

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market Size & Share Analysis - Growth Trends and Fore cast (2026 - 2031)

> ****Industry:**** Drones, UAVs & Urban Air Mobility (Aerospace & Defense)
> ****Source:**** <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/uav-market>
> ****Scraped Date:**** 2026-09-17

Executive Market Summary

Market Metric	Details
:--	:--
Base Market Size	USD 18.55 billion
Projected Forecast (2031)	USD 18.55 billion
Growth Rate (CAGR)	7.03 %
Largest Market Region	N/A
Fastest-Growing Region	N/A

Market Visualizations & Infographics

![Major players in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles industry](images/chart_2.png)

![Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market Size](images/chart_3.png)

![Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market Share by UAV Class, 2025](images/chart_4.png)

![Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market Share by Mode of Operation, 2025](images/chart_5.png)

![Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market Concentration](images/chart_6.png)

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![ESOMAR](images/chart_16.png)

![GPTW](images/chart_18.png)

Comprehensive Research Analysis

Overview Points List Flex 49 Share Feature End

Market Overview

Study Period
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2019 - 2031
|

Market Size (2026)
|

USD 18.55 Billion
|

Market Size (2031)
|

USD 26.05 Billion
|

Growth Rate (2026 - 2031)
|

7.03 %
|

Fastest Growing Market
|

Asia Pacific
|

Largest Market
|

North America

|

Market Concentration
|

Medium
|

Major Players

*Disclaimer: Major Players sorted in no particular order

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Market Overview

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market Analysis by Mordor Intelligence

The unmanned aerial vehicles market is expected to grow from USD 17.23 billion in 2025 to USD 18.55 billion in 2026, and is forecasted to reach USD 26.05 billion by 2031 at a 7.03% CAGR over 2026-2031. This growth profile positions the UAV market size as one of the most resilient pockets of defense spending despite overall budget pressures. Demand is anchored in a decisive shift toward distribute

d, lower-cost airframes that can be fielded in large numbers, saturate sophisticated air-defense networks, and be replaced quickly when lost. Converging drivers include rapid autonomy gains that reduce operator workload, the attritable-drone doctrine that accepts higher loss rates in exchange for increased volume, and satellite-mesh networking that maintains viable command links in jammed theaters. Competitive dynamics are changing just as quickly, with software-native entrants challenging legacy primes on speed and price, while governments tighten export-control rules that reshape the revenue pools available to companies. Opportunities, therefore, focus on mid-sized Class II airframes, hybrid VTOL designs for shipboard use, and payload-agnostic autonomy stacks that can be migrated across various airframe classes.

Key Report Takeaways

- * By UAV class, platforms Class I (below 150 kg) held 43.78% of the 2025 unmanned aerial vehicles market share, whereas the Class II (150-600 kg) tier is projected to post a 7.55% CAGR to 2031.
- * By platform type, fixed-wing designs dominated with a 74.78% share in 2025; however, hybrid VTOL concepts are expected to record a 9.25% CAGR through 2031.
- * By mode of operation, remotely piloted systems controlled 47.89% of 2025 activity, yet fully autonomous modes are set to expand at a 7.72% CAGR.
- * By application, ISR accounted for 51.27% of 2025 revenue, while combat roles are forecast to climb at a 10.16% CAGR.
- * By geography, North America accounted for 40.12% of 2025 revenue; the Asia-Pacific region is the fastest-growing, with an 8.29% CAGR.

Key Market Trends

Market Trends and Insights

Drivers Impact Analysis of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market*

Driver 1

(~) % Impact on CAGR Forecast |

Geographic Relevance I

Impact Timeline I

Rising defense budgets fueling UAV fleet expansion

1

+1.80%

Global, led by North America and APAC

Medium term (2-4 years)

Operational demand for real-time, all-weather ISR

|

+1.50%

Eastern Europe, Indo-Pacific

Short term (≤ 2 years)

