



Market Report

A Snapshot of your Marketing Sector

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)** industry in Scotland, as well as helping to inform the market research section of your business plan. You can find more information on how to write a business plan from the Business Gateway website (www.bgateway.com/businessplan), including an interactive template and tips to get you started.

This market report was updated by Business Gateway in **May 2026**.

What do I need to know about the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) market?

The following summary statistics have been taken from market research reports and reliable resources that the Information Service uses to compile industry information. They should give you an indication of how your industry is faring at present and whether there is demand for your type of business:

- ◆ Overall, **the global drone market is forecast to grow in the coming years, reaching a size of almost US\$5billion** by 2029. Furthermore, drones are deployed in many countries worldwide, with China and the United States leading the market. The latest development in the consumer drone sector is FPV (first-person view) racing, where the pilot has an immersive flying experience through augmented reality (AR) glasses that display the live view through a low-latency drone camera. (Statista, *Consumer Electronics - Consumer and commercial drones - statistics and facts*, March 2026).
- ◆ The **revenue in the 'Drones' segment of the consumer electronics market in the United Kingdom was modelled to be US\$119.97 million in 2024**. From 2018 to 2024, the revenue rose by US\$12.83 million, though the increase followed an uneven trajectory rather than a consistent upward trend. **Between 2024 and 2030, the revenue will rise by US\$10.16 million**, showing an overall upward trend with periodic ups and downs. (Statista, *Drones*, 2024).
- ◆ The global UAV market with SATCOM capabilities was valued at \$25.59 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach **\$70.28 billion in 2029 at a CAGR 8.45% during the forecast period 2019-2029**. In the end user segment, the **military market with SATCOM capabilities was valued at \$21.70 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach \$60.67 billion by 2029 at a CAGR of 8.61% during the forecast period 2019-2029**. The military segment is expected to hold the largest market share during the forecast period. This is because BVLOS range UAVs mainly use SATCOM, and only military and defence services are allowed to operate the UAVs in the BVLOS range. The **U.K. generated \$939.9 million in 2018 and is expected to witness a growth rate of 6.78% to reach \$2,245.5 million by 2029**. (BIS Research, *Global Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Market*, May 2019).
- ◆ **The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)** has been appointed as the Market Surveillance Authority (MSA) for drones. From 1 January 2026, drones in the Open Category must meet new product standards under the Class Marking framework to enhance safety and security. The MSA will ensure compliance with these standards among manufacturers, importers, and distributors, intervening when necessary. (UK Civil Aviation Authority, March 2025 [UK Civil Aviation Authority appointed to oversee safety standards for drones](#)).
- ◆ Industry bodies include the [Association of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems UK \(ARPAS-UK\)](#), the [Royal Aeronautical Society](#), [UK Civil Aviation Authority](#), [Search & Rescue Aerial Association Scotland](#) and the [British Association of Remote Sensing Companies \(BARSC\)](#).

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Where can I find more information on my market?

The Information Service has access to a number of databases which can offer more detail on this industry. Some of these reports are listed below - if you would like to be sent extracts from any of these reports, please contact us on **0300 013 4753** or email info@bgateway.com.

- ◆ **BIS Research - *Global Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Market, Focus on Class, Components, Applications and End User, Analysis and Forecast 2020-2025 (November 2020)***. The spectrum of UAV applications is increasing, especially for the small UAVs, which are now being widely adopted across the hobbyist end user. The prime factor behind the rise in the demand for UAVs for commercial and hobbyist applications is their declining price, compact size, and improved performance. UAVs have become more convenient in their operation, and consequently, are widely preferred among different industry verticals. Commercial UAVs have witnessed significant growth, especially after the exemptions from FAA regulations in the U.S. The European countries are also lenient toward the rulemaking for commercial UAVs. These exemptions have supported the growth in the demand for the commercial and consumer UAVs globally. The military UAV market has its dominance in terms of revenue generation in the overall UAV market, owing to high unit price that ranges from nearly \$100 thousand to \$50 million. The military UAVs are seen as an integral part of any country's defence system.

There are also a number of online resources you may find helpful:

- ◆ **Civil Aviation Authority (www.caa.co.uk/drones)** - It is against the law to fly a drone or model aircraft without having the required IDs. You can be fined for breaking the law when flying. In the most serious cases, you could be sent to prison. The [Drone Code](#) and information on the latest guidance and regulatory developments relating to drones and their operation in UK is at (caa.co.uk/regulations). 2023 UK drone Survey – survey publication reveals insights into the UK drone market. ([2023 UK drone survey](#)).
- ◆ **PWC – [Skies Without Limits v3.0](#)** (September 2024) offers an insight into the UK drone industry from 2021 to 2024, through the lens of ten exciting organisations. (See also [Drones](#) and [Building Trust in Commercial Drones](#)).
- ◆ **Commercial UAV News – October 2023, article [The United Kingdom and Commercial Drones](#)** – “The drone industry in the UK is primarily composed of small companies, with 84% of them having fewer than 50 employees.” ([The United Kingdom and Commercial Drones](#)).
- ◆ **Commercial UAV News – [Reports](#)** – there are a number of relevant reports, free to download with email registration, that offer further market insights. e.g. *How Drone Technology is Reshaping Infrastructure Inspection Across the Globe*, and *The BVLOS Investment Decision: Technology, Regulation, and Economics in Early 2026*.
- ◆ **Nesta** – this British charity supports innovation and has offices in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh. They offer an online **Drone Industry interactive map**. ([UK Drone Industry Map](#)).

