VFS 44th (2027) Annual Student Design Competition
VTOL Aircraft Supporting South America Offshore Oil & Gas Production
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION from SDC Teams
Bell Responses (Round 1 – Nov. 19, 2026)

Q: Are missions 1 and 2 weighed equal, or is one more important?

Bell Response: A Helicopter is not like a car, where a full tank of gasoline, or a half tank makes no difference in how many passengers it can carry. For the helicopter, the payload is constrained by a max gross weight, which applies to both range rings. The number of passengers and fuel (range) are the payload options. The fuel tank must be sized for the max range mission but is does not have to be full if you are doing a shorter range with a full load of 16 passengers. A Proposal that offers no ability to fly a "~half-empty" fuel tank in exchange for carrying more passengers for a shorter distance is not a viable proposal. Operators need flexibility and that means accommodating the specified range rings by adjusting the fuel load in exchange for fewer passengers and vice-versa. An invalid proposal would receive a low score.

Q; Clarification Required for Point 12 of Mission Profiles on Page 15 of the RFP. Does the mission profile defined in point 12 include the takeoff, landing and again a takeoff from the alternate airfield? Are teams free to choose the specific details about the same profile which have not been defined in the RFP?

Bell Response: Reserve fuel is intended for a situation where the target landing point upon returning from the mission is suddenly unavailable. Maybe the runway is closed because of an accident or foul weather. That scenario means you are enroute to the base airport but must now fly to an alternate landing site. Since you are already enroute, adding a takeoff would imply that you've already landed safely at the airport. i.e., You have already taken off from the FPSO and are on the way home. There is no additional take-off / landing /Takeoff involved in the reserve fuel scenario.

Q: Clarification Required for the DDN, Page 17-20 of RFP: a) When exactly are teams supposed to submit the DDNs? Is each one supposed to be submitted in a particular order?

Bell Response: See the Bell Response below.

Q: The RFP mentions a Preliminary Design Review (PDR) on Page 19, line 1-3. When exactly is this supposed to be submitted, and what is the format for the same?

Bell Response: The entire student proposal represents a (very) preliminary design effort. Students are not tasked with providing a detailed design of anything (i.e., we are not asking how you will manufacture, route wire harnesses, determine pin-outs, conduct a flight test program, or certify the design, etc). The RFP discussion is asking for the DDNs to reflect "PDR level" material to keep things simple. Pages 18-19 emphasize how an OEM handles a DDN and is saying that DDNs are part of the preliminary design phase that ends in a PDR at the OEM. The student task is just to put forward the requested DDNs as part of your preliminary design to show how you intend to meet certain objectives of the RFP. Since a DDN is a "preliminary design" artifact (not a detail design artifact) you will keep it concise and at a preliminary design level. For students, there is no Preliminary Design Review other than the evaluation of your submitted proposal which must contain the requested DDNs. VFS judges will evaluate each team's proposal where DDNs will be used to assess your decision-making skills.

Q: Please clarify the OEI performance for Cat A requirements to include what variables should be presented in the report. Pilot input (increasing airspeed using altitude to reach lower P req etc.) changes the flight path dramatically. Is the 3 m/s in a vertical hover?