Rapid advances in onboard autonomy and AI-driven mission systems

|

+1.30%
|

North America, APAC
|

Long term (≥ 4 years)
|

Manned-unmanned teaming concepts entering procurement cycles

|

+1.10%

|

North America, Europe, APAC

|

Medium term (2-4 years)

|

Attritable-drone doctrine lowering cost threshold for mass deployment

|

+0.90%

|

US, Ukraine, China

|

Short term (≤ 2 years)

|

Satellite-mesh networking enabling resilient BVLOS comms

|

+0.70%
|

Indo-Pacific, Eastern Europe
|

Medium term (2-4 years)
|

Source: Mordor Intelligence
|

Competitive Landscape
Competitive Landscape

At the high end, the UAV market exhibits moderate concentration, with BAYKAR A. S., General Atomics, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Elbit Systems Ltd., and BAE Systems plc collectively accounting for a majority of MALE/HALE revenue. Their strengths lie in systems integration, classified supply chains, and the organizational weight to meet security-clearance demands. Yet the tactical and software layers fragment heavily, with hundreds of entrants vying for autonomy, IP, and niche airframes. Turkish Aerospace and Baykar utilize export diplomacy, securing USD 1.7 billion in contracts, including the sale of 100 Akinci units to Saudi Arabia in 2024. US disruptors like Skydio and Shield AI pitch software-defined capability that drops into commodity hardware, accelerating update cycles and undercutting price points.

Strategic differentiation revolves around openness and attritability. Legacy primes respond with modular architectures and partnerships; Lockheed teaming with Kongsang on low-cost airframes demonstrates willingness to outsource manufacturing innovation. Startups counter with swarm coordination, low-observable composites, and zero-trust cybersecurity baked into flight controls. Patent filings in autonomous navigation increased by 40% from 2023 to 2025, signaling an intellectual property race. Counter-UAS technologies represent a parallel growth story as governments seek layered defenses against the very proliferation they foster.

High export-control hurdles act as both a barrier and a moat. Western primes that navigate compliance secure premium, long-tail support contracts, while non-aligned producers gain market access by accepting higher political risk. As attritable doctrine normalizes, the revenue mix tilts from low-volume, high-margin sales toward high-volume, moderate-margin runs, pressuring incumbents to streamline factory cycles and adopt just-in-time components.

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BAYKAR A.S.

*

General Atomics

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Northrop Grumman Corporation

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Elbit Systems Ltd.

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BAE Systems plc

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*Disclaimer: Major Players sorted in no particular order

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Component Component 3 Scope Of The Report Bottom

Global Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Market Report Scope

This report analyzes the global unmanned aerial vehicles market, focusing on the development, production, and deployment of unmanned aerial systems for military and commercial applications. These applications include combat, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), as well as delivery and loitering missions. The market encompasses fixed-wing, rotary-wing, and hybrid platforms that operate in remotely piloted, optionally piloted, and fully autonomous modes, along with related mission systems and ground control infrastructure.

The unmanned aerial vehicles market is segmented by UAV class, platform type, mode of operation, application, and geography. By UAV class, the market is segmented into Class I, Class II, and Class III. By platform type, the market is segmented into fixed-wing, rotary-wing, and hybrid. By mode of operation, the market is segmented into remotely piloted, optionally piloted, and fully autonomous. By application, the market is segmented into combat, ISR, delivery, and loitering mission. The report also covers the market sizes and forecasts for the unmanned aerial vehicles market in major countries across different regions. For each segment, the market size is provided in terms of value (USD).

By UAV Class

Class I (Below 150 kg)

|

Class II (150-600 kg)

|

Class III (Above 600 kg)

Segmentation Accordion Item

By Geography

North America

United States

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Canada

|

Mexico

South America

Brazil

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Rest of South America

|

Europe

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United Kingdom

|

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France

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Germany

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Russia

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Rest of Europe

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Asia-Pacific

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China

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India

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Japan

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Australia

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Rest of Asia-Pacific

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Middle East and Africa

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Middle East

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Saudi Arabia

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United Arab Emirates

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Israel

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Rest of Middle East

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Africa
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South Africa
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Rest of Africa
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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the forecast value of the unmanned aerial vehicles market by 2031?

The unmanned aerial vehicles market is projected to reach USD 26.05 billion by 2031 from USD 18.55 billion in 2026, reflecting a 7.03% CAGR.

Which UAV class will grow fastest through 2031?

Class II platforms in the 150-600 kg range are expected to post a 7.55% CAGR as they balance endurance with deployability.

How dominant are fixed-wing designs today?

Fixed-wing configurations accounted for 74.78% of 2025 revenue, though hybrid VTOL airframes are gaining at a 9.25% CAGR.

Which region is expanding most quickly?

Asia-Pacific is set to grow at an 8.29% CAGR, underpinned by Chinese production and Indian, Australian, and Japanese procurements.

What role does autonomy play in future demand?

Fully autonomous modes are forecast to expand at a 7.72% CAGR as onboard AI reduces reliance on vulnerable datalinks.

How are export controls affecting suppliers?

Stricter MTCR and national security rules shrink addressable markets for Western primes while giving nonaligned producers room to grow.