



SBIR 25.4 Release 9 Q&A Telecon Transcript
17 Jun 2025

- SOCOM254-P005 Secure and Protect Infrastructure through Cyber-threat Emulation (SPICE)
- SOCOM254-P006 Visual Augmentation Systems (VAS)

SBIR Process Timeline

Jun 04, 2025: Topic issued for pre-release

Jun 25, 2025: USSOCOM begins accepting proposals via DSIP

Jul 09, 2025: DSIP Q&A closes to new questions

Jul 23, 2025: Deadline for receipt of proposals no later than 12:00 p.m. ET

SOCOM254-P005 Secure and Protect Infrastructure through Cyber-threat Emulation (SPICE)

1. **Is this just a phase I SBIR or is it also a Direct to Phase II?** This is a Phase I SBIR only. SOCOM is only accepting Phase I proposals.
2. **Is AI for vulnerability research enhancement is a priority?** No, not as a primary focus. The topic is not scoped specifically around AI for vulnerability research.
3. **Is there a geographic region you're most interested in for a phase 1 test case? What about phase 2?** No geographic region is prioritized. Technologies should be globally applicable. Geographic considerations may emerge in Phase II.
4. **Is a customer memorandum required for this phase I open topic?** Please make sure to familiarize yourself with the USSOCOM BAA Instructions. The Customer Memorandum is a AFWERX requirement and not required by USSOCOM.
5. **AOI 4): Wireless network sensing. Is a solution that extracts wireless sensing information from a commercial C2 system like 5G cellular within scope?** Yes. Wireless technologies including 3G/4G/5G are within scope if integrated with commercial C2 systems.
6. **Are AI/agent code and command generation techniques of interest (e.g., from language models), and what be a compelling platform for deploying the solutions?** Yes, if they align with the topic. Open-source LLMs and accessible platforms like Ollama are encouraged. Avoid SaaS like solutions which cannot be put on prem.
7. **Does gov't have access to, or could facilitate access to, a preferred cyber range for testing, or should the vendor expect to simulate their own?** Vendors should simulate their own for Phase I. Cyber range support would only be considered at Phase II.
8. **During Phase I execution, would performers be provided access to in use government frameworks/systems (or related documentation) to assess feasibility?** No, government frameworks/systems will not be provided during Phase I.
9. **Does gov't find autonomous, adaptive, and/or learning solutions more compelling than human-in-the-loop techniques? Any expectations regarding HITL?** Proposals will be evaluated on alignment with the topic rather than on HITL vs. autonomy.





10. **Are solutions that demonstrate effects from portable/field systems more compelling than deploying on non-portable (e.g., from command center)?** No inherent preference. Both remote and proximity-based solutions are welcome if they meet topic objectives.
11. **Are you interested in novel AI-driven solutions that ENABLE / support OCO functions as described in your topic, but don't actually execute code remotely, etc?** If it aligns with one or more of the four topic areas, it's in scope, regardless of whether it's AI or another solution.
12. **What types of systems or operational environments are highest priority for cyber-threat emulation under SPICE?** Network-based systems, embedded systems, operating systems, and routers. No specific priority was defined.
13. **Are you interested in the exploitation of AI Models or exploitation of AI applications as the problem to be solved?** No, not at this time.
14. **Are you interested in a new, innovative AI-driven encryption solution that could serve as a preventive measure to address some of the listed challenges?** No.
15. **Is there an operational need to assess/validate software like compiled code running on embedded or COTS hardware that supports SOF missions without source code?** Not under this topic.
16. **How important are letters of support for this SBIR?** Government letters of support are a disqualifier. Letters from subcontractors are acceptable.
17. **Is there a transition pathway or designated customer inside PEO SOF Warrior or related components to own post-Phase II efforts?** Yes. The Government Stakeholder team is actively engaged and interested in following through with Phase II and beyond.
18. **Are there any red flags or technical domains that we should avoid?** No.
19. **How important is compatibility with existing SOF C2 or mission planning systems (e.g., ATAK, JADC2 elements)?** Solutions should integrate with existing commercial system. Section four is not meant to develop a new C2 platform but expand the capabilities of any commercial mobile C2 solution.
20. **You mentioned LPE at the beginning, so if we offer a specific LPE exploit is it in scope?** Yes. Local privilege escalation falls under Area 1 and is within scope for research.
21. **Is technology area #2 focused purely on offensive cyber capabilities or are novel defensive capabilities being considered as well?** SOCOM is open to both offensive and defensive capabilities. Area #2 focuses on delivering effects (deny, degrade, etc.) but is not restricted to offensive-only concepts.
22. **How are patent pending capabilities handled in terms of SBIR feasibility study? If we mention or discuss one of our patent pending capabilities in the doc?** Question pending response.
23. **Does topic reflect specific needs/gaps identified in recent SOF cyber/ISR missions or JSOC or MARSOF units? Want to know alignment w/ live TTPs, mission sets.** No specifics will be shared at this time.