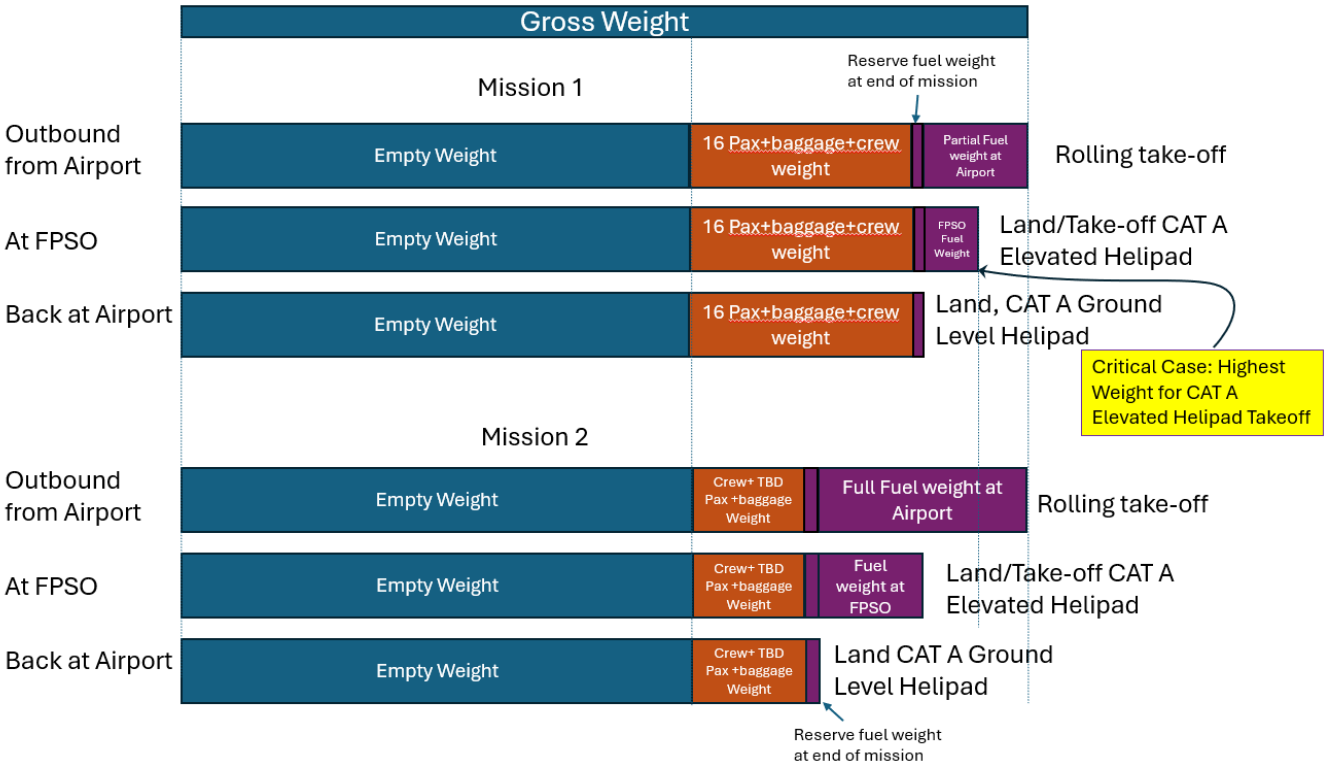
Bell Response: The student approach to handling Cat A should be based on energy principles:

You will have energy in these forms:

Forward speed ($1/2mv^2$), altitude (mgh), stored rotor kinetic energy and 30 sec OEI power: The exercise is to show how your aircraft balances these energies to arrive at a 3 ft/sec landing with zero forward speed. There is no need to show what the pilot is doing in the cockpit to make this happen. We just want to know that it's possible.

Q: Is there a minimum number of passengers that allows Mission 2 to still be worthwhile?

Bell Response: The maximum gross weight is comprised of only three things: There is an empty weight, a passenger/crew weight, and a fuel weight. For the two missions, the empty weight does not change, but the fuel and passenger weights are interchangeable. Mission 2 requires a full fuel tank to fly roughly twice as far as mission 1. The additional fuel weight is equal to the number of passengers "off-boarded." In Mission 1, 16 passengers at 255 lb each (with baggage) weighs 4080 lb. Cutting the passenger load in half would offer 2040 lb of additional fuel for Mission 2. Eight passengers would be a very reasonable passenger load, but the teams will need to show that 2040 lbs of fuel is sufficient for the greater range. The chart below is a representative expectation for mission weights to show how Mission1 and Mission 2 compare:



Q: Can the sponsors expand upon the fleet size? If possible, what is the relative importance of cost versus number of aircraft stationed at an airport to accomplish the mission. For example, a low-cost aircraft with a large fleet or vice versa.

