



## **Drone Dominance**

### **Request For Solutions (RFS) Question & Answer | Date: October 7, 2026**

#### **Drone Dominance Phase III Q&A Batch #2, Posted 09 October 2026**

##### **CQB**

- 1. Question:** RFS Table 3-2 states Mission Range <3 km with no one-way vs out-and-back definition. Confirm whether <3 km is one-way attack distance and whether it is with or without payload.
- Answer:** CQB is a one-way attack mission. 3KM is anticipated max one-way distance. Yes, CQB drones will have a payload.
- 2. Question:** Are (Mission B) applicants expected to fly the fiber needed for a 3km mission and carry a lethal payload on 5" diameter rotors? The rotor diameter, in our experience, is too small to carry that large of a payload with favorable flight characteristics and efficiency.
- Answer:** Fiber is optional, not required. The lethal payload weight is not specified by the program and should be right sized to the intended lethal effects.
- 3. Question:** If a design change improves performance (e.g., moving to larger propellers for better flight time and lift) but exceeds the CQB size requirement, should vendors demonstrate the compliant configuration or the better-performing one? Would the non-compliant configuration be disqualified?
- Answer:** No. The CQB size in the RFS reflects warfighter preferences and is not a hard requirement, so exceeding it will not result in disqualification. Vendors should submit the configuration they believe will perform best in the mission. Warfighter feedback, portability and packability are part of how mission performance is evaluated.
- 4. Question:** For Mission B, what flight-control behavior is expected: acro mode, stabilized mode, or the ability to switch between them in flight?
- Answer:** No specific flight mode is required. Evaluation focuses on the system's overall ability to accomplish the mission, and vendors may use whatever flight-control approach best supports mission success. Note that warfighters of varying skill levels may prefer the option to switch between modes in flight.
- 5. Question:** Section 3 (Table 3-2) of the RFS states a 'preference for 6+ air vehicles in a single backpack, with all required equipment being dispersed across 2-3 personnel maximum'. Is fitting exactly 6+ vehicles into a single backpack a strict, disqualifying requirement, or is it acceptable if the total system (6+ drones and all required control equipment) can be comfortably carried and dispersed across the 2-3 person team using standard carrying systems?
- Answer:** It is not a strict requirement.

##### **Deep Strike**

- 6. Question:** Will a fix wing solution be favorably positioned for Mission A (deep strike, gauntlet 3)?
- Answer:** We do not anticipate fixed wing drones being used in Mission A.



**7. Question:** Should vendors expect direct RF line-of-sight between the ground station and the drone during Gauntlet III Mission A lanes, or non-line-of-sight conditions like terrain masking? If the latter, will the Government provide terrain profiles?

**Answer:** Vendors should not expect direct RF line-of-sight between the ground station and the drone during Mission A lanes. The Government will not provide terrain profiles.

### **Fiber**

**8. Question:** Is fiber scored in evaluation or only encouraged?

**Answer:** Fiber will be considered in the Advanced Features & Interoperability category.

**9. Question:** Do the Table 6-2 prices (\$5,000 Deep Strike / \$3,000 CQB) apply uniformly to every OWA air vehicle in an order, whether or not it is delivered with a fiber connection and spool?

**Answer:** Yes.

**10. Question:** Is the cost of the fiber spool on the required 20% of awarded units included within the per-drone price and absorbed across the full order? Does this also apply to the Gauntlet Production Sprint order?

**Answer:** If a drone company chooses to compete and deliver with fiber, then yes, these are both true.

**11. Question:** Is fiber completely optional, or do participants who include a fiber option receive additional points/benefits over those without fiber?

**Answer:** Fiber is optional but drones that have fiber may receive bonus points under Advanced Features & Interoperability category. The scoring framework will not be shared.

### **Interoperability**

**12. Question:** Are ATAK streaming requirements and open specs available for civilian vendors to meet the ATAK streaming interoperability standard?

**Answer:** Yes, please see the open source ATAK project.

**13. Question:** Is ATAK interoperability required by the Pitch and Fly or by the March Gauntlet?

**Answer:** Companies are not expected to demonstrate ATAK interoperability at the Pitch & Fly event. This will be evaluated at G3.

### **Lethality**

**14. Question:** Which ESAD will be provided for MK118, and what mounting requirements apply?

**Answer:** Please contact the POC for MK118 as referenced in the RFS



**15. Question:** The Pitch Deck Template requires photographs of the aircraft with the payload installed and status indicators visible (slide 8). However, slide 10 permits submission of a munitions manufacturer letter if integration has not yet occurred. How should applicants that have not yet integrated the munitions satisfy slide 8?

**Answer:** Companies that have not satisfied slide 8 can reference the letter from a munitions provider and provide justification for how they will have integrated with a required training munition in time for the Pitch & Fly event.

