

NAVAIR & NAVSEA 26.BX – Release 3 – Counter-UAS Open Topic

Industry Day Q&A (Jun 16, 2026)

Please note that subsequent to the meeting, we updated our definition of "low kinetic" to:

"no or very low collateral damage from the effector (you get a pass on the 50 lb drone falling out of the sky) for defense of a land-based facility with populated areas nearby. If the effector misses the target and goes into a neighborhood, is it going to injure someone or cause damage. A solid rocket motor propelled interceptor could be ok if it similar to a model rocket that people use in neighborhoods. If the interceptor is more substantial than that, it may not fit this sub-area, but this is dependent on the use case. **If an interceptor is limited to use from a Navy ship at sea, collateral damage is not a concern and in that case, low kinetic would refer to low SWAP and minimal ship modifications required to support the interceptor.**"

Time	Questioner	Question	Answer
13:06:00	Anonymous	How many awards will be made on this open topic?	Typically 3 to 4 Phase I awards per subtopic, 10-20 Phase I
13:08:00	anonymous user	What are the required components of the "Initial Phase II Proposal" deliverable?	Please see the Navy SBIR Forms page for that information: navysbir.com
13:09:00	anonymous user	Will the SBC need an approved accounting system since it will be awarded as an OT?	For phase I, you do not. For phase II, the CSO states that it may be required for Phase II. We always do recommend an
13:09:00	Anonymous	Is the preference for an integrated solution spanning multiple/all topic areas, or to focus on advances in one	Either. A single subtopic or can combine
13:11:00	Marco	Will these slides be made available?	We will post the slides to the NAVAIR SBIR website:
13:20:00	anonymous user	Will we get the contact information for all the sub-topic TPOCs to connect prior to the open period?	All questions should be sent to navair-sbir@us.navy.mil. The TPOC will respond during pre-release
13:23:00	anonymous user	What would be considered a low cost solution?	Considerably less expensive than traditional methods.
13:23:00	anonymous user	Any security requirements? If so, what level?	CMMC level 2 self certification is required at contract award. Other than that, the company must be US-based and all work
13:25:00	anonymous user	Can a company apply for multiple sub-topics?	Only one proposal per firm.
13:27:00	anonymous user	Sub Topic 1 : Are novel sensor/data sources that improve AI-enabled target recognition in scope, or is the topic limited primarily to software-only AI/ML approaches using existing	Yes, novel sensor and data sources that improve target recognition are in scope.
13:27:00	anonymous user	is there any appetite for securing enemy drones once downed? shielding from RF signals? possibly a low kinetic	The focus is mainly on detection, tracking, classification, and defeat; not on securing once downed
13:27:00	anonymous user	Which C-UAS mission is of greatest interest or importance? Shipboard protection, ground-mobile expeditionary protection, or base defense?	All are equally valuable. No single application is assigned greater importance.
13:28:00	DONI	Is a detection and classification-only Phase I approach within scope, or must proposals include defeat or neutralization	Yes, a detection and classification-only Phase I approach is considered responsive and within scope.
13:28:00	Garrett Crutcher, Ph.D. Signal Systems Corp.	For the counter swarm topic, how important is classification of the type of unmanned system?	It's a sliding scale; identifying the specific type is great, but classifying general types or counts (e.g., '50 of type A') is also relevant.
13:28:00	Anonymous	for all of these topics, sensor data availability is a major constraint. Are there preferred identified sensors and/or datasets for use?	No GFI or datasets will be provided under Phase I, and there are no preferred identified sensors.
13:28:00	anonymous user	Is the use of current Navy hardware (sensors/hardware) preferable or is a standalone system dedicated for C-UAS desired?	No preference; standalone systems are fine for Phase I, though interoperability is a consideration for later phases.
13:28:00	Abigail	Is there any specified AI/ML components that you are looking for?	No, interested in all approaches.
13:28:00	anonymous user	I assume high energy laser (HEL) solutions are non-kinetic, but discuss safety concerns related to HEL.	Lasers are considered non-kinetic, but safety is an issue. The proposed solution must include a safe way to employ the laser.
13:28:00	DONI	Is a detection and classification-only Phase I approach within scope, or must proposals include defeat or neutralization capability?	Yes, a detection and classification-only Phase I approach is considered responsive and within scope.
13:29:00	Anonymous	Are there specific PMAs already identified as potential transition partners?	Not specifically, but likely customers include PEO(RAS).
13:29:00	Anonymous	Is the government driving any C2 integration requirements?	Not in Phase I, but interoperability and integration will become more important in Phase II.
13:30:00	Anonymous	With regard to non-kinetic kill, I understand that the desire is to not have the "solution" raining down following an attempted kill, but what about the UAS crashing down after a kill? Is that acceptable?	Yes, the UAS raining down is ok. It is a bit inconsistent since the UAS could be 54 lbs., but low damage from the effector (<i>but see note above</i>)
13:30:00	Hunter Burch	For non-kinetic effectors: does the effector itself need to have a >1 mile range or can low-SWAP effectors be deployed outside the ship/base to achieve the >1 mile effective range?	You can have a short-range effector if it can be loaded on something that can carry it out to the threat.

