Disrupter Event Q&A Telecon Transcript
08 March 2024

SOCOM Disrupter Categories. Emplacement and Access, Scalable and Precision Effects, and Multiple Domain Communication and Computing

1. **Are specific targets identified for performance characteristics such as payload weight, payload type, range, speed etc.?**
   The descriptions that were provided, although very vague, are intended to widen the scope on any development. The assumption is this question is built on an idea of drones or platforms being disrupted in the areas we asked, there aren't going to be specific targets. We are looking for general disruptive capability. We're looking for the best that's ever been done. Obviously, a lot of people are working in a lot of areas but if the average weight on a platform is 100 pounds, then we're looking for those that believe they've either found or are developing things that can double that, triple that, extend range, speed, etc... We won't be able to provide you specifics in the description, but hopefully the general information that was provided is enough.

2. **Is M-Code compliance desired/required?**
   This is in range with the alternate PNT (position, navigation or training). The description is not going to require M-code. M-code is a solution. We understand that is obviously sometimes looked at as a requirement in military communications or in security infrastructures. But the idea of disruption, we are not looking for a standard requirement. Is it desired? There may be uses or areas where having something that is supported by the Government standards and the security aspects of our communications platforms that is beneficial is needed. It's possible that it would benefit us, but it does not have to be that way and it won't be a limiter if it has nothing to do with the encryption or connections for global positioning satellite technologies.

3. **What is the timeframe that end users are looking to showcase TRL 3-5 capabilities?**
   This is a good one because often with our end users it's like tomorrow. So, it's a good challenge that we have and that we are obviously looking to partner with you all on. There are a lot of factors that go into what technology, for example what TRL or technology readiness level you start at, what the expected risk or complex areas it takes to develop or experiment those capabilities and who, when, where is available to do the work. In general, when we look at each disruptive capability, we will consider many factors to assess the schedule. Let's say we see something in TRL 2-3 that's estimated to take six to seven months to get to a development level where it's off the table compared to get to the 4-5, which means that you can see a prototype, whether it's on a tabletop or a demonstration. But to get it into the hands of users and into the field could be an extra amount of time and assess accordingly. We are not expecting magic (but will assess it if applicable). It takes time to develop, and we will be doing technical rigor to make sure that the capabilities are as effective as possible, as quickly as possible. For us, there is no, this is going to be done in six months or not at all. It will be dependent on which area and what type of technology and where it's at in the process.

4. **Do end-users have a timeframe in mind of when they would like to advance TRL from a 3-5 range to a 6-7 range?**
It depends. We will go through assessments to understand what's being proposed and what the opportunity in getting to whatever levels we think we can get to. If you know that idea of what your development time frame looks like, the more detailed and description that you can provide in that is going to be beneficial. If in the process, further down in the process, there may be times when we will have to get communications back and forth to make sure we understand what that opportunity is. We understand that some technologies you can't just assume it's a 12-month effort and go especially if it is disruptive, we are looking for those things that are really challenging the norm and really looking at difference. We will take the time to help develop that and get that in range. We're also looking for quick wins, it'll be a bit of both. If we see something that you're proposing in TRL 5 range and all we need to do is get it into some hands and some specialized environments for assessment or technology review or even testing, we will look to do that in those specific areas. So when you look at your proposals, when you look at your development range, try to be descriptive in what you expect your ability to get to where you need to is. If you come in and tell us 10 years, we could look at it as 10 years and if that's a feasible capability for us and something worth the range, then it's possible that we could look that way. Don't limit yourself, make sure you just try to be as informative as you can and what your expectations are, and we will do the same in assessing what we can do with it.

5. **Is it expected that there will be a prototype OTA to get a technology to a TRL 3-5 or an OTA to take a 3-5 TRL product to a greater TRL level?**
We will find the appropriate vehicle for the appropriate project when decided. There are several vehicles that SOF AT&L has at their fingertips, there are a number of ways to get after it. OTA (other transaction agreements) is one. Multiple types of contracts, including SOFWERX, the PIA here, (partnership intermediary agreement). We would say that it(OTA) is an opportunity, but it is not going to be the only answer.