Bell Response: The RFP is not asking for dollarized cost, but instead asks for cost factors, and fleet size is the first cost factor number. A design that requires fewer aircraft to complete the daily mission (because it is faster) would impact the fleet size. But this "fancy" aircraft may have a higher cost factor than a competing design. The question is whether the purchase price and maintenance of the fancy aircraft makes up for fewer aircraft.

Note:
The fleet size is determined by the daily need to transport 200 passengers/baggage to range Ring 1 and back, and 200 passengers/baggage to range Ring 2 and back. These flights move FPSO crew changes and thus the return flight carries as many people on the return flight to the airport as the flight to the FPSO. Do not "overthink" the FPSO situation by asking "how many FPSOs are being served. Simply assume that there is a FPSO at the range ring to conduct the off-loading, on-boarding operation. (See later response on cost factor in fleet sizing)

Q: Page 21: Pax Weight + Baggage: 115.6 kg or 115.9 kg? The math adds up to 2 different values in the RFP. Which one is correct?

Bell Response: Use 255 lb=115.6661 kg. 102.3 kg is a typo and has been corrected in the RFP.

Q: Although passenger and baggage masses are specified, is there a required baggage volume per passenger, or may teams establish a reasonable assumption based on offshore aviation operations?

Bell Response: The RFP (page 16, Specification Requirements) calls for students to provide their rationale for the baggage bay volume. All of you have packed luggage for travel and weighed it. Make some measurements, ask Ai (and verify), and put forward your reasonable assumptions.

Q: Page 14: Cat A Runway Landing at Airport (Mission 1) vs. Cat A Vertical Landing at Airport (Mission 2). However, the common mission segment requirements on page 15 specify a vertical landing at the airport. Should Mission 1 assume a STOL (rolling) landing and Mission 2 assume a VTOL landing, or should both missions use VTOL landings? Should the landing at the third airport in OEI be VTOL or STOL?

Bell Response: We removed "vertical" from the RFP, but it should be understood that when you land on the helipad, you cannot have forward speed. On the return flight to the airport, there is no need for a runway landing. Instead, use a CAT A landing profile to land at zero forward speed in front of the hangar. When returning to the airport, the fuel is mostly depleted and the CAT A landing is really an approach to a vertical landing that does not factor into the design since the landing weight is not close to the MAX GW. i.e., If you can land CAT A on the helipad at the FPSO, then landing at the airport with the fuel burned off is not going to size anything. Both Mission 1 and Mission 2 will end with Cat A profile ground-level helipad landings at the airport because there is no benefit / need for a run-on landing once the fuel weight is depleted.

Q: For the rolling takeoff, there aren't any runway parameters. Are there runway length and obstacle clearance restrictions that should be considered, or should an unrestricted runway access be applied?

Bell Response: The reason for a rolling takeoff is that the helicopter needs less power if it has forward speed, so it can take off with more weight. Students should assume the runway is clear and length is unrestricted for their operations. Keep the takeoff speed reasonable and state your rationale.

Q: Concerning the "Maintenance hours per flight-hour: (hours per flight hour)" cost factor (pg. 16), is the intent to determine the amount of down time required for each aircraft (and thus size the fleet) (i.e. the number of hours regardless of the scale of maintenance), and/or is it the equivalent maintenance man-hours required to service the aircraft used as a proxy for the cost of maintenance?

Bell Response: To avoid random assumptions in dollarizing the cost, the RFP asks only for cost factors (as a proxy for dollars). The cost section is treated separately from the design effort because every student team will make different assumptions on what constitutes cost figures. Therefore, to provide consistency for all competing teams, the RFP gives a fixed number of 12 hours of daily operation regardless of any "cost factor" numbers related to fleet size. Flight operation consists of any time that the engines are on (rotors are turning) and includes the 40-minute refueling / passenger swap at the airport. Students should determine the number of flight operation hours and provide the number of maintenance man hours.

