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OFME AAM Challenge: MSP FAQ

Funding/ Match

- **Is the funding amount listed per award, or is it the total available?** *The total funding available across all five state agency opportunities is $2 million. Applicants are encouraged to request between $300,000 and $400,000 per proposal, with any additional project costs covered through matching funds or other sources. Each agency is expected to award one grant, resulting in up to five awards overall.*
- **Would current SBIR funding count as matching funds?** *Yes, SBIR and other in-kind contributions qualify.*
- **What is the match requirement?** *Any level of match (percentage or dollar amount) is acceptable. OFME expects to see in-kind or financial matching on each application. The goal of the sliding-scale match requirement is to expand access to the program and allow innovators to develop partnerships that will best serve their application and demonstrate a strong commitment to the program.*
- **What is the recommended funding range for applications, given the total budget across all five opportunities?** *The total available funding across all five opportunities is $2 million. While project scopes may vary, applicants are encouraged to aim for a funding request in the range of $300,000 to $400,000. Any additional costs beyond that should be covered through matching funds or other sources.*
- **How far is the initial pilot program funding expected to carry the overall drone detection deployment—just through initial site validation, or into long-term operations and control?** *The initial funding is focused on getting the system up and running and validating its effectiveness at a few key sites. Long-term operations and control are not covered under this phase and are expected to be supported by the State of Michigan in future stages. Once the pilot proves successful, the plan is to expand and scale the system gradually.*
- **Is this project funded as a single upfront payment at award, milestone-based reimbursements, or recurring managed-service fees?** *Milestone-based reimbursement over the life of the project. Reimbursement is based on completion of each milestone.*
- **Can in-kind contributions (e.g., installation labor, training, hardware management and vendor price discount, if applicable) be counted toward the required matching funds?** *Yes, refer to the budget template. Cost share contribution is calculated using the actual costs of any good or service provided, not discounted market or selling price.*
- **Funding allocation ($300,000–$400,000): Is this amount allocated specifically to the proposed vendor scope (hardware, software, managed service, installation), and are there any exclusions MSP expects vendors to treat as out-of-scope?** *Refer to the budget template.*
- **Where can I get more information about W-9 requirements and ask follow-up questions related to the challenge?** *For questions regarding W-9 form requirements, contact* OFMEMobilityChallenges@nextenergy.org.

General

- **How long does the MSP deployment last?** *The deployment is expected to last 6-12 months, and will be determined during the contracting period. Current deployments of MSP mobile systems last between one day to three months.*
- **Where can the webinar materials be accessed?** *The meeting materials will be provided in the FAQ section of the OFME AAM Challenges website.*
- **If a company is selected by one of the state agencies, does that prevent them from applying to the others?** *Yes. Selection by one agency does not prevent applying to others. Each agency reviews proposals independently.*
- **Are universities eligible to apply for funding independently or with an industry partner?** *Yes, any university is eligible to apply—either independently or in partnership with industry. The key is ensuring the application fully addresses all required criteria, such as prior deployments and a clear path to scalability across the state. We strongly encourage applicants to form strategic partnerships, as collaboration is often essential for a successful proposal. The six-week application window is designed to give teams time to build those partnerships before submitting.*
- **Is existing technology that is not a part of the current Michigan supply chain eligible within this program?** *Yes, if the proposal includes plans to expand operations or manufacturing in Michigan.*
- **Is there an advantage to being a Michigan-based company when participating in this initiative?** *No geographic preference, but long-term growth plans in Michigan are considered. OFME will consider long-term growth plans within the state, including how companies intend to build partnerships, support commercialization, and potentially scale manufacturing operations in Michigan.*
- **Will MSP permit a single submission to include two scopes—(a) a large-scale, multi-site option and (b) a smaller-scale pilot—so reviewers can compare scalability and cost deltas?** *MSP prefers a single proposal. If selected, scope can be refined to fit within the use cases.*