24. **Describe role of detection and evasion of defensive cyber solutions as part of the solution?** Not required, but if evasion/detection supports access, escalation, or persistence, it can be part of the proposal.
25. **Does a tool that focuses on a novel technique that potentially allows new accesses for operators to exploit fit into the ask to focus on novel techniques?** Yes.
26. **Would a specific fuzzer for RCE be in scope? Interesting?** A standalone fuzzer is not in scope, but a fuzzer used to develop novel RCE techniques could be relevant.
27. **For topic #1, are both passive and active recon of interest?** Yes. Network reconnaissance comes in many fashions, forms, and is not directly as a result of stimulating a network and getting a response.
28. **Would embedded systems in an automotive context be within scope?** Yes. That would align with Area 2.
29. **Are the certain computer architectures that are of more interest (arm, fogs, intel, etc)?** No. The architecture is not critical at the feasibility study stage.
30. **A fully developed exploit is in interest but the tools that help find this exploits are not in scope?** Correct. The focus is on developed capabilities, not tooling for exploit development.
31. **Is compatibility with COTS exploitation frameworks of interest?** Compatibility is not required or expected.
32. **Are there any specific metrics or benchmarks for evaluating the feasibility of proposed solutions in Phase One?** No. Metrics may be defined at Phase II for prototyping.
33. **Is there a requirement regarding how quickly a solution needs to operate?** No.
34. **For topic 3, are RF air gap jumping capabilities of interest?** Yes. Novel, non-standard access methods like RF air gap jumps are of interest.
35. **It sounds like new, novel and unpublished capabilities are primary focus? Does feasibility of maturation of existing PoC in scope?** Yes. Feasibility studies to mature PoCs are acceptable if aligned with topic areas.
36. **Are the specific post exploitation capabilities that are of interest?** Not explicitly, but deform (deny, degrade, etc.) payloads under Area 2 may relate to post-exploitation goals.
37. **Is there an expected number of awardees?** No.

SOCOM254-P006 Visual Augmentation Systems (VAS)

1. **The SOCOM 254-P006 topic only references Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. Does this indicate that D2P2s are discouraged?** Yes, this is an open topic for Phase I only. Direct to Phase II (D2P2) proposals are not being accepted.
2. **On item #13, what is the required Threshold and Objective for latency?** The requirement is low enough latency to avoid user-observable ghosting or lag — likely high single digits to low double-digit milliseconds for weapon-mounted or handheld





devices. Helmet-mounted systems would require lower latency, in the low single-digit ms range.