Q: In section 2.4, page 15 the RFP says: "students shall assume 40 minutes are spent at the Airport (refueling, unloading/loading)," does this mean that any optimizations regarding speed of maintenance or fuel tank size should be overlooked/not considered in how many passengers per day a vehicle can transport? In other words, assume that all maintenance occurs after the operational day ends?

Bell Response: Assume that all maintenance occurs after the operational day ends.

Q: Are there any operational environmental conditions which need to be considered in the design? For example, is there a certain maximum operational Sea State?

Bell Response: Per page 17 Section 2.4: Students shall assume calm seas.

Q: For mission profile (Item 12, page 15), stating the vehicle should have reserve fuel at the end of the mission to complete a flight to a secondary airport, is that after mission 1 or 2? It is stated that mission 2 sizes the fuel tanks but does not directly account for reserve fuel. Should it be inferred that the additional flight to the airport is after mission 2?

Bell Response: Fuel reserves are required to be in the tank at the end of both missions. The unused fuel weight (and tank size) must be accounted for as part of satisfying the mission requirements..

Q: In the powerplant section of the RFP it states to assumed engine installation losses at 4.5% of the rated power. Is that 4.5% specifically referring to the MCP rating?

Bell Response: Installation losses apply to all power states of the engine.

Q: Section 2.4, page 15: "proposals shall consider a daily need to transport 200 passengers and their baggage for Mission 1, plus 200 passengers and their baggage for Mission 2." Does this mean that requirements for mission 1 and mission 2 must be met simultaneously (i.e., 400 passengers per day)?

Bell Response: Yes – each mission is separate from the other. 200 passenger fly out and 200 passengers return for both missions each day.

Q: Does the 200 transported passengers number consist of 100 passengers to the oil rig and 100 passengers from the oil rig, or 200 passengers each way (net 400 people moved)?

Bell Response: 200 passengers to the FPSO and 200 returning to the airport for each day for each mission.

Q: Mission 2 starts with "full fuel tanks." Does that mean the tanks hold exactly the Mission 2 fuel plus the required reserve (50 km to an alternate at best-range speed, then 30 minutes at best-endurance

speed)? Or can extra capacity beyond that be added? This decides the passenger count for Mission 2, since maximum gross weight is fixed.

Bell Response: The Mission 2 fuel requirements (range + reserves) sizes the minimum fuel tank for the helicopter. There is no benefit for fuel beyond the requirements.

Q: For the reserve fuel requirement, when it says fuel sufficient for 50km of cruise at 915m, does the fuel reserve also include the fuel needed to climb to that altitude? (This is imaging a scenario where the vehicle lands but an emergency arises where it needs to go 50km to the emergency).

Bell Response: This was answered previously. Fuel reserve remains in the tank at all times as far as missions are concerned. The statements in the RFP allow you to calculate how much fuel is required for reserve. Proposals must account for its weight and the extra capacity in the fuel tank.

Q: If only an engine's fuel flow at maximum continuous power is available, what method is acceptable for estimating fuel flow at cruise and at 10% MCP during loading and unloading? Is a constant specific fuel consumption assumption acceptable for preliminary sizing?

Bell Response: RFP Powerplant Section 6, Page 20 specifies: Scaling requires examining an appropriate (known) commercially available engine as the basis for scaled engine weight, scaled MCP fuel flow rate, and any other critical parameters. Therefore, scale your 10% MCP fuel flow based on the selected, scaled engine running at 10% of MCP.

Q: Should the single-engine-failure analysis at the FPSO be performed at the actual arrival weight for each mission, or is a more conservative gross weight required? RFP states " An energy/power analysis that considers the loss of one engine and 30 second OEI power on the remaining engine(s) is sufficient to determine any gross weight limitation that would ensure a safe landing" but would like more clarification.