Scope

- **The original scope was C-UAS focused, but now the use cases are more AAM focused. Can you identify the important objectives for each of the three locations? What drone or detection capabilities are you looking to enable (e.g., medical delivery, drone operations support, drone detection)?** *The scope emphasizes airspace awareness and drone detection to support safe and efficient operations for approved flights. Key objectives include enabling reliable detection and monitoring of unmanned aircraft systems, ensuring situational awareness, and prioritizing a secure airspace environment for authorized activities across all three locations.*
- **Under Executive Directive 2025-4, if the selected partner proposes only Use-Case A (Lansing), will MSP consider the Lansing pilot as the state's reference architecture for**

future AAM and statewide drone-detection expansion? *That will depend on the outcomes of the pilot. MSP will build on successes and lessons learned.*

- **Will the Lansing pilot operate independently, or will it be integrated with other AAM sites and use cases (e.g., Camp Grayling, Jackson corrections) to enable data sharing and standardized success metrics?** *Coordination across locations is expected to ensure consistent metrics and improved situational awareness. This will depend on how many challenge winners there are. Each project will have its own plan and contract; any coordination will be through MSP. The intention of the pilot is primarily to focus on the partnership with MSP, but generally the state likes to share success stories across agencies.*
- **What types of challenges are expected to be addressed? Are they primarily focused on public safety, or do they include broader interagency use cases?** *The challenges addressed span beyond public safety to include broader interagency needs:*
    - *Use Case A: Government Operations & Urban Mobility (Lansing Capitol Complex)*
    - *Use Case B: Military & Emergency Preparedness (Camp Grayling)*
    - *Use Case C: Secure Logistics & Health Services (Correctional Facilities)*
- **The initial requirement mentions 10 sites—if the budget allows for more, would expanding beyond those 10 be welcomed?** *Yes, expanding beyond the initial 10 sites is welcome if the budget allows. While the use cases addresses are the priority, co-located sites may reduce antenna needs. Additional locations like Camp Grayling and its airfield are also planned, with potential deployment at up to 20 sites depending on coverage and resources.*
- ***Can you confirm whether the exact addresses of the locations where airspace security is needed will be shared?***

  The addresses are:

    1. *Use Case A: Lansing Capitol Complex, 100 N Capitol Ave, Lansing, MI 48933;*
    2. *Use Case B: Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center: 311 Howe Road, Grayling, MI 49738;*
    3. *Use Case C: Cooper Street Correctional Complex (Grand Region): Cooper Street Correctional Facility: 3100 Cooper Street, Jackson, MI 49201; Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center: 3855 Cooper Street, Jackson, MI 49201; Robert Cotton Correctional Facility: 3500 North Elm Road, Jackson, MI 49201; and Parnall Correctional Facility: 1780 East Parnall Road, Jackson, MI 49201.*
- ***What is the scope of this program, does it focus on a single site or statewide deployment?*** *The pilot will focus on implementing at least one of the three identified use cases. Over time, the goal is to expand statewide to include all three use cases.*
- **Is the submitted work plan intended for a minimum viable product (MVP) at a single site, or for deployment across all targeted locations?** *The work plan should address the full scope of the project. While implementation will begin with priority sites—starting at the Capitol Complex in downtown Lansing; the Jackson Correctional Facility Complex (Cooper) and Camp Grayling.*