3. **On item #17, what laser frequency ranges are of interest?** For item 17, which is laser detection/warning technologies, all ranges from near-infrared through the SWIR spectrum are of interest.
4. **Please confirm the period of performance for Phase I & II** Phase I is 7 months and includes submission of a Phase II proposal. Phase II typically runs 12–18 months, depending on the proposal.
5. **Please confirm the funding level for Phase I and Phase II.** The Phase I funding level is up to \$175,000. We will not be accepting phase two proposals.
6. **Are multiple submission from the same entity allowed?** No. Only one proposal is allowed per entity under an open topic.
7. **Are submissions from different companies held by the same ownership allowed?** Submissions from different companies held by the same ownership are allowed for a SBIR Open Topic.
8. **Would AR HUD/HMD or other AR use cases fall under this proposal request?** No. AR software and common HUD technologies like waveguides are not of interest unless they are truly novel in hardware. Display hardware innovations may be acceptable.
9. **What are the requirements for point 9?** Point 9 seeks novel display technologies that reduce the size and weight of visual augmentation devices — including display hardware and the optics that relay visual data to the user.
10. **Are helmet mounted, weapon mounted, or handheld devices of the most priority? Is there a set fraction being awarded to each type of system?** There is no stated priority among device types. The topic was kept broad to include a range of applicable technologies.
11. **Given the evolution in VAS, how does commercial scalability & integrator readiness weigh with scientific & technical merit when directing to Phase II proposals?** Technical merit is the highest priority. SOCOM can help performers with scalability and integration.
12. **RE: #20 Do you have any desired capabilities that you think are inadequately met by conventional sensors and for which event-based sensors may be appropriate?** Event-based sensors are a new area for SOCOM. We are open to concepts of operation that show applicability, but we do not have predefined expectations.
13. **For handheld systems, are screens expected to be within the system weight, or just the imaging system?** The screen and all operational components must be included in the system weight.
14. **What types of evidence best demonstrates a solution's potential to accelerate transition and collaboration with both defense integrators and commercial partners?** Prior work and openness to collaboration are useful. SOCOM primarily values technical innovation and will work with performers on integration.
15. **With regard to "only one open topic", does that mean if I'd like to submit a proposal for Technology Areas 7, 8, 10, and 12, I could only pick one to do?** Yes. Only one proposal is allowed under this open topic. Focus on the area where your company is most confident.





16. **Can we propose both a weapon mounted and handheld system in one proposal?**
Assuming they are similar technology with differing capabilities given the extra size.
Not recommended. It would likely be too complex of a proposal/lacking sufficient details for both systems due to page limitations. SOCOM is currently more interested in weapon-mounted applications.
17. **Could you elaborate on Topic 16 and clarify multi-sensor vs. multi-modal, multi-domain sensing, and their relation to lethality??** Multi-sensor refers to systems using multiple sensors (e.g., SWIR and MWIR). Multi-domain includes other sensing like IMUs, etc, for sensor/data fusion. Both can support lethality via targeting enhancements for applications for joint fires.
18. **For 10, can you give a ROM for Medium and Long Range?** Medium range = 400–700 meters. Long range = 700 meters to 2km+.
19. **Is there any interest for this proposal in sensing modalities other than IR, such as different electromagnetic spectrums? e.g. lidar to eyepiece?** Yes, but include a clear concept of operations. SOCOM is open to novel approaches beyond IR, depending on demonstrated value.
20. **Could you please elaborate on item #1 & #14? Would this topic be open to software approaches that process imaging data post-capture for display in hardware?** Yes, if near real-time or real-time. Post-mission/offline processing is not of interest.
21. **Is the intent to produce a "complete device" eg, handheld camera system, or are efforts related to component enhancement the priority? eg, novel NIR sensor.** Both system-level and component-level efforts are acceptable. There is no preference stated between the two.
22. **Can you elaborate on the desire for increased field of view with decreased SWaP. What FOV is desirable? What is the SWaP today, and what reduction would be ideal?**
For night vision goggles, current FOV is ~40°. A meaningful increase would be 60° or more. A 15–25% reduction in SWaP would be considered significant.
23. **Does the handheld variant have to run off CR-123 or are 18650 accepted and is that included the weight of the product.** CR123 and L91 lithium AAs are acceptable. Battery weight must be included in the total system weight.
24. **Are innovative optical components in support of a final device of interest, or do we need to propose a complete system / complete product as our proposal?** Component-level proposals (e.g., optical sensors) are acceptable. A complete system is not required.
25. **Can we show feasibility of novel sensor capability but integrate a COTS display?** Yes. Using COTS for part of the system (like display) is fine if the novel capability is demonstrated.
26. **Event-based sensors and concepts of operation. Are you interested in event-based and event-frame based object detection and tracking?** Yes. SOCOM is interested in novel applications of event-based sensors, including object detection and tracking.
27. **Do you have any ballpark estimate for how many total awards might be given?**
Typically 1–3 awards, but open topics allow flexibility for more depending on proposal quality.