Bell Response: The single-engine-failure analysis at the FPSO should be performed at the actual arrival weight for each mission. Adding margin that is not required by the RFP will make your design less competitive and harms productivity.

Q; Pilot input and remaining altitude have a significant effect on fly-away capabilities. When determining an LDP, is it sufficient to consider this a speed that level flight can be maintained AND power available would equal a 3 ft/s descent in a hover? This could demonstrate an Airspeed decision point, but LDP location (attitude above / distance to pad) would be very dependent on approach glideslope (more / less steep).

Bell Response: Pilot control input is downstream of making sure your energy provides a 3 f/s landing solution. We are interested in students showing that the energy converges on a landing. As stated previously, you have 30 sec power, you have potential energy (mgh), you have forward KE (to start) and you have stored energy in the rotor (down to rotor stall RPM), all acting as energy sources to accomplish the 3 ft/s landing. No pilot enters this equation, though the landing analysis does start with a low speed approach on landing or a slow back-up speed during departure. See the PowerPoint supplement that was supplied to VFS shortly after the RFP was released.

Q: Section 2.4 requires transportation of 200 passengers for Mission 1 and 200 passengers for Mission 2 each day. Does the requirement of 200 passengers per mission refer to 200 passengers transported in each leg/sector (outbound and/or inbound) or 200 passengers in total across both outbound and

inbound flights?

Bell Response: 200 each way for each mission, each day.

Q: Reference: Section 2.4 (page 15) the RFP specifies a daily transportation requirement of 200 passengers for Mission 1 and 200 passengers for Mission 2, while also requiring full passenger exchange at the FPSO. Please clarify whether these passenger totals represent one-way transportation to the FPSOs or the combined number of outbound and inbound passengers?

Bell Response: See above

Q: The RFP permits helicopters, tiltrotors and other VTOL configurations but specifies Category A operations and one-engine-inoperative (OEI) performance. For unconventional configurations such as distributed electric propulsion or hybrid-electric VTOL aircraft, should a single propulsion-unit failure be treated as equivalent to a conventional single- engine failure when evaluating Category A performance?

Bell Response: For a hybrid/electric design show that a single worst-case failure in the power distribution system would allow for a safe continued flight or landing under a CAT A profile.

Q: Mission 1 Referred in Section 2.3 (pages 14–15) Mission 1 specifies a Category A runway landing at the airport, whereas Segment 11 of the common mission profile specifies a Category A vertical landing for both missions. Could you please confirm whether Mission 1 requires a runway landing or a vertical landing at the airport?

Bell Response: RFP is updated to reflect Intent for a CAT A helipad landing at the airport hangar helipad. This means you conduct a CAT A ground level helipad landing upon returning to the airport.

Q: Reference Section 2.3 (page 14) Mission 1 specifies an elevated helipad landing and a vertical take-off, while Mission 2 specifies an elevated helipad vertical landing and an elevated helipad take-off. Should both missions be assumed to use vertical landing and take-off procedures at the FPSO, or are different Category A procedures intended?

Bell Response: Both missions are treated the same**.** Since there is no runway at the FPSO (just an elevated helipad) you are essentially forced to perform a zero-airspeed touchdown or a zero-airspeed take-off at the FPSO – hence the notion of "vertical". Both the landing and the take-off will exercise a CAT A elevated helipad profile. "Profile" refers to the procedure from the landing decision point (LDP) to the helipad, or from the helipad to the takeoff decision point – which is usually the same point in space as the LDP). A pilot following the CAT A profiles guarantees a safe landing or continued safe flight in the event of a single engine failure. Note: We are not asking students to discuss pilot control inputs for the manuever, but students do need to select an LDP/TDP and show that an energy balance is converges for a 3 ft/s landing or in the case of continued take-off, the aircraft can continue to fly away with OEI. The RFP has removed "vertical" from pg 14, replacing it with Cat A elevated helipad landing / takeoff – which assumes zero forward airspeed upon touchdown and zero forward airspeed on lift off.