Time	Questioner	Question	Answer
13:30:00	anonymous user	For companies with relevant capabilities already developed, what mechanisms beyond traditional SBIR are available to accelerate transition and fielding? And, how is NAVAIR thinking about leveraging Phase III authorities to move faster once capability has been demonstrated?	You could submit a white paper to the NAVAIR North Stars BAA. Additionally, Phase III contracting is an option if you've had a previous SBIR award.
13:31:00	anonymous user	Do you fund solo founders or is it highly unlikely?	Small businesses just need to be small. It doesn't matter how small.
13:32:00	CJBV	Sub-topic 2: Can you elaborate more on anomaly detection for sub-topic 2? Isn't the detection of a swarm by itself considered an anomaly?	Yes, a swarm is an anomaly, but the focus is also on tracking the overall behavior of the swarm and identifying any sub-behavior or anomalous actions within it.
13:32:00	Anonymous	Can a firm be a prime on one submission and a sub another?	For the proposals this is not an issue. If both teams are selected for Phase I, it may be an issue.
13:32:00	anonymous user	For signature data, will datasets for training be provided or some other sort of detailed information that may assist in establishing the domain of the problem?	Datasets will not be provided. Solution should be able to adapt to multiple datasets.
13:32:00	KTS	Is there an architecture accepted or used by NAVAIR already so new capabilities can adapt or integrate with it?	We are not specifying a system to integrate with during Phase I.
13:32:00	anonymous user	Is there a priority platform and integration target for this open topic: ship self-defense, fixed installation, fixed-wing or rotary aircraft, ground, or an unmanned platform? Is there a size, weight, and prime-power envelope should we design to?	No, shipboard, ground-based, and shore-based defenses are equally important.
13:32:00	anonymous user	Sub-topic 1: Is there an expected minimum distance for recognition?	We are not specifying a specific minimum range due to the many variables involved.
13:32:00	anonymous user	Are solo founders or very small teams at a disadvantage?	The program is a small business program. Solo founders and small teams are welcome.
13:34:00	anonymous user	The instructions ask you to pick a subtopic and specify it in the proposal ID. How do you address that with multiple (integrated) subtopics?	You can specify that you are addressing more than one subtopic and mention it in your proposal.
13:35:00	anonymous user	Are RF directed energy weapons of interest for non-kinetic defeat?	Yes
13:39:00	anonymous user	Will adversary UAS RF signature datasets be made available to Phase I awardees to support development?	No datasets will be provided.
13:39:00	anonymous user	Should classification be focused on optical sensor approaches, radar signature/movement analysis, or a combination of both?	Any of the above is fine. We are not limiting it.
13:39:00	anonymous user	For non-kinetic defeat, what is an acceptable TRL for submission?	We are not specifying a required TRL. Speed of fielding is a consideration, but lower TRL solutions are welcome.
13:40:00	anonymous user	Sub Topic 1: Is drone-versus-bird discrimination, including reduction of false alarms from biological or environmental clutter, considered an important target-recognition problem for this topic?	Yes, it is a capability that would be nice to have and is considered fairly important.
13:40:00	anonymous user	Are there particular frequency bands of interest for RF/non-kinetic solutions?	No particular frequency bands of interest.
13:40:00	DONI	Is a detection and classification-only Phase I approach within scope, or must proposals include defeat or neutralization capability?	Yes, a detection and classification-only Phase I approach is considered responsive and within scope.
13:41:00	Barclay Fitzpatrick	Would a Group 3 UAS that can act as a platform for significantly extending the range of non- or low-kinetic defeat systems be in scope for this Topic?	Yes
13:41:00	anonymous user	What are your expectations by the end of Phase I, II, etc.?	Phase I is a feasibility study. By the end of Phase II, we expect to see a working prototype and aim for a prototype demonstration event.
13:46:00	anonymous user	Subtopic 3: If kinetic defeat meets range and cost requirements but slightly more kinetic than bird shot, would it be of interest?	It would be considered. Ground-based defenses lean towards lower kinetic, while ship-based defenses may have more wiggle room (<i>see note above</i>)
13:46:00	CJBV	Sub-topic 2: What are your expectations for the deployment of protective measures?	Undefined at the moment. It could be agnostic—detecting and tracking, then handing off to other options for protective measures.
13:47:00	anonymous user	How many phase-1 proposals will be awarded?	A typical open topic is 10-20 awards.