28. **Section K: If Section K is not submitted with the proposal, the proposal will still be considered responsive. What is Section K?** Yes, the proposal is still considered responsive. Section K refers to the Representations and Certifications ("Reps & Certs").
29. **Related to topic 1, is this proposal interested in the generation of synthetic data in support of AI/ML imaging systems?** No. SOCOM is not interested in synthetic data generation for this topic.
30. **You mentioned earlier "AR" HUD is not of interest, can you go over that again? No interest in AR glasses /IVAS type or no HUD weapon sight/handheld interest?** SOCOM is not interested in AR software or IVAS-style systems. Only truly novel display hardware might be considered.
31. **Topic 8. Can you elaborate on fire control?** Fire control includes systems that help determine where to aim — such as measuring target distance or guiding the user for lead and correction — not just zeroing the sight to the weapon
32. **For modular night vision goggles, what wavelength bands beyond traditional image intensifier tubes be of interest?** SWIR, mid-wave, and long-wave IR bands are all of interest due to their additional capabilities.
33. **For a "modular" NVG concept to increase depth of field, would this imply a clip-on solution, or would a replacement lens be acceptable?** Either is acceptable. SOCOM is not specifying a solution — the goal is to increase depth of field without requiring frequent focus adjustment.
34. **How does one "increase lethality"? What system performance (hardware, processing, display) results in increased lethality? e.g. better contrast, target ID,...** Improvements in self- and target-location, better imaging in dynamic environments, and enhanced accuracy in targeting/joint fires delivery all contribute to increased lethality.
35. **Would subcomponents be acceptable for proposal? (For example - a novel sensor that enables wide FOV and low SWaP in a modular NVG, but not the goggle itself)** Yes, subcomponent proposals are acceptable and encouraged under this open topic.
36. **Unclear on novel display system for HUD. Why is a waveguide a "no"? No to devices using WG?** Waveguides are typically not novel and have known issues (e.g., brightness, light bleed, power use). Unless significantly innovative, waveguide-based solutions are not of interest.
37. **Do you accept a proposal for an innovative AI-driven realtime solution whose foundation has been developed & can be further enhanced to meet the program's needs** We would be interested in reading a proposal, as long as it fits one of the topic areas and operates within real-time and SWaP constraints.
38. **Is the focus on innovative near-to-eye (HMD) AR displays or standalone HUDs is also sought?** Only near-to-eye displays are of interest. Standalone HUDs (e.g., in vehicles) are not.
39. **Are vehicular weapon systems included in "weapon mounted"** Only if user-operated (e.g., M240 or M2). Vehicle gun systems like those on tanks are not included.
40. **Application-wise: helmet mounted AR systems or, for instance, vehicle HUD?** Vehicle HUDs are not of interest. Helmet-mounted or near-eye display technologies are.



41. **Previous mention of priority interest: weapon sight before hand-held system. If given choice between multi sensor goggles and weapon sights?** Preference is currently for multispectral weapon sights, especially for medium to long range use.
42. **What's the page limit for volume 2?** 5 pages, plus a required quad chart. Details are in the SOCOM-specific instructions on DSIP.
43. **What is the minimum runtime?** Approximate guidance: 4 hours for clip-on weapon sight and handhelds, 8 hours for NVGs. These are not hard limits.
44. **Is there a limit specific to the battery pack other than the system SWaP?** No specific battery limit, but most systems use 1–2 cells. High-power systems may use up to 6.
45. **Do hand carried drones count as weapons for "weapon mounted"?** No. "Weapon-mounted" refers specifically to small arms, not drones.