6. **What is USSOCOM's definition of "medium lift"?**
We don't have an exact answer to that. We would describe any proposal in the area in the amount of either personnel, cargo, or capability that it can do, we will be able to assess. Although we put medium lift because that was based on some capture from the community and what we categorized capabilities. If it's a lift capability in your proposal, describe what that cargo or that range opportunity would be. The measurement that we'll look at, the assessment we'll look at will be in accordance with that. Is it piloted, is it not, is it carry three to five people or 280 lbs. We're making these numbers up. For a range of X with a specialty type of fuel, any of that information in a proposal is going to help us understand where it fits and whether it's disruptive to go after it in the ranges we have.

7. **Are there any attributes more important than the others regarding performance trades?**
Yes, there usually are. Unfortunately, in that vague of a question and with the multiple areas that we put into the disruptor, we don't have any specific answers for you. With regards to the descriptions, they have some categories inside of them that are listed as what we would say are our trade-offs. In the description before with let's say a lift capability or a platform capability,

the amount of cargo for the range or fuel use as examples. Some that always exist; survivability for operators, speed, size, weight, and power (SWaP) is always a function for what we do. And if it's a technological capability, a package, a system, etc…. If you are proposing taking a thing that today is, an equipment rack of equipment and putting it down into the size of a cell phone, that is a disruptive swap that we would be interested in. And that's an example of the trades we would do.

8. **Will a Continuing Resolution impact SOFWERX ability to contract Disrupter?**
The general answer is that is a possibility. Obviously, we are all working in a continue resolution environment. The challenge is going to be the funding which we will track and accordingly contractually, we don't believe it's a limitation. Continuing resolution is really about the funding available and we don't know the funding status for this area, whether it is an existing CR allotment or an expected one. There's no question that funding will be available, it's going to be about timing depending on what the status of the continuing resolution and/or full budget is. We will be able to communicate what the status is through the process after the decisions and we will continue to communicate to those that stay involved in the process accordingly, so it shouldn't be a surprise to anybody.

9. **For disruptors, will you consider both man portable, vehicle mounted, and large vehicle transported?**
Absolutely. Most of our capabilities will look at a family of systems opportunity in multiple phases of operations of SOF operations in various environments. The community moves from strategic to tactical to dismounted to moved environment. If the capability is required in all phases and if the platform, the power, the range, is needed in those phase operation, then we do look at families of systems. If your technology or capability is being designed, developed, or planned in that area, clearly identify what that is. From a technological perspective, the same perspective that was said earlier, we would not dilute the disruptive nature of your technologies into trying to answer 18 problems. For this first run, we would focus in on the disruptive technology specifics and details but identify that you believe it could be developed into that larger family of systems platform and that you'd be supportive to do that in your process.

10. **Does our proposed capability need to be on or part of a "medium lift" asset or can it be something independent that supports a medium lift asset?**
The answer is yes. If you feel like you're disrupting the fueling process to a medium-lift air asset that uses engines, that could be something that's disruptive to us. If it's a loading capability or a safety capability or something of that nature, we would assess that accordingly as a component of the capability. In this case, the medium-lift asset includes the entire life cycle that we'd be looking at because there's a very large environment to work with both technologically and operationally. We don't believe there'd be any limitations. If you feel like you have a truly disruptive technology anywhere surrounding what we're looking for, don't be shy to provide it.

11. **Regarding kinetic and non-kinetic/directed energy strike platforms/weapons, are you able to provide information on key targets you want to be able to defeat?**

The quick answer is no. The idea here should be if you know you are working in an area of that range, you know what effect you can get on what type of environments and or capability that you can get after. If you think you are going to affect different types of systems, optical, electrical, electromagnetic, physical with heat, without heat, we don't know what numbers of opportunity you could look at. We would describe it in that way so that we understand what the opportunity is and whether that capability is something that we would want to or need to get after. We definitely will not be able to in this forum, for this opportunity provide any specific information on any target areas.

