and promoting national prosperity by facilitating the legitimate movement of individuals and goods, whilst preventing those that would cause harm from entering the UK. This is achieved through the immigration and customs checks carried out by our staff at ports.

Border Force is responsible for:

* Checking the immigration status of people arriving in and departing the UK;
* Searching baggage, vehicles and cargo for illicit goods or illegal immigrants;
* Patrolling the UK coastline and searching vessels;
* Gathering intelligence.
* Alerting the police and security services to people of interest.

**Background:**

Border Force (BF) secures the border and promotes national prosperity by facilitating the legitimate movement of individuals and goods, whilst preventing those that would cause harm from entering the UK. Border Force achieves this by searching goods and screening people on entry to the UK. To support Border Force and our prosecuting partners within NCA, HMRC, Immigration Enforcement and Policing, BF would like to provide high quality visual evidence to support prosecution of offences.

Border Force is planning to trial Drones/UAVs in non-operational training environments with confined spaces and ‘live’ operational environments aboard vessels, to ascertain the viability of their deployment to search confined spaces for Person(s) and/or Goods. Both of the trial types will be conducted in Liverpool over a one to two day period.

These environments will include a Border Force owned specialist training facility and on-board vessels or containers. Border Force is seeking to gain information on Drones/UAVs and would appreciate supplier support for trials via provision of equipment, training, and data management solutions.

Typically, officers are deployed to search these areas, this can be hugely time consuming and there are risks to Health and Safety involved.

**Project goal:**

The intention of issuing this document is to facilitate constructive and meaningful dialogue which will be beneficial to all involved and enable Border Force to get a better understanding of the capabilities of the marketplace relating to the subject area prior to any potential procurement exercise.

This Trial will establish if there is sufficient evidence that Drones/UAVs will provide operational benefit by assessing the following areas:

* Improvement in ability to search confined areas on vessels or containers
* Positive impact on the level of Health and Safety Concerns
* Cost efficiency

Evaluation will be based on the below criteria and will be assessed on both Mandatory and Non-Mandatory requirements.

Border Force are looking to conduct trials with a maximum of 5 bidders, this may increase depending on successful bids identified.

Bidders who meet mandatory specifications will then be considered against non-mandatory specifications with the highest scoring being invited to display equipment in a trial/test environment.

Trial dates and details will be confirmed once successful bidders identified. Due to space restrictions, maximum of 2 persons from successful bidders present on trial day is preferred.

Failure to meet any “**Must have”** requirements will result in disqualification from consideration.

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| **Project description, goals, and background** |
| **Statement of need:**  Border Force are seeking an opportunity to trial Drones/UAVs against ability to manoeuvre and effectively examine confined spaces of around 300mm in diameter on vessels.  For the purposes of this trial, Border Force are seeking to understand if there are Drones/UAVs available for costs of up to £5000.  The confined spaces are dark and dusty and extremely difficult to navigate.  A training environment is available but there is desire to test in operational environments too.  This trial is to ascertain if Drones/UAVs will add benefit to operational deployments. A trial will inform decision makers within the business to consider future procurements of drones on a larger scale.  Suppliers **MUST** provide trained pilots that can demonstrate UAV/Drones capability both in a non-operational and operational environment.  Prior to any formal tendering or procurement process, suppliers are asked to consider and offer any sample devices / attachment solutions they propose could support and accommodate business needs outlined below.  This RFI is solely for information and planning purposes but may be used to define scope and inform vendor selection should the project move forward to an RFP.  Any RFI returned in response to this exercise does not constitute a contractual agreement between the respondent and Border Force. Respondents should also note that Border Force will not be responsible for any costs and expenses that may be incurred in responding to this RFI.  Border Force are not obligated to award a contract to any suppliers involved in this trial.  Border force will review the bidders’ terms & conditions with a view to accept following advice from the legal team.   1. **Functional Requirements**   **Mandatory:**   * 1. The Drone/UAV **must** have battery capable of working in extremely cold (minus 10) or warm environments (40°)   2. The Drone/UAV **must** have a maximum diameter of 300mm   3. The Drone/UAV **must** have hand-held unit controller with screen displaying colour images   4. The Drone/UAV **must** have lighting sufficient to illuminate up to minimum of 4 meters   5. The Drone/UAV **must** have Field of View of minimum 150°   6. The Drone/UAV **must** have capability to capture and store still images   7. The Drone/UAV **must** have capability to work in environment where dust or gases are present  1. **Functional Requirements**   **Non – Mandatory:**   * 1. The Drone/UAV **Should** have minimum Flight Time of 10 minutes  |  | | --- | | 2.1 – Flight time under 10 mins will score 0  ≥ to 10 mins but <15 mins will score 50  ≥ to 15 mins but < 20 mins will score 70  ≥ 20 mins will score 100 |  * 1. The Drone/UAV **Should** have Rotor Protection   2. The Drone/UAV **Should** have Auto Recall   3. The Drone/UAV **Should** have a camera with minimum capability of Full HD  |  | | --- | | * 1. <Full HD definition will score 0   ≥ to Full HD but < 4k definition will score 50  ≥ 4k definition will score 100 |  * 1. The Drone/UAV **Should** have a Lithium battery   2. The Drone/UAV **Should** be able to rotate camera to vertical axis   3. The Drone/UAV **Should** have capability to stabilise when in flight  1. **Out of Scope**   3.1 The Drone/UAV does not need Bluetooth function |

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| **Milestone** | **Date(s)and time(s)** |
| Issue of RFI | 05/09/2023 |
| Last date for Clarification questions | 15/09/2023 |
| Response to Clarification questions | 22/09/2023 |
| Close of Submission of RFI | 29/09/2023 |
| Evaluation of RFI | 02/10/2023 |
| Notification of result of evaluation | 06/10/2023 |

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| **Company information** |
| **RFI issued by: Border Force**  **RFI title:** C25686 - RFI - UAVs |

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| **Submission instructions** |
| Responses must be submitted in the RFP360 template. Case studies and additional documentation should be embedded in the proposal with the corresponding question. |

Requested information

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| **Vendor requirements** |
| **Functionality requirements:**  *<Include any deal-breaker solution factors. For example, state any required functionality, features, integrations, or specifications.>*  **Minimum vendor requirements:**  *<State any general vendor requirements i.e., sustainability, diversity, location, subcontracting and so on.>* |

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| **Experience** | | |
| Have you delivered your solution previously to UK Law Enforcement body? | |  |
| Previous work samples | *<Leave blank for vendor to provide links to examples of previous work.>* | |

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| **General company information** | |
| Company name and office address | *<Leave blank for vendor to provide company info.>* |
| Describe company background | *<Leave blank for vendor to provide company history and background.>* |