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How can I find out about my competitors?

Business Gateway's online guide to [Competitor Analysis](#) explains how to find your competitors, how to research what they're doing and how to act on what you learn about them.

Immediate competition will be from other businesses in your local area. There are several online directories which can be used to find company information and generate lists easily and at no expense. Many Local Authorities also publish local business directories on the web. Below are some key web resources:

- ◆ General business directories such as [Yell](#) ,[Thomson Local](#) or [Google Maps](#)
- ◆ Trade specialists like [EuroPages](#) (European directory), [The Wholesaler](#) or [Free Index](#)
- ◆ Business to business (B2B) specialists such as [Kompass](#)

Likewise, your local Chamber of Commerce may publish a members' directory; find your local Chamber on the [Scottish Chambers](#) website.

Once you've identified who your competitors are, the next step is to gather information on the way they do business. Which services do they provide? How do they market themselves? How much do they charge?

To learn about your competitors:

- ◆ Look for articles or adverts in local newspapers, trade press and directories.
- ◆ Try to read their marketing material; if the company has an online presence, visit the company's website as a first port of call. Not only does it give you a better understanding of the company's activities, it can also offer a wealth of information such as a company history or staff biographies, as well as the company's partners or suppliers
- ◆ Search for information on limited UK companies via the [Companies House](#) website
- ◆ Gain an insight into your competitor's performance using credit checks and the accounts that limited companies are required to submit to Companies House each year.

We can provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using this resource, or looking for us to help you find relevant publications, please contact us by emailing info@bgateway.com or by calling **0300 013 4753**



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What about suppliers?

[Choosing and Managing Suppliers](#) can help you decide what you need from a supplier, how to identify one and how to choose one to deal with.

Trade associations or industry specific organisations may also be able to recommend suppliers or contacts. You can also use the aforementioned resources for finding competitors to find suppliers.

Once you have decided on a supplier, we can run a credit check on the company to help assess their financial stability. We provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using the resource please contact us on info@bgateway.com or by calling **0300 013 4753**.

Who are my customers?

Your business plan should include information about the customers you would expect. Business Gateway's guides on [Market and customer research](#) will help you to identify new trends, opportunities, customers and competitors.

It can be useful to group your customers by geographical location, age or lifestyle. The websites listed below are freely available and can provide most of this information. If you can't find what you're looking for from these websites, please contact us and one of the team will be happy to help:

- ◆ Access the latest population estimates from the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#). NRS also offers demographic factsheets for each council area in Scotland, which can provide summary statistics for the area you will be based in.
- ◆ Information from the most recent census in 2011 is released via the official website. See in particular the [Census Area Profiles](#). Clicking on your area of interest will give the latest population figures, including estimates by age.
- ◆ [Understanding Scottish Places](#) has interactive profiles of towns and cities across Scotland. It can be useful for understanding the interrelationships and flows between towns, and also gives comparisons between two or more places.
- ◆ [Scottish Government Statistics](#) provide accurate and up-to-date statistics on Scotland, covering population, health, education and housing.
- ◆ [The Scottish Household Survey](#) provides information on the structure, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of Scottish households, both at a national and local level.
- ◆ [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) is the recognised national statistical body for the UK. ONS covers a wide range of demographic, economic and social issues at a UK level.



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How can you help me with other aspects of starting my business?

The Business Gateway website has guides, videos, online tutorials and tips on all aspects of starting up a business in Scotland. Follow the links below to explore each resource:

Accountancy

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland's (ICAS) "[Find a Chartered Accountant](#)" tool

Funding

[Practical information](#) on finance and funding for starting and growing your business

Insurance

[Business insurance guide](#)

Legal Help

Gov.uk "[Licence Finder](#)" tool

Law Society of Scotland's "[Find a Solicitor](#)" tool

Pricing

Business Companion [Pricing & payment guide](#).

Please note: the most effective way to research pricing is to conduct your own research – visit wholesalers or suppliers to obtain price lists, find quotes from similar companies and work out what other businesses in your area are charging

Promotion

[BG guides to Marketing](#)

Training

[Skills Development Scotland's My World of Work](#)

[Funding for training](#)

[Small Business Bonus Scheme \(Scotland\)](#)

Your local Business Gateway can offer events, workshops and 1:2:1 support on all aspects of starting and developing your business. Call the helpline on **0300 013 4753** to find out what is available in your area.

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