To help students understand the CAT A profile, consider first that an actual emergency CAT A landing (i.e., an actual engine failure) while approaching a helipad at sea would be an extremely rare occurrence. Nevertheless, the OEM will develop, test, and demonstrate that a CAT A landing (and takeoff) profile is available to the operator, guaranteeing the ability to make a safe landing at the specified gross weight, with a single engine failure, on an elevated helipad at sea (or the ground level helipad at the airport.) There is also a CAT A profile for executing a rolling takeoff at the airport, when the helicopter is at its maximum gross weight. It is incumbent upon students to recognize that helicopters can continue to fly with one engine inoperative because forward flight requires a lot less power than maneuvering around at

low forward speed. The highest power condition that a helicopter will ever see is the vertical take-off. When the pilot uses a CAT A rolling take-off, he/she is taking advantage of the fact that forward speed is less power than a vertical take off. He/she is executing a procedure that guarantees a safe landing or continued safe flight for the given CAT A tested gross weight.

Q: Reference: Section 2.3 (page 15) Segment 6 specifies 15 minutes at 10% MCP AEO for loading and unloading passengers at the FPSO. Should this be interpreted as 10% of the total installed maximum continuous power with all engines operating, and expected to assume that the engines remain running throughout the passenger exchange?

Bell Response: Yes

Q; Reference: Section 2.3 (page 15), and Final Configuration Parameters (page 21) the RFP specifies a combined passenger and baggage mass of 115.6 kg (255 lb). However, the breakdown on page 21 gives 102.3 kg (225 lb) per passenger and 13.6 kg (30 lb) for baggage, totalling 115.9 kg. Which SI mass value should be used consistently for aircraft sizing and mission calculations?

Bell Response: Use 255 lb=115.6661 kg. 102.3 kg is a typo and has been corrected in the RFP.

Q; Can teams make an amphibious aircraft and reduce the emergency raft to one?

Bell Response: No. This is beyond the scope of the RFP.

Q; What is the standardized size/Volume of Luggage brought on by the passengers?

Bell Response: The RFP (page 16, Specification Requirements) calls for students to provide their rationale for the baggage bay volume. All of you have packed luggage for travel and weighed it. Make some measurements, ask Ai (and verify), and put forward your reasonable assumptions. Part of the proposal evaluation is to judge student rationale and decision making.

Q; What airspace class will the mission segments take part off?

Bell Response: For design purposes, just assume Airspace is unrestricted.

Q: Can the design go over 16 passengers? Is there a reason behind the 16 passengers like it being the crew size that mans the FPSO or is it arbitrary?

Bell Response: No. 16 is the number.

Q; How many FPSOs are there per mission? Does the mission need to be spread out to?

Bell Response: Per previous response: Do not “overthink” the FPSO situation by asking “how many FPSOs are being served. Simply assume that there is a FPSO at the range ring to conduct the off-loading, on-boarding operation.

Q: For takeoff and landing as well as idling at helipad and airport can the AEO power only include its engines that will be used for the takeoff and landing instead of all engines in case some are not in use?

Bell Response: Use the definition of AEO.

Q; In Section 2.3, the Mission 1 requirements state that rotorcraft shall land at the airport via a Category A runway landing. However, the mission profile states that a vertical Category A landing must take place. Kindly clarify which type of landing is to be followed. Does a Category A runway landing mean a rolling landing?

Bell Response: See previous response. The RFP has been revised to a CAT A ground level helipad landing at the airport.

Q: The RFP states that for the OEI landing, the sink rate at landing shall be no greater than 3 ft/sec. Should this sink rate be taken as the vertical speed of the aircraft's center of gravity (CG), or as the vertical speed at the landing gear contact points? Please clarify.

Bell Response: Use the cg.

Q: Section 2.3 gives 115.6kg (255 lbs.) per passenger including baggage, while the "Final Configuration Parameters" table gives 102.3kg (225 lbs.) for passengers and 13.6 kg (30 lbs.) for baggage. These values add up to 115.9 kg as weight for each passenger with baggage. Kindly clarify this discrepancy. And should values be tracked separately for CG purposes?

