

Call for FY 2021 DoD Dedicated HPC Project Investment (DHPI) Proposals

Full Proposal submissions due by: 30 April 2021

Critical Dates:

Call for Proposals: **26 Feb 2021**

Proposal submission: **30 Apr 2021**

Service/Agency ranking provided to DHPI panel chair: **21 May 2021**

Anticipated award announcement: **July 2021**

A. Purpose

The DoD High Performance Computing Modernization Program (HPCMP) invites proposals for Dedicated High Performance Computing Project Investments (DHPIs). These are defined as two to four-year mission critical projects requiring small-scale laboratory or test center on-site HPC systems – targeting unique requirements.

B. Critical Elements of Proposal

Justification: The **main criterion** for considering a DHPI system is that the project's requirements cannot be met at a DoD HPCMP Supercomputing Resource Center (DSRC) due to **special, mission requirements**. DHPIs are commercially available systems used to support unique project requirements (custom built systems are not eligible for DHPI funding). Examples include:

1. real-time response
2. hardware-in-the-loop
3. embedded implementations
4. HPC-at-the-Edge and deployable HPC,
5. emerging HPC technologies (emergent technology should enable the solution for an application that otherwise cannot be addressed with DSRC resources), and
6. classification and availability requirements that cannot be met with HPCMP resources (submission of classified DHPI proposal is encouraged for best consideration). **Note: HPCMP offers HPC resources at collateral secret, secret/special access, TS special access, and TS/SCI.**

Improved application turnaround time that cannot be provided by shared resources is **not sufficient justification** for a proposal. The HPCMP provides two approaches for meeting out-of-the-ordinary computational requirements:

1. Advance Reservation System (ARS) is designed for short-term, intermittent HPC usage. ARS is regularly available to all DoD HPC users who have received HPCMP resource allocations from their organization.
2. Dedicated Support Partitions (DSPs) are designed for longer term, dedicated usage. DSPs require a proposal vetted through the appropriate HPC Service/Agency Principal, but proposals are considered throughout the year. Both of these require a Service/Agency allocation of computational time.

3. Prospective principal investigators should carefully consider whether their computational requirements might be met by one of these mechanisms before submitting a DHPI proposal.

Eligibility: All computational scientists and engineers in DoD research, development, test and evaluation, and acquisition engineering programs who are eligible to use HPCMP resources under the program's current guidelines may submit a proposal. Systems **can only be hosted at DoD, FFRDC¹, and UARC²** facilities (i.e. systems may not be hosted by or proposed for commercial organizations). Exceptions to the above site location restrictions of DHPIs require written concurrence from the HPCMP Director.

Co-location with DSRC: Although there is no requirement that a DHPI be co-located at a DSRC, the HPCMP will give additional consideration and weight to proposals that implement plans to co-locate the system within a DSRC to reduce facility modification, power/cooling, and/or system administration costs for the DoD, Service, or Agency. DHPI proposers are responsible for contacting DSRCs directly to investigate this option. The DSRC host organization is expected to prepare a business plan for hosting a DHPI that includes appropriate cost recovery. (Note: Such arrangements are not part of the DSRC but rather the DSRC host organization is leveraging facilities, personnel, etc. that may be beneficial to some DHPI proposers.)

Awards: Requested awards should not exceed \$2M without prior written concurrence from the HPCMP Director and **can only be used for the procurement of HPC hardware**. Selected DHPI sites **must provide funds for:**

1. facility preparation,
2. system operation and maintenance, and
3. software beyond that typically provided by the HPC system original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and required for basic system operation.

Partial awards may be granted, if appropriate. Funds to support **labor associated with this award are not eligible** for DHPI funds.

Financial Execution: The requestor's **ability to meet the financial execution schedule is paramount to award and post-award success**. DHPI systems require significant host organization resources and expertise to execute the necessary contracts for HPC systems. During the period after award the awardee will provide **quarterly status updates** to the HPCMPO regarding the progress and schedule for system award. If the DHPI system contract has not been awarded after a **maximum period of one year from award**, the HPCMP Office will re-evaluate the status of the project. Results from this evaluation **could result in an award rescission**.

Funding required for execution of this project will be coordinated by the HPCMP Business and Finance Office.

Proposal Composition: To be competitive the proposal should have the following characteristics.