- **What is the Michigan State Police's long-term vision for scaling a successful drone detection deployment?** *The vision is to transition from mobile units to fixed infrastructure with remote monitoring. The goal is to eventually develop a statewide solution. Expansion will be based on identified needs, using historical deployment data to guide where additional infrastructure is required, eventually building out coverage across the state from highest to lowest priority areas.*
- **If the initial deployment proves successful, what are the Michigan State Police's next steps for expanding the drone detection system?** *The Michigan State Police will begin by establishing more innovative coverage solutions at the Capitol Complex in downtown Lansing, followed closely by deployments at Department of Corrections facilities. From there, the plan is to expand into metropolitan areas, prioritizing county seats with at least one deployment per county. Once statewide coverage is established and proven effective, MSP will scale further by filling in coverage gaps using additional antennas and integrating emerging technologies to enhance efficiency and reduce reliance on mobile units.*
- **What is the expected duration of the pilot project? How long might it take to complete?** *The timeline for the pilot depends on how quickly the selected vendor can deliver and install the necessary equipment. Initial deployments are expected to provide immediate feedback on system performance due to high activity levels. While an exact duration isn't defined, the goal is to validate the technology early and then expand based on results and operational needs.*
- **Is the goal to simply identify drones, or does it also include intercepting or retrieving them?** *The current goal is limited to identifying drones and their operators. Under federal law, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies—including the Michigan State Police—are not authorized to intercept, disable, or retrieve drones. These mitigation actions are currently restricted to specific federal agencies such as the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and Department of Energy.*
- **Is your interest primarily in FAA Remote ID-compliant drones, or does it extend to detecting non-compliant drones as well?** *The interest goes beyond just Remote ID-compliant drones. While radar may not be the most effective solution in this context, passive RF signal detection is a viable approach. As long as the RF detection remains passive and does not involve intercepting protected communications, it can be a valuable tool for identifying and tracking such drones.*
- **Are there any upcoming regulations that could impact the availability or use of drones manufactured outside the U.S.?** *Yes, there are important regulatory changes on the horizon. Under the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) signed last year, drones manufactured in certain countries are subject to a security evaluation. If no entity completes that evaluation by December 23, those drones may be added to the FCC Covered List, which would prevent future licensing in the U.S. There will likely be increased demand for compact, rapidly deployable drones equipped with day and thermal cameras, as well as small tactical drones suitable for indoor use. These types of drones are essential*

for police and fire departments, particularly in scenarios like barricaded suspects or confined space operations, where larger drones are impractical.

- **Do ground-based sensor systems still satisfy the requirements related to the OFME manufacturing objectives?** *Yes, OFME is interested in the full range of technology and partnerships that could support the long-term manufacturing goals set out in Michigan Mobility Plan 2.0, that support the growth of manufacturing in the state of Michigan.*
- **Does this AAM challenge focus exclusively on ground-based drone detection systems installed at fixed locations—including mobile vans—and not on drone flight applications like DFR, asset inspection, or delivery?** *The challenge is focused on ground-based detection technologies, including fixed installations and mobile units. However, for those involved in drone operations such as DFR or tactical applications, there may be emerging opportunities due to upcoming regulatory changes.*
- **Is the team considering a solution that does not involve mobile vans, radars, antennas, or RF decoders? There appears to be interest in a hardware-free approach, but current comments suggest that antennas and related equipment may still be necessary.** *The Michigan State Police (MSP) currently utilize mobile vans, antennas, and RF-based equipment as part of their drone detection and infrastructure protection strategy. These tools are especially critical during disaster response scenarios, where mobile units powered by generators ensure continued operation during power outages. However, MSP remains open to evaluating innovative solutions that do not rely on traditional hardware. Any approach that effectively meets operational needs—particularly in detecting drones and safeguarding critical infrastructure of interest.*
- **Will MSP coordinate airspace permissions and provide (or host) controlled test flights in the Lansing Capitol Complex to validate detection coverage, alert latency, and geo-location accuracy? If yes, who secures FAA/airport approvals and specify timing, altitudes/routes, and number of flights?** *MSP will coordinate airspace permissions and secure FAA approvals if vendors provide flight details. Controlled test flights will be supported to validate detection coverage and alert performance.*
- **Does MSP require integration with FAA Remote ID data feeds, or will vendor detection logs/decodes serve as the validation system-of-record?** *Vendor detection logs and decodes will serve as the validation system of record.*
- **Will MSP evaluate forensic reporting (formats, audit trails/chain-of-custody) and evidence export as part of the scoring criteria?** *Yes, forensic reporting and evidence export will be evaluated.*
- **Will MSP evaluate the platform's historical flight data and national activity database for investigative/intelligence value?** *Yes, historical and national airspace data will be considered for investigative value.*
- **Will MSP score not only drone detection accuracy, but also pilot (controller) and home-base/origin identification?** *Yes, both drone detection and pilot location will be scored.*
- **What is MSP's preferred go-live window for the Lansing pilot?** *As soon as possible. It is anticipated that it could deploy in early 2026.*

