

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A team led by Virginia Tech and Old Dominion University has formed the Commonwealth Center of Innovation for Autonomous Systems (C2IAS). C2IAS seeks to contribute to the unmanned systems ecosystem by acting as the *lead entity for unmanned systems technology transition for the Commonwealth* by:

- Providing targeted investment for ventures emanating from university intellectual property (IP). C2IAS will reduce technical and environmental risk while maturing the technology and the associated venture as acquisition targets for Virginia firms.
- Providing connection to university technical, business and capital resources to help small businesses identify and solve (or mitigate) the technology transition challenges they face.

While there are a number of entities contributing to the growth of the unmanned systems industry in the Commonwealth as indicated in Figure 1, C2IAS seeks to address the shortfall in leadership for the critical challenge of technology transition.

Function	Lead	Assist
Advocacy	USAV	AUVSI Chapters
Economic Development/Business Attraction	CIT	All
Community Development/Convening/Connecting	CIT	AUVSI Ch., C2IAS
Local/regional community development	AUVSI Ch.	
Technology Transition	C2IAS	CIT, accelerators
Innovation Ecosystems	Accelerators/Incubators	CIT, C2IAS

Figure 1: Unmanned Systems Leadership in Virginia

The success of C2IAS depends on leveraging the accumulated wisdom of the larger unmanned systems ecosystem to select the most promising projects and to synchronize efforts with other initiatives to grow the industry and with broader innovation efforts in the Commonwealth.

C2IAS will meet a number of the goals of the Virginia Research Investment Fund including the commercialization of existing research, the formation and spin-off of new companies, the promotion of applied research in the unmanned systems area, and, ultimately, significant capital investment and job formation in Virginia.ⁱ

The focus of C2IAS is not on “research” as such, but on “technology transition,” which promises results (jobs and wealth in Virginia) rather than research publications. The C2IAS team understands the challenges it faces: short timeline, limited funding and a big task, but the team is confident it can produce quick wins and significant victories for Virginia while developing a sustainable operation. Moreover, we expect a multiplicative effect between C2IAS and other initiatives.

Outcome. The ultimate metric of C2IAS’ success will be the spin-offs nurtured, the companies grown and the jobs created. C2IAS will survey partners at the conclusion of projects and annually thereafter for ten years to gauge the impact of C2IAS projects on business success.