12. **Multiple Domain Communication and Computing (MDC2) disruption covers a wide range of technologies. Do you expect proposals/ideas to cover all of it or just part of it?**
It's an excellent viewpoint. In any of the disruptive areas there could be several opportunities derived from it and in this case for MDC 2 it is. It can be a component or a specific area that you feel is disruptive in that overall interest. So, let's say in communications it's the compute hardware, it's the memory, it's the software, it is a new network infrastructure, it is the encryption platforms as examples. It does not need to be an all-in-one solution. It can be a piece that you believe is disruptive. We will assess it accordingly. If it is disruptive inside the area that we're looking for then it'll be looked at accounted.
If it is something that is unique or a component than integration and or non-proprietary interfaces is going to be a requirement. It would be very difficult to manage your proprietary components that don't to work into integrated systems. We have enterprise architectures, tactical architectures down to personal architectures, and they all need to be able to be interoperable. If something you're working on as a component, the idea that it needs to integrate into existing systems must be accounted for.
So, make sure you pay attention to that. If in your proposal or your idea, you can make those things clear, it'll be much better. If you're looking at a network infrastructure, here's how it's going to work with legacy Wi-Fi, or here's how our new encryption looks to work inside of existing network protocols. Things of that nature should be accounted for to make it easier for assessment.
This is where we're throwing a line out to see what bites. If you have the next greatest thing that you've been working on in your garage or if you've created the hush bomb, anything like that. That's what we want to see, new and exciting, Faster, lighter, more lethal, those kinds of things. That's what we're looking for. So, if you've got it, this is a great showcase for that over.

13. **You have stringent restraints on submission. Can an entity meet those AND add a document such as an 87 Page White Paper in ADDITION to your request.**
For phase one, we must have your submission in accordance with those criteria. We do have a down select where we could get additional information, but for the submission, it should be a standalone white paper in accordance with the submission criteria.

14. **Do submitting companies need to be a small business?**
There are no limitations to small business and that is not part of the selection criteria.

15. **If our tech can answer several parts of a disruption category, is it better to submit for each capability separately or combined?**

We're not sure what the input of the assessment platform would take and how that would be represented in the communities of interest that are going to be eventually assessing the disruptive areas. Most of the areas that we asked for have specific communities of interest and subject matter assessments. So, to ensure that the appropriate people see the items, we want to make sure that if you are proposing a single proposal that crosses multiple disruptive areas that those different groups see it. We'll keep an eye on that. Administratively, you might be able to work with the SOFWERX staff when you put your proposal in to make sure it's in the right areas.

You do not want to dilute your proposal, or not make sure that all your effects are in one paper, don't distribute it out to different areas. Offers can submit more than one white paper as well.

16. **What IP rights are you expecting?**

Write your proposal in accordance with your expectation of the business process. The Government will review, and we'll have to make it part of the assessment of deciding whether there's a risk on the life cycle of the expected capability in the acquisition process due to authorities. When we go through our processes, we look at if we are buying a commercial product or something that will be commercialized, what is that cost over the life cycle and that has to do with IP rights in a case like a type of a code development. Our expectation in sharing development cost is that there's going to be some level of a shared rights or a rights, general purpose rights or something of that nature, but we're not looking at a specific one. If you have concerns or have specifics in your interest to your technology and your proposal, make sure that's clear so that we can assess it accordingly.

17. **When do you expect to award and kick-off by?**

There's the standard, it depends, but if you look at the schedule, the goal is to announce the zero, one or more selectees to go to Phase 4 which is our path forward, which it would depend on what is the approach being used. If it's a SOFWERX B2B it's usually a little quicker. If it's a stand-alone 4022 OTA, it would most likely be a little longer after that, so May, early May is SOF Week so depending on which path forward it could be, June, July, could be a late summertime frame.

18. **What are acceptable PoPs for R&D projects? (<12mo?)**

The assessments for these are not going to go on; it has to be 6 months to 12 months. We believe that the assessments will be in accordance with what the proposal is. There is no standard to it. It will be what is feasible, what is cost-effective and that we're disrupting technology. Unfortunately, we wouldn't tell you it's less than 12 months. It could be 24 months if it's a very difficult problem or we look at multiple phases on development of the technology according to what was proposed. The idea that we are really looking for disruptive technologies, we are going to expect that this is a longer road than maybe a TRL 6-7 capability-based assessment type of project. That's not to say that we aren't going to look at high TRL technologies, maybe applied in a different way or disruptive in the capability and they could move faster. It will be looked at in accordance with the proposals and then the projects will be

individually assessed in how long it looks like it would be evaluated for your proposal. Be as open and honest about what you expect the development is in your proposal and we will take that as the starting schedule to work with.