Companies that have integrated with lethality providers prior to the submission of their Pitch Deck Application will be scored more favorably.

**16. Question:** Will the Government provide training payloads for the Pitch and Fly munition demonstration? If not, must vendors supply their own training munitions from an approved commercial provider?

**Answer:** Drone vendors are responsible for integrating with a commercial lethality provider for the Pitch & Fly event in order to showcase integration with a training munition.

**17. Question:** If warhead was qualified for GII Lethality Challenge, is GIII Arena Testing required?

**Answer:** Yes it is still required

**18. Question:** Does the government expect to receive a response from Munition providers in response to GIII RFS? "

**Answer:** No, DDP does not. DDP will contact lethality providers to confirm drone / lethality integration plans.

**19. Question:** Is a Visible SAFE/ARM status indicator required on live payloads? "

**Answer:** Yes, on both the payload and on the end user device (goggles, display, laptop etc.)

**20. Question:** Will the USG procure the payloads for the January 8, 2027 arena testing?

**Answer:** Yes

**21. Question:** Does the government require only 1 trainer payload configuration suitable for both Mission A and Mission B?

**Answer:** Yes. Per the RFS: "Capable of simulating all proposed payload variants within a single configuration. Vendors shall not provide multiple distinct training payload systems to represent different payload variants." Refer to the table on page 6.

**22. Question:** Section 4 requires APEX for the NSWC-Crane solution and sUPI for the PMCCS solution. When will the APEX, sUPI, MK118, LoCo, and SHANK Interface Control Documents (ICDs) be made available to invited vendors, given integration with at least one training munition must be demonstrated at the Pitch & Fly event in early November?

**Answer:** Integration with 1 commercial training payload is required for the Pitch & Fly event. Government payloads are required for Gauntlet III. POCs for Government payloads are listed in the RFS.



**23. Question:** May sUPI support be deferred until a subsequent, agreed milestone, or is it mandatory for every commercial lethality provider at an earlier stage? If mandatory, please identify that stage.

**Answer:** sUPI and APEX are preferences for commercial lethality providers, but they are not required at this time.

Drone vendors will need to integrate with sUPI and APEX with Government payload solutions.

**24. Question:** We participated in Gauntlet II as a commercial lethality provider supporting winning drone teams. Our understanding is that the fast-track pathway for those teams also extends to their participating commercial lethality providers. Please confirm whether this understanding is correct.

**Answer:** Yes, lethality providers are named in the RFS.

**25. Question:** Under that pathway, must we submit a separate application or response by November 1, or is our participation established through our partnering drone vendors?

**Answer:** Lethality providers participation is established through partnering drone vendors. Lethality providers will be contacted by DDP to verify integration plans with drone vendor partners and have the opportunity to submit for Tranche 2 at that time.

**26. Question:** Please identify the governing requirements for lot definition, sampling, inspection/test characteristics, acceptance and rejection criteria, destructive testing, quality records, and disposition of failed samples.

**Answer:** This will be provided at a later date.

**27. Question:** Are units required for QAT, Arena testing, and SAD teardown included in contracted delivery quantities?

**Answer:** Included in delivery quantities

**28. Question:** Will efficacy results be reported separately for each commercial lethality provider, or only as part of the associated drone vendor's overall Lethality score?

**Answer:** Separately by commercial lethality provider

**29. Question:** Does the stated CMMC Level 2 self-assessment requirement apply directly to commercial lethality providers receiving separate contracts?

**Answer:** Yes.

**30. Question:** Can a single munition perform double-duty?

**Answer:** No, a single munition can not perform double-duty. A separate munition design should be used for AMAT and APERS.



### Misc

**31. Question:** If we are able to provide low-light/night camera capabilities on every airframe without increasing cost/supply chain do we need to strip this capability off and offer it as a modular component instead?

**Answer:** No, you may choose to offer above the minimum. This would be considered an additional capability under the Advanced Features & Interoperability category.

**32. Question:** If we submitted a video for Gauntlet 2 showing integration with the training munition and we're using the same esad/training munition but we improved the UAS, can we re-use that video?

**Answer:** Yes that is acceptable

**33. Question:** There is no "Submit a Solution" button on NSTXL's Opportunity Page.

**Answer:** This has been fixed.

**34. Question:** Will selected systems be returned after Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) teardown?

**Answer:** No, items are not returned after DCMA teardown.

**35. Question:** Will written documentation identifying the system and its disposition be provided if it is expended or lost during demonstration, or destroyed or disposed of following teardown?

**Answer:** No

**36. Question:** Where the providers are contracted separately, who is responsible for delivering the integrated system and obtaining Government acceptance: the drone vendor, the lethality provider, or each provider for its separately contracted items?

**Answer:** It is anticipated that drone vendors deliver drones, and lethality provider deliver payloads.

**37. Question:** Deferred Submission of CMMC UID Section C of the RFS references DFARS 252.204-7025(d), which requires the inclusion of a CMMC UID in the proposal. If an applicant does not yet have a CMMC UID and is currently preparing a CMMC Level 2 (Self-Assessment), may the applicant describe its assessment status in the October 12 application and submit the UID separately after completing the self-assessment? If so, by what date must the UID be submitted?

**Answer:** Yes, that is acceptable. However, all vendors must achieve CMMC Level 2 (Self-Assessment) prior to being award eligible.

### Pitch & Fly

**38. Question:** Are vendor pilots permitted to execute (or co-pilot) the 60-minute flight demonstration, or is flight execution strictly limited to warfighter pilots?

**Answer:** Within the 60 minute flight demonstration, vendors may demonstrate their system as long as warfighters also have time to fly.



**39. Question:** Could the Government provide a recommended agenda or required topic breakdown for the 90-minute pitch session?

**Answer:** Drone vendors will present their submitted Pitch Deck Template and answer questions.

**40. Question:** When will the Pitch & Fly event take place? When will the location and invitations be announced? Are the presentation and flight demonstration times allocated per company?

**Answer:** The Pitch & Fly event is anticipated to take place the week of Nov. 16 on the East Coast. The location & invitations will be announced approximately 1 week after the RFS closes. The approx. 90 minute presentation (which includes Q&A) and approx. 60 minute flight time is for each selected company for the mission area that they are accepted.

**41. Question:** FOIA Confidentiality Markings Section F of the RFS recommends marking business plans and technical data as "Business Confidential." May applicants include this designation in the footer of documents such as pitch decks, BOMs, and FOCI forms without violating the prohibition on modifying government-provided forms?

**Answer:** Yes companies may mark the pitch deck template as Business Confidential.

**42. Question:** Are we allowed to submit for both CQB and Deep Strike? Also, can we submit more than one aircraft for CQB?

**Answer:** You may submit one submission to each application area.

**43. Question:** What is required for the pitch portion of the pitch and fly?

**Answer:** Companies are responsible for pitching their Pitch Deck Slides. This will be the equivalent of an oral proposal with Q&A at the end.

**44. Question:** What specific capabilities are needed/evaluated during the November Pitch and Fly, i.e., real world EW, ATAK streaming, APEX/sUPI, fiber C2, etc.?

**Answer:** The Pitch & Fly event will emphasize the pitch deck template content. The flight time is for military operator evaluation to get hands on stick time with every system.

**45. Question:** Can/should we describe our planned iteration process/roadmap in our pitch deck?

**Answer:** You may use one of the backup/extra slide in the pitch deck for this information if you think its valuable for the government to understand.

### Pricing

**46. Question:** For Tranche 2, may vendors propose a different unit price for fiber-equipped drones than for non-fiber drones, or must a single unit price apply to the full block?

**Answer:** DDP is open to considering separate priced for fiber in Tranche 2.

**47. Question:** Please confirm whether the fixed per-drone prices in Table 6-2 (\$5,000 DS) are inclusive of the durable system components (1:20 GCS), 10% spares, night-vision modules, fiber kits, and the six CONUS



operator/SME training sessions, or whether those are separately funded. Section 6.2.1 requires night vision as a modular, field-swappable add-on on  $\geq 30\%$  of systems. Does an integrated EO/IR sensor providing day + low-light/thermal on 100% of air vehicles satisfy this, or must night vision be a physically removable module?

**Answer:** Yes, fixed per drone prices is inclusive of all of these components. If companies can offer 100% low light/thermal on 100% air vehicles, this is acceptable.

**48. Question:** Is Tranche 1 payment made per delivered batch or when the full order is complete? For the 400-drone production sprint, when is payment made after delivery?

**Answer:** Tranche 1 will be paid based on accepted batches. The 400 drone production sprint will be paid upon successful delivery and acceptance, approx. 30 days.

**49. Question:** If deliveries extend beyond five months, does the stated 20% price reduction apply only to units delivered late, or to the entire awarded quantity?

**Answer:** To the orders delivered late.

### Production Capabilities

**50. Question:** Are foreign companies (e.g., allied nation companies with non-US manufacturing) eligible to participate? Does having or establishing a U.S. location affect eligibility?

**Answer:** Foreign companies are eligible to participate. They must be compliant with the DDP Supply Chain Framework to include final assembly in the US. CAGE Code and CMMC self-level 2 certification are required.

**51. Question:** To demonstrate the capacity required by Sections 5.3 and 7.2 of the Request for Solutions (RFS) to produce at least 8,000 drones in five months and subsequently scale to more than 100,000 annually, may respondents present an integrated production plan combining allied-country subassembly capacity with U.S. final assembly capacity? How will existing capacity and committed expansion plans be evaluated, and what evidence is required at each milestone?

**Answer:** Yes, that is acceptable. It is up to the company to present the required evidence in their pitch deck application.

**52. Question:** Facility Photos Requirement (Minimum Six Photos) For the minimum six facility photographs requirement, if an applicant currently operates an established production facility overseas and is in the process of setting up Production Sprint capacity and U.S. final assembly capabilities, is it sufficient to submit photographs of the existing overseas production facility?

**Answer:** Yes, that is acceptable. Companies with overseas production should provide evidence on the ability to support DDP's timelines with setting up US manufacturing.

### Scoring

**53. Question:** Will additional capabilities beyond the baseline requirements, such as autonomy behaviors, receive bonus credit at Pitch and Fly and Gauntlet III, similar to how fiber-optic capability is treated?



**Answer:** Autonomy and fiber capabilities are both considered under the Advanced Features & Interoperability evaluation criterion. DDP will not share its scoring formula and which is weighted heavier.

### Supply Chain

**54. Question:** Does the no-Chinese-components rule apply to ground control equipment (including commercial gear like Meta Quest headsets), or only to the drone itself? If it does apply to ground equipment, why? ATAK runs on Samsung phones with Chinese chips across DoW, and NSA has approved those phones even for classified use after its own supply chain risk review.

**Answer:** It has to be in compliance with the supply chain framework and will be verified by the DCMA.

**55. Question:** We plan to upgrade components of our system (e.g., radio, compute, or sensors) after Pitch & Fly but before Gauntlet III. Can systems change between those events? If so, how should planned upgrades and their timelines be presented in the application pitch deck?

**Answer:** Yes, companies are allowed to iterate on their systems provided that they continue to be compliant with the DDP Supply Chain Framework. You may use some of the extra/backup slides with this content. All configuration changes should be communicated with the government and coordinated with DCMA for inspection/approval.

**56. Question:** Can systems demonstrated at Pitch & Fly event include components that don't meet the supply chain requirements (e.g., Chinese origin from an older production line), as long as the system is fully compliant by Gauntlet III?

**Answer:** Supply Chain is an evaluation criterion that is used throughout the entire span of all phases. Drones demonstrated at the Pitch & Fly event will be held at the pitch session. For companies selected to move onto Gauntlet III, these drones will be broken down by DCMA and scored. (For companies that do not move on, these systems will be returned.)

**57. Question:** Country of Origin for Lower-Tier BOM Components (Attachment C BOM) When preparing the BOM, some suppliers (for example, battery suppliers) may decline to disclose the origin of lower-tier components due to confidentiality or trade-secret concerns. What is the recommended approach in such circumstances?

**Answer:** Provide maximum level of detail possible. DCMA may ask for clarification after submission and will evaluate hardware once received.

### Testing

**58. Question:** Will Gauntlet III have EW (jamming, interference, etc.) beyond what was present at the Gauntlet II Qualifier and Gauntlet?

**Answer:** G3 is anticipated to be more difficult.

**59. Question:** Will there be an opportunity to demonstrate capabilities in progress that will be ready by the Gauntlet, specifically in autonomy assisted flight?

**Answer:** There is currently no plan to demonstrate in-progress capabilities. DDP will consider based on test schedule availability.



**60. Question:** If selected for the Pitch and Fly, how many flights/units are expected? If no requirement is there a recommended number of units?

**Answer:** Only one system is required, but it may be beneficial to bring a backup system.

**61. Question:** During pitch and fly, how much time will we have to train the operators?

**Answer:** The Pitch & Fly session will only use advanced warfighters. Vendors will be responsible for setting up the system. There is no dedicated training time built in. The entire stick time session is approx. 1 hour. Vendors are allowed and encouraged to help the warfighters with the drones.

**62. Question:** Will the Government use vendors' spectrum submissions (DD Form 1494 or Part 15 template) to coordinate and obtain operating authorization for Pitch and Fly? If vendors must apply separately, who is the authority and what are the deadlines?

**Answer:** Yes, the Government will use these forms for coordinating spectrum. DDP vendors will likely be required to provide additional information to the test ranges if selected for Gauntlet III.

**63. Question:** Will demonstrations at Pitch and Fly or Gauntlet III include flights or engagements over water? If so, what distances or other operating constraints should vendors expect?

**Answer:** The Pitch & Fly event will take place primarily over land.

**64. Question:** In GNSS-denied portions of Missions A and B, what drone behavior will be evaluated: manual controllability, position stability, or the ability to continue the mission autonomously using its own position estimate?

**Answer:** Evaluation focuses on the system's overall ability to accomplish the mission in GNSS-denied conditions, not on any specific navigation behavior. Vendors may use whatever approach (manual, autonomous, or a combination) best enables mission success.