Bell Response Use 255 lb=115.6661 kg. Baggage and passenger cg should be tracked separately. 102.3 kg is a typo and has been corrected in the RFP.

Q; The reserve fuel mission statement in section 2.3 does not specify the takeoff and landing constraints. Kindly provide the necessary details.

Bell Response: Previously answered.

Q: When returning to the airport for Mission 1, is it a Category A runway landing (as stated on page 14: Mission 1, Range Ring 1) or a Category A vertical landing (as stated on page 15: mission segment 11)? Mission 2 indicates vertical landing in both of its descriptions.

Bell Response: Previously answered

Q: How is a passenger defined (1 passenger = outbound **and** inbound, or 1 passenger = outbound **or** inbound)? Does the 200 passengers for Mission 1 mean 100 people outbound and 100 people inbound, for example, or does it mean 200 people must be transported both ways? (bottom of page 15)

Bell Response: Previously answered

Q: Is the helipad of the FPSO assumed to be fixed in both translation and rotation for our analysis?

Bell Response: Yes

Q: Regarding the "12 hours of daily operation" per rotorcraft (page 15), does this refer to just flight time, or does this include the refueling, loading/unloading times at FPSO and airport, and/or maintenance?

Bell Response: Previously answered

Q: "Students shall assume 40 minutes are spent at the Airport" (page 15). Is this per mission or per day for each vehicle? Do we include these 40 minutes in the 12 hours of daily operation?

Bell Response: Question 1 is "per-mission." Question 2: yes

Q: RFP Page 15, Section 2.3 "At the end of the mission, there shall be a reserve fuel weight to fly the following profile: First, cruise at 915 m (3,000 ft) at best range speed (VBR) for 50 km (27 nm) to an alternate airport and then cruise at 915 m (3000 ft) altitude at best endurance speed (VBE) for 30-minutes." When calculating the fuel reserve volume for take off weight purposes, should we assume that the fuel reserve profile includes landing and takeoff at the alternate airport?

Bell Response: See previous response

Q: RFP Page 15, Section 2.4:"To differentiate design concepts (Helicopter, Tiltrotor, eVTOL, etc.), proposals shall consider a daily need to transport 200 passengers and their baggage for Mission 1, plus

200 passengers and their baggage for Mission 2." Request further clarification on how the 200 passenger requirement is counted. For example, if an aircraft transports 16 passengers from the airport to the FPSO and then transports a different group of 16 passengers from the FPSO back to the airport, would this count as 16 or 32 passengers toward the daily requirement for the respective mission?

Bell Response: 200 passengers each way. See previous response.

Q: RFP Page 15, Section 2.4 "Students shall assume that each rotorcraft conducts 12 hours of daily operation." Does the RFP assume that aircraft for mission 1 and mission 2 are operating simultaneously? Furthermore, are two aircrafts able to complete the same mission simultaneously or must each aircraft complete the entire mission before the next one begins?

Bell Response: See previous response

Q: Maximum Gross Weight is fixed between Mission 1 and Mission 2, and Mission 2 departs with full tanks. Please confirm whether Mission 2 must use only the permanently installed tanks or may add removable auxiliary tanks. Our working assumptions are permanently installed tanks only.

Bell Response: All fuel tanks must be permanently installed.

Q: The RFP defines MCP, a 5-minute takeoff rating at 110% of MCP, and a 30-second OEI rating at 137% of MCP. Category A procedures use a 2-minute OEI rating and a continuous OEI rating beyond the 30-second rating. What power should the remaining engine be assumed to deliver after the first 30 seconds? May teams define a 2-minute OEI rating, and if so, at what percentage of MCP? Our team's assumption is a 2-minute OEI rating at 110% of MCP, then MCP as the continuous OEI rating.