We had a gentleman hand us a breadboard about three years ago and it was a very exciting idea, we've been shoveling money to him ever since and we are going to field it next year. That's the kind of thing we're looking for.

19. **Will you entertain a CRADA that includes SOCOM, MITRE, and DEVCOM as well as a private company start up to maximize team output ?**

The answer to that is yes, we will always entertain CRADAs because CRADAs are a different process than what this is. If you what you're asking is it proposing an entity or an opportunity to do those things from the private company's perspective toward a development effort, we believe that's true too. The CRADAs are included underneath the path forward Phase 4, so CRADAs are possible from the solicitation.

20. **Presentations and then a subsequent announcement of awards. You specify that you will immediately begin negotiations after award. Can you elaborate?**

The wording on the website says you *may* immediately begin negotiations after award. There are a lot of factors, which we've alluded to a few of them, whether it's continuing resolution, the type of contract, the type of acquisition strategy or pathway we're going to take, all of that happens in those negotiations. Depending on the number of projects, depending on the review across the directorate, there's going to be time needed to go through the administration of that. The answer is going to be, we will be working on it for selections and then this is going to be something that the team on the call are working on from that point forward.

21. **Are you open to funding parts of a proposed effort if we break everything out? Or will you evaluate the proposals as all or nothing?**

That's a great point for everybody that's on the line and are going to propose. That's the kind of information that helps us know in assessment that you're open to that opportunity, whether it's because you feel like one part is more mature and you're not sure about the risk of another, whether it's because one is more costly than the other, so maybe there needs to have different avenue of how to get 2 pieces together; that will happen in those assessments. The answer is yes. We will look as we're doing assessments and negotiations, if we're moving forward with something, if we need to scope in a specific way and the proposer is interested and able to do so, we may break it into phases. We may change scope for it or at least ask to change scope for it. It will probably be a dynamic environment during those assessments and negotiations. The answer is flexibility. We're actually very good at that in the acquisition space, the contract space compared to a lot of DoD, we would expect that upfront. The opposite side of that would be, if you are not with that, be very clear about that in your proposal as well to make sure that the assessment accounts for it and that nobody gets any time wasted on an environment that's not supported.

22. **Along those lines with the ROM, what would you prefer if it is multiple phases to break out their anticipated their need of funding?**
That's an excellent way for us to see cleanly where we could focus on a higher priority piece, phase them differently, ask about phasing differently. We obviously try to look at it both technologically and resource wise. That would be a great way to make sure we clearly understand what our borders are, where we can kind of figure out how to make the best path forward.

23. **User input is critical to our proposed product. Can we expect your support to enable operators to be involved in disrupter live fire and R&D processes.**
That's specific to 1 area. The SOF AT&L is very connected to the operational force. Most all development, technology evaluation, any assessment, especially once the TRL gets to a specific layer, you're going to have operational input. As much as possible, yes. We often do not develop technology without our stakeholders tied at the hip with us. In general, the answer is going to be, and with something of this nature, which could be a kinetic effect or a live fire requirement, it is usually very specific that that community be a part of any assessment at those levels. Keep in mind please that these are very low-density, high-demand assets. We do pay close attention to our service component requirements developers, and when we feel the need to have operators come in, we will make sure that they are where they will give us the best bang for the buck.

24. **The evaluations up to selection seem to be based on the WP and quad chart. Do you expect to request a "full" proposal during the negotiation period?**
That would be part of the path forward, Phase 4, and that would depend on which path forward we're going. If it's going to be a 4022 after white paper, quad chart, down select, one-on-ones and then selected for the path forward. If it's a 4022 other transaction authority, there would be a request for prototype proposal. If it's through SOFWERX, SOFWERX has their own path forward for doing PIA order. There are a few pathways. The expectation is if down selected at the first level, there will be additional information requested or proposals requested to get to the appropriate pathway.