1. Well written and concise.
2. Address all the stated factors in **Section D: Proposal Contents**.

¹ FFRDC – Federally Funded Research and Development Center

² UARC – University Affiliated Research Center

3. The “justification” needs to effectively capture the uniqueness of the request. **Classified proposals receive better scores when a classified proposal is submitted** that includes details on impact to Service/Agency mission. Speculative statements such as “might need to do above-secret computing later in project,” “customer wants us to have our own computer,” “our existing DHPI is at the end-of life”, etc. are insufficient.
4. The proposed system should be used to expand the benefits and uses of HPC to support the HPCMP mission objectives.
5. The proposed system should include detailed specifications to allow the reviewers to determine if the system matches the computational requirements stated in the proposal. Proposals with systems that are configured too small to address the stated requirements of the computational work are unlikely to produce the proposed results.
6. There are two sets of reviewers for DHPI proposals.
 - a. Service/Agency Principals: These reviewers, and their review teams, are responsible for determining the mission importance of the science and the potential for subsequent impacts. They will review the sections titled “DoD Relevance” and “Technical Approach” along with other elements of the proposal to produce a Service/Agency score.
 - b. HPCMP DHPI evaluation panel: These reviewers are responsible for determining the soundness of the computational elements of the proposal. They will focus on the configuration of the proposed system, the proposer’s capability to field a DHPI, and the numerical and computational elements (“Computational Approach”). The proposal should have a strong technical basis and include domain experts in the appropriate disciplines.

C. Process, Evaluation, and Post Award

Questions and Proposal submission:

Submitters should ensure that their submissions have been vetted and endorsed by their organizational executive leadership. All questions should be directed to the email site below.

All unclassified communications and proposals (**single file in PDF format**) should be submitted to

dhpi2021@hpc.mil

Classified communications and proposals should be coordinated by contacting the HPCMP at the above email address. Specific instructions will be provided to facilitate classified proposals.

Selection Process:

1. After submission to the HPCMP Office **each Service/Agency’s** HPC Advisory Panel (HPCAP) member’s review team will down-select proposals.
 - a. The primary focus will be the determination of the mission importance **for the science** and the **potential for subsequent impact**.
 - b. Proposals must be endorsed and prioritized by the Service/Agency HPCAP member prior to HPCMP consideration. The Service/Agency principal’s scoring will provide succinct information regarding the relative priority of the submitted proposals.

2. The Service/Agency principal will submit the Service/Agency rankings to the DHPI panel chair.
3. The HPCMP DHPI evaluation panel will consider the factors detailed in the “Proposal Contents” section of the proposal. The HPCMP DHPI evaluation panel will independently score each proposal. The DHPI panel chair will then facilitate the aggregation of Service/Agency scores with the DHPI evaluation panel’s scores. If required, the DHPI panel chair will communicate with Service/Agency principal(s) to resolve any differences in scoring between the two review panels.

HPCMP DHPI Evaluation Panel Process:

A review panel convened by the HPCMP will evaluate proposals against the following criteria:

1. Merit of the proposed project (Sections 3 and 5): Based on the project’s goals, solution approach, and technical quality, does the project represent a potential **significant contribution and impact** to the RDT&E and/or acquisition engineering community?
2. Computational approach used to address the project’s requirements (Sections 4 and 5).
 - Based on software applicability, software scalability, and anticipated large-scale computational requirements, can the project effectively leverage the requested resources?
3. Potential for significant progress (Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, and 14):
 - Based on the team’s track record, staff’s qualifications, and software readiness, does the project have the potential to complete the proposed work?
4. Resource appropriateness and O&M/facilities support quality (Sections 9, 10, 11, and 12).
 - Is the proposed hardware the right system for the proposed work?
 - Is the host organization capable of deploying and sustaining the resource for the life of the project?
5. Does the proposed system expand the benefits and uses of HPC in a way that supports the HPCMP mission objectives?
6. Does the host organization have a contracting approach for acquiring the proposed system and its life-cycle support that that will meet HPCMP’s financial execution requirements?

The above criteria are of equal importance. All evaluations will be used to formulate a proposed set of awards for consideration by the DHPI selection authority (Director, HPCMP). ***Only technically sound, mission critical projects that cannot otherwise be executed via the use of DSRC resources will be considered.***

Post Award Project Review Schedule:

DHPIs are reviewed by the HPCMP **semi-annually** against proposed milestones. **Annually** the DHPI project leader **must present a progress report (both a paper and a presentation)** to the HPCMP. This report should include such information as:

1. How the system has been utilized.
2. The level of utilization.
3. Significant **impacts realized** from DHPI usage.
4. Plans for the next year’s use of DHPI with **potential impacts**.
5. Any milestone delays and the reason.