Bell Response: RFP Powerplant (Item 6 of DDNs) has been modified to include 2-min OEI power rating.

Q: Section 2.4 calls for the engine failure analysis upon arrival at the FPSO, while the RFP fly-through presentation states leaving the FPSO helideck. There will be a difference in fuel weight between the two. Is the Category A OEI landing assessed during arrival at or departure from the FPSO? Our working assumption follows the RFP text: arrival at the FPSO.

Bell Response: The power for the CAT A OEI landing will be different from the CAT A OEI take-off because one is climbing the other is descending. Both cases are to be examined. Yes, there will be a slight fuel weight reduction for the takeoff that could be factored.

Q: Section 2.1 Number of FPSO Vessels - How many FPSO vessels are located within the radius ring of Mission 1? Is it only the four described in the Mission Map? How many FPSO vessels should we anticipate being within the radius ring of Mission 2?

Bell Response Per previous response: Do not "overthink" the FPSO situation by asking "how many FPSOs are being served. Simply assume that there is a FPSO at the range ring to conduct the passenger off-loading, on-boarding operation.

Q: Section 2.2. Passenger Standby and Airport ATC - Should we assume that the airport and FPSO always have passengers on standby for transport, or is there an anticipated shift schedule for the FPSO crew members that we must support? Also, can we assume that the airport has an Air Traffic Control tower to manage incoming and outgoing rotorcraft?

Bell Response: Everything is ready to go whenever needed. Towers have no impact on the design.

Q; Section 2.3 Passenger Count Accounting - In terms of meeting the 200 passengers per day requirement for each mission, does a passenger count when transportation is completed to and from the FPSO, or

only to or from the FPSO? Essentially, does each mission to and from the FPSO count as 16 or 32 passengers for Mission 1 (and the same doubling effect for Mission 2)?

Bell Response: 16 passengers out, 16 passengers back for an overall of 200 out, 200 back per day per mission.

Q: Section 2.3 Turnaround Times and Pilot Duty - Does the 40-minute refueling period at the airport or the 15 minutes for loading and unloading at the FPSO count towards pilot flight time limits?

Bell Response: Make any mental assertion needed such that Pilot timeouts do not factor in any decision of your proposal.

Q: Section 2.4 Pilot Flight Time Limits and Crew Swaps - Can teams assume that the two-pilot crew must have a maximum flight time of 10 hours, similar to the requirements of 14 CFR Part 135? Would this require a daily crew swap for each aircraft since each rotorcraft operates for 12 hours? Can the pilot crew swap to a new rotorcraft if the 12-hour limit is reached on their original rotorcraft and their 10-hour limit has not been reached?

Bell Response: Make any mental assertion needed such that Pilot timeouts do not factor in any decision of your proposal.

Q: Section 2.4 Fleet Schedule and Shift Staggering - Should teams assume that the rotorcraft flight time limit counts as 12 hours on and 12 hours off? Must all rotorcraft operate within the same 12-hour window, or can the rotorcraft available within the fleet be staggered across a 24-hour day to meet the daily passenger requirement?

Bell Response: The operational day consists of normal working hours and lasts 12 hours out of a 24-hour day. All aircraft will be non-flying during the same 12-hours.

Q: Section 2.4 Pilot and Crew Shift Availability - Do teams need to consider a realistic, staggered shift schedule and shift time limits for pilots and support crews, or are the necessary number of pilots and support crew members always available up until a particular maximum time limit?

Bell Response: Keep it simple -Assume there are as many pilots/crews as needed, so that the number does not impact mission rate or the design of the aircraft in your proposal.

Q. Section 2.4 Required OGP Kit Weights - Is there a given weight we must assume for any of the required OGP kit items, namely the ditching floats and two 18-passenger life rafts? Should these kits be counted as part of the empty weight or as removable equipment?

Bell Response There are only three components of weight: Empty weight, Passenger/crew weight, and Fuel weight. Kits are part of the Empty weight, and the Empty weight never changes.