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13:49:00	anonymous user	For Area 1, how much weight does a working prototype carry in evaluation? Is it a major factor, or one input among many?	It is an advantage, but we also encourage proposing great ideas that might still be at low maturity.
13:49:00	Abigail	Does a working model have advantage over MVP/ideas?	Yes, it is an advantage, but we do not want to dissuade anyone from submitting lower maturity ideas.
13:49:00	anonymous user	For companies with relevant capabilities already developed, what mechanisms beyond traditional SBIR are available to accelerate transition and fielding? And, how is NAVAIR thinking about leveraging Phase III authorities to move faster once capability has been demonstrated?	You could submit a white paper to the NAVAIR North Stars BAA (https://www.navair.navy.mil/North-Stars). Additionally, Phase III contracting is an option if you've had a previous SBIR award.
13:50:00	anonymous user	How many submissions do you anticipate for this open call?	A typical open topic call usually receives between 120-160 proposals. We have no anticipation with how many proposals we will receive for this call.
13:50:00	Anonymous	Can you expand on kinetic defeat requirements...specially firing small caliber. .22-.45 caliber, from another drone against threat meet your requirement?	Firing a small caliber from another drone (like one shot per kill in the air) produces lower collateral damage and would likely be acceptable. <i>(see note above)</i>
13:51:00	Jeff Szielenski	What if we want to partner up with or join another small business to tackle this SBIR. Is there a directory of sorts to network?	We do not have a directory to work through, but you could review awards at SBIR.gov for firms working in related technologies.
13:53:00	anonymous user	Can Phase I prototypes use Chinese-sourced components?	No, Chinese-sourced components cannot be used.
13:53:00	anonymous user	Are there requirements or restrictions against AI-generated proposals?	Proposals must be genuine and accurately reflect the company's capabilities. AI shouldn't be used to fabricate experience.
13:56:00	anonymous user	Are lasers on drones considered no-kinetic?	Yes, lasers are considered non-kinetic.
13:57:00	Jeff Walker	Are there caliber limitations for the Subtopic 3?	We didn't put a specific cap or line on the caliber.
13:58:00	anonymous user	General Question: Is there a link that describes how to format and submit of a Phase 1 proposal?	Please see the instructions at http://www.navysbir.com
13:59:00	DONI	Is a detection and classification-only Phase I approach within scope, or must proposals include defeat or neutralization capability?	Yes, a detection and classification-only Phase I approach is considered responsive and within scope.
13:59:00	anonymous user	How much funding are you expecting to be available? When will this be known?	The Phase I Base must have a period of performance of six (6) months at a cost not to exceed \$200,000. The Phase I Option, if exercised, must have a period of performance of six (6) months at a cost not to exceed \$115,000.
13:59:00	anonymous user	For low cost solutions regarding defeat systems, is this directed at the entirety of R&D, or more about the cost of the final product/solution? In other words, should the phase 2 prototype be expected to be lethal, or would low-power prototypes, along with a plan and cost analysis for taking it to high-power be acceptable?	A Phase II low-power prototype that has a clear path to becoming a lethal capability would be acceptable.
14:00:00	anonymous user	Apologies if this was already covered, "Which C-UAS mission is of greatest interest or importance? Shipboard protection, ground-mobile expeditionary protection, or base defense?"	All are equally valuable. No single application is assigned greater importance.
14:01:00	anonymous user	Are you interested in wearable or body-worn C-UAS detection for individual warfighters, or is the focus on platform-mounted and deployable sensors?	We are interested in solutions across the board—both stationary and portable/body-worn.
14:04:00	anonymous user	Sub topic 2: How many drones is considered a swarm under this topic? Does the topic encourage robust solutions to when a single drone is in the environment?	We are looking for solutions for both single drones and swarms. There is no specific number defined for a swarm.
14:05:00	anonymous user	Would you consider an open, scalable, and secure cUAS compute and sensor platform that can integrate and operate multiple awardee solutions? This cUAS platform will have US-sourced mobile operating system, AI-ready hardware, sensors (including RF), and very secure communications.	Yes, we would consider that.
14:07:00	DONI	Is a detection and classification-only Phase I approach within scope, or must proposals include defeat or neutralization capability?	Yes, a detection and classification-only Phase I approach is considered responsive and within scope.

Time	Questioner	Question	Answer
14:08:00	anonymous user	Subtopic 3: regarding 'low kinetic,' I know this is the grey zone, but how would a small caliber (12ga) low mass command-airbursting grenade rank in terms of low collateral risk?	As long as it minimizes collateral damage (low kinetic), it will be considered. The goal is to avoid heavy amounts of lead falling over populated areas. <i>(see note above)</i>
14:08:00	anonymous user	What separates winning proposals from losing ones in your experience?	Recommend https://www.sbir.gov/tutorials/preparing-proposal
14:08:00	anonymous user	General Question: Can I send a description of a system to the email to get a reply about if it would be considered?	Questions should be clarifications on the topic; evaluations of potential proposals will not be provided.