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GENERAL ASPECTS

IAFI¹

PROPOSAL TO SUPPRESS FURTHER STUDY REGARDING SMALL UAVs IN THE NEW ITU-R REPORT ON USAGE OF IMT FOR A2X

1 Background

The work on Air to Ground communications using terrestrial component of IMT was initiated based on Document [5D/148](#), which proposed development of a new Report to address both Aircraft to Ground and UAV to Ground. Further, Document [5D/320](#) proposed to develop a new ITU-R Report on usage of IMT for “Aircraft to Everything (A2X)” communications based on the Question [ITU-R 262-1/5](#), which addresses usage of the terrestrial component of IMT systems for specific industrial and enterprise applications, their emerging usages, and their functionalities. Main aim of these proposals was to develop a report on A2X that enables direct communication from air to anything e.g. drone-to-drone communications, enhancing situational awareness and collision avoidance without relying on network connectivity, for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations.

The proposal was also discussed in detail by an offline email discussion group for considering the Scope and Title of this proposed new Report. During the offline email discussions group of WG General Aspects, it was agreed to carry forward this item as a TEMP document titled “Elements of a working document towards a possible new ITU-R Report on applications of the terrestrial component of International Mobile Telecommunications for communications with Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicles” and was therefore carried forwarded in Document [5D/413 \(Annex 3.5\)](#), Chair’s Report for further consideration during the 49th meeting of Working Party (WP) 5D.

During 48th WP 5D meeting, Document 5D/413 (Annex 3.5), proposed inclusion of the potential use of terrestrial component of International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT), including IMT-Advanced and IMT-2020, to support Aircraft-to-Everything (A2X) communications, including Aircraft-to-Aircraft (A2A), Aircraft-to-Ground (A2G), and Aircraft-to-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (A2UAS), enabling real-time information exchange for enhanced aviation safety and efficiency, particularly focused on small UAVs and submitted a working document towards a possible new ITU-R Report.

¹ IAFI is a sector Member of ITU-R. For more details, please see <https://iafi.in>.

Matter was discussed in the Ad-Hoc meeting of WG General Aspects regarding the scope of the Small UAV, it was unanimously agreed that this area significantly overlap with the purview of WP 5B/ICAO, particularly concerning critical aspects like airspace restrictions and exclusion zones. Furthermore, the diverse needs of governmental, commercial, and recreational UAV users were acknowledged as presenting distinct challenges while creating a report on this subject.

2 Proposal

Small UAVs have a wide range of applications, from recreational use to commercial operations and public safety missions. WP 5D's focus on IMT might not adequately address the diverse technical and operational challenges associated with small UAVs particularly in the areas of aviation or aerospace. For example, issues related to flight safety, collision avoidance, and weather conditions are outside the core expertise of WP 5D. Further, as the UAV industry is rapidly evolving, with continuous advancements in technology and applications, the ITU's process for developing reports and recommendations which is typically time-consuming and thus may not keep pace with these rapid changes. Effective regulation of UAVs requires engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including aviation authorities, manufacturers, operators, and public safety agencies. Developing reports and recommendations on UAVs would also require specialized knowledge and expertise in areas such as aerodynamics, flight control systems, and airspace management, which are beyond WP 5D core competencies.

Accordingly it is proposed that WP 5D should not proceed with any further development of the Report on small UAVs.