- **Please clarify the expected length and structure of the initial pilot's active evaluation period post-installation and any acceptance criteria.** *The pilot duration and acceptance criteria are still under discussion and will require leadership guidance.*
- **Would MSP prefer proposals to include multi-year managed-service options (option years, SLAs/KPIs, pricing holds) to demonstrate continuity, scalability, and cost stability beyond the initial pilot?** *Yes, MSP prefers proposals that include multi-year managed-service options.*
- **Are there any existing detection sensors in place today that need to be integrated at these locations? Will those providers be willing to integrate?** *None are currently known or accessible for integration.*
- **For the Camp Grayling location (Use Case B), what detection coverage area is desired—entire 148,000 acres or a specific portion?** *The goal is to cover the full Camp Grayling footprint, including the Army Airfield and training areas east of the airfield.*
- **For the Correctional Facility location (Use Case C), what hospitals are expected to be involved for package deliveries, and how far away are they?** *Hospital partnerships for package delivery are not part of this project's scope but could be a partner in long-term operations outside of this challenge.*
- **For Use Case C, do you have existing package delivery drones, or should proposals include recommendations? If so, what are the weight and dimension requirements?** *Package delivery drones are not part of the current objectives and are not required in proposed solutions.*
- **Is UTM enablement desired at any of these locations to help coordinate with other operators in the area?** *UTM functionality is not part of this project's scope. The focus is on detection and situational awareness to maintain safe airspace for approved operations.*

11/15/2025

OFME AAM Challenge: MSP FAQ (Condensed Version)

- **Funding / Match**
  - Total Funding: $2 million across five agencies; each agency will award one grant.
  - Recommended Request: $300,000–$400,000 per proposal.
  - Match Requirement: Flexible; financial or in-kind match expected.
  - SBIR Funding: Qualifies as in-kind match.
  - Pilot Scope: Covers initial deployment and validation; long-term operations funded separately.
  - W-9 Questions: Contact OFMEMobilityChallenges@nextenergy.org.

- **General**
  - Webinar Materials: Available on the OFME AAM Challenges website.
  - Multiple Applications: Allowed; each agency reviews independently.
  - University Eligibility: Yes, independently or with partners.
  - Non-Michigan Tech: Eligible with plans to expand in Michigan.
  - Michigan-Based Advantage: Not required, but growth plans in Michigan are valued.

- **Scope**
  - MSP Vision: Shift from mobile units to fixed infrastructure and remote monitoring.
  - Expansion Plan: Capitol Complex → Corrections → County seats → Statewide coverage.
  - Pilot Duration: Depends on vendor speed; early feedback expected.
  - Drone Mitigation: Limited to identification; interception restricted to federal agencies.
  - Detection Scope: Includes Remote ID and non-compliant drones; passive RF preferred.
  - Regulatory Impact: NDAA may restrict foreign drones; demand rising for tactical models.
  - Ground-Based Systems: Eligible and aligned with Michigan's manufacturing goals.
  - Challenge Focus: Ground-based detection only; drone flight ops not included.
  - Hardware-Free Solutions: MSP open to innovative approaches beyond traditional equipment.

Summary: The OFME AAM Challenge invites proposals for drone detection systems focused on ground-based technologies. With $2 million in total funding and flexible match requirements, applicants are encouraged to request $300,000–$400,000 per proposal. Universities, companies (regardless of location), and partnerships are all eligible. The Michigan State Police aim to validate systems through a pilot phase and scale statewide. While traditional hardware is currently used, MSP is open to innovative, hardware-free solutions. Regulatory changes may influence future drone use, especially for law enforcement and emergency services.