



## Preliminary design contracts for OPC are imminent, USCG commandant says

### Key Points

- The USCG will let contracts for up to three offerors for the first phase of the OPC programme
- Coastguard officials are still keen on acquiring a fleet of 25 OPCs

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The US Coast Guard (USCG) is close to determining which bids for the Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) programme will be selected to proceed with preliminary design contracts for the vessel, the service's top official said on 24 January.

The OPC is intended to replace the USCG's fleet of medium endurance cutters consisting of 13 Famous Cutter-class vessels and 14 Reliance-class ships. With an expected procurement of 25 vessels, the OPC programme will be the largest acquisition project that the coastguard has ever undertaken, USCG Commandant Admiral Robert J Papp Jr said at a breakfast gathering near Washington, DC.

"We're doing it very smartly," Adm Papp Jr said of the OPC acquisition programme.

The USCG is following a two-phase 'design-build' strategy to acquire the OPC. Officials plan to award up to three contracts to competing companies for the preliminary contract design (Phase I) of OPC. Then they will downselect to a single contractor for detail design and ship construction (Phase II).

Eight bids from US-based shipyards were submitted to the USCG. Five of the proposals fell into a 'competitive range' and those offerors were given an opportunity to revise and refine their proposals. *IHS Jane's* previously confirmed that Bollinger Shipyards, General Dynamics Bath Iron Works, and Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding were among the five moving on in the process.

USCG officials originally planned to conduct the downselect for Phase I in the third quarter of fiscal year 2013 (FY 2013), but the effort was delayed in early October 2013 to the second quarter of FY 2014.

When asked for an indication of timing on the OPC contracts, Adm Papp Jr told *IHS Jane's* that the award decision was imminent.

"I have to keep myself out of the acquisitions details for obvious reasons, but my sense is, it's going to be very soon," he said.

The USCG's fleet recapitalisation effort remains focused on three programmes: National Security Cutter; Fast Response Cutter; and OPC.

With regard to the National Security Cutter, Adm Papp Jr expressed confidence in attaining the fleet goal of eight vessels to replace the USCG's Hamilton-class cutters.