D. Proposal Contents

Proposals are limited to **15 pages** (single-spaced, standard 12-point font, one-inch margins) and **must be a single PDF document**. The cover page, executive summary, system quotation, certification of operations and/or maintenance support, and curricula vitae do not count against the 15-page limit. Proposals must contain the following sections – ordered and numbered as indicated. Suggested lengths for each section are provided. Proposals that do not conform to this structure may be returned without further evaluation.

Cover Page: Include the proposal cover page (template provided). Does not count toward the 15-page proposal.

Summary Page: (Length: **1 page maximum**; see example at end of document)

- *Title:* Provide the title of the project.
- *DoD Impact:* Briefly discuss the projected DoD impact.
- *Technical Goals:* Briefly summarize the technical objectives.
- *Technical Approach:* Briefly summarize the technical approach.
- *Dedicated HPC Hardware³:* Provide a brief description of the hardware requirements including the size and type of the proposed dedicated HPC system. A system quote of the proposed hardware is required.
- *Special Circumstance(s):* Summarize the reason(s) why this project requires dedicated HPC hardware and any special circumstances such as security requirements.
- *Major Applications Software:* List major applications software that will be used.
- *Technical and Computational Challenges:* Summarize any anticipated technical and computational challenges.
- *Duration:* Specify the duration of the project.

Proposal Structure

1. Executive Summary (Length: no more than 1-2 pages. Does not count toward the 15-page proposal limit)

Documentation of requestor's organizational abilities to meet financial execution requirements should be incorporated into the Executive Summary.

2. Introduction: (Length: approximately ½ to 1 page)

Introduce the project in broad terms. Include a general discussion of ongoing related work in both your organization and the scientific, technology, and/or testing community.

3. DoD Relevance: (Length: approximately ½ to 1 page)

Clearly state the DoD mission relevance of the proposed work and potential impacts from the effort including what current and future defense systems it will support, if any.

³ The DoD HPCMP is required to comply with DFARS 225.7012 (cannot purchase a supercomputer unless it is manufactured in the United States). DHPI systems are also subject to these DFARS.

4. Technical Approach: (Length: approximately 2-4 pages)

Clearly state the technical goals of the project and discuss the science, technology, and/or engineering steps that are required to meet these goals. Provide a project plan for achieving these goals. Discuss technical challenges that will likely be encountered during the course of the project.

5. Computational Approach: (Length: approximately 2-4 pages)

Describe the computational methodology and algorithms, and estimate the size and structure of the problem with as many supporting details as possible. State the advantage to be gained by exploiting HPC capability. Discuss in detail the applicability and readiness of any software targeted for use by the project, particularly as the software relates to the proposed dedicated hardware. It is important that **application codes be fully developed and ready to port to the proposed hardware at the onset of the project**. Provide evidence of the benefit of the application of high performance computing to improving mission efficiency (For example, HPC would substantially reduce time to compute solutions for large run matrices or provide for increased accuracy or resolution in results obtained) or software efficiency on scalable systems by plotting the performance as a function of the number of processing cores for each code that is to be used for the project. Discuss the computational challenges that will likely be encountered during the course of the project.

6. Milestones/Deliverables: (Length: approximately 1 to 2 pages)

Provide a schedule in tabular form that lists milestones, deliverables, and mission impacts spanning the life of the project. The schedule should include the acquisition schedule for the system, testing and stabilization of the system and the subsequent project milestones. Dates can be expressed as a function of date of availability of funding. **HPCMP funding** is expected to be made available within 60 days after award.

7. Progress to Date: (Length: approximately ½ to 1 page)

Discuss any progress to date, providing evidence of preliminary work. Discuss the work that remains and why it must now be performed via a DHPI.

8. Key Personnel: (Length: approximately ½ to 2 pages)

Present key personnel, including those intended to provide operations and maintenance support for the system. Summarize the background of each participant, highlighting relevant previous work, and discuss why their qualifications suit them for their proposed role in this project.

9. Justification for Dedicated Resources: (Length: approximately ½ to 1 page)

Clearly explain why the proposed work requires dedicated resources and cannot be performed at a DSRC.

10. Description of Required Resources: (Length: approximately 1-2 pages)

Fully describe the proposed system and justify each of its attributes (e.g. system size, system type, processors, accelerators [if any], memory, interconnect, O/S, storage, login nodes, external network interfaces) as they relate to project requirements. Also justify any system software (e.g., batch schedulers and compilers). Address any aspects of your physical or computational infrastructure (e.g. DREN connectivity, floor space, power, cooling, and application software licenses) that will be required to support the proposed hardware solution and provide evidence that such facility requirements will be addressed by the supporting organization.

