The Power of the Innovation Network

More than twenty startups were recently awarded Small Business Innovation Research Phase II contracts by the Army during their xTech SBIR pilot competition. The purpose of the pilot is to accelerate technology prototypes for crucial Army capability gaps into military platforms. The Army was searching for technology solutions that could considerably improve Army platforms, Army weapons systems, or Army support systems, specifically in six key topic areas:

- Combat Vehicle Modernization – Advanced hybrid networks and cable management strategies
- Autonomous Navigation Sensor Technologies – Passive sensor that operate in Degraded Visual Environments (DVE)
- Advanced Real Time Global High-Resolution Environmental Information to Support Multi-Domain Operations
- Ultra Narrow-band Emergency Radio – Highly scalable, low data rate, LPD radio technologies
- Non-Lethal Vehicle Defense System – Technologies to protect manned/unmanned vehicles amongst local populations
- Condition-Based Maintenance for Combat Vehicles – Advanced prognostics and diagnostics techniques

MITRE's Bridging Innovation team played a role in increasing awareness of this solicitation to startups across their partnership network of accelerators, incubators, and co-working spaces. Specifically, MassRobotics, an innovation hub for robotics and connected devices in Massachusetts, shared the solicitation to the starups in their hub, alerting one such company, Nodar Inc., to the opportunity. Nodar submitted a proposal and was awarded a Direct to Phase II contract. Nodar develops and produces technology that enables long range 3D sensing with ultra-high fidelity depth maps at ranges to 1km. The technology also provides flexibility in how cameras can be mounted on autonomous vehicles and could be a significant capability for military off-road autonomous vehicles.

The MITRE team is very excited about the technology solutions that were discovered through this pilot and their potential to increase the capabilities of Army platforms. The MITRE team plans to continue to work with the Army to leverage these types of industry outreach efforts to discover additional technologies that can solve other Army critical challenges.

Additional information about the XTech SBIR can be found at:
https://www.arl.army.mil/xtechsearch/competitions/xtechSBIR.html