11. Ability to Operate and Maintain a HPC System: (Length: approximately 1-2 pages)

Identify where the dedicated system will be placed and who will be responsible for system operation and maintenance.

12. System Quotation: (Does not count toward the 15-page proposal limit)

It is required that a system quotation (from within 90-days prior of proposal submission) be included to provide further details of the required resources. Quotations should include all elements intended for purchase using the DHPI funds. If some elements are quoted costs and some estimated costs, please denote such. System quotations typically expire prior to DHPI project awards, and are, therefore, only used as a sample quote representing a potential configuration and its respective cost. Annual maintenance costs, extended warranties, and other support costs included in any submitted quotes will not be considered as part of the DHPI costs to be borne by the HPCMP.

13. Certification of O&M Support: (Length: 1 page. Does not count toward the 15-page proposal limit)

A letter from an appropriately authorized executive official (a member of the Senior Executive Service) of the supporting organization MUST be included stating that the organization will fund the site preparation and operations and maintenance costs of the system for the duration of the project.

14. Curricula Vitae: (Does not count toward the 15-page proposal limit)

Include curricula vitae (at most 2 pages each) for key personnel, listing relevant publications.

DHPI Proposal Checklist

Based on the HPCMP's past experience reviewing DHPI proposals, the following checklist is provided to assist *Proposers* in preparing their proposals. Proposals that do not meet the following preliminary requirements will not be reviewed.

1. The proposal must be provided as a **single PDF file**.
2. The project associated with the proposal must have an up-to-date entry in the HPCMP's requirements database that reflects its resource requirements.
3. The proposal must include a letter from an appropriately authorized **executive official of the supporting organization** stating that the organization will fund the site preparation and operations and maintenance costs of the system for the duration of the project. More specifically, **a maintenance contract on the HPC system, provided by the HPC system manufacturer, is required; self-maintenance is not allowed**.
4. The **proposed system must be 100% used for the proposed project**. Use of the system for other non-DoD, educational or commercial purposes is not allowed.
5. Justification that the resource requirements of the project cannot be met at a DSRC (using standard queues, the ARS, or a DSP).

The *Proposer* is strongly encouraged to address the following suggestions. Proposals that fail to do so will still proceed through the review process, but will be at a disadvantage.

1. The required CVs of the project personnel should include background and experience relevant to the proposed project. Staff roles should be described in Section 8. Lengthy, verbose CVs are discouraged.
2. A quotation from a HPC vendor is required (proposed by vendor within 90-days prior to proposal submission).
3. Projects that involve significant amounts of algorithm/software development will be viewed as **unready** to use HPC equipment.
4. Data demonstrating the scalability of the proposed software should be included. The size of the proposed system should be justified by the resource requirements of the software; i.e., the total expected number of runs at expected core counts should generally consume the proposed hardware.
5. Hardware requests should be limited to HPC-system equipment. Requests for PCs, networking equipment, chillers, or other hardware deemed to be auxiliary in nature are not appropriate.
6. Requests for small amounts of HPC features not crucial to the project and to be used for preliminary investigations are not appropriate (e.g., requesting a 100-node cluster with two GPU-equipped nodes "just so we can see how they work").
7. Proposals that cannot address required items due to classification sensitivity **should submit a proposal that is classified**. Contact the HPCMP to discuss how a classified proposal should be submitted.
8. Multi-site proposals should carefully justify why multiple sites are required. If the proposal includes hardware at multiple sites for unrelated (or only loosely related) projects, then multiple proposals should be submitted.

9. Schedule milestones should be substantive and measurable. Vague milestones that will be met by default (e.g., “work on input data”) are discouraged.
10. **A DHPI is not the appropriate funding vehicle for ongoing operational computing requirements.** Additionally, if a subject agency’s first DHPI, if any, has already demonstrated a proof-of-concept and/or innovative use of HPC technology, subsequent DHPI proposals that address the same requirements will be at a significant disadvantage in the evaluation process.
11. The ability to achieve financial execution expectations are essential and should be well documented.

Example Summary Page

Real-time Image and X-scan Processing for Discernment of Theatre Bridge Integrity

Requirements Project Number: ARMY123456

DoD Impact: In 2014, the Army lost over 30 tanks to compromised bridges, and had to slow the advance of its forces into enemy territory, as it mitigated losses through manual inspection of bridges and in-the-field calculation of structural integrity (determined to have an accuracy of only 51%). The proposed implementation will provide highly accurate discernment of bridge strength with quick turn-around (~5 minutes), allowing the rapid, safe advance of forces.

Technical Goals: Real-time determination of bridge integrity prior to crossing potentially compromised, weak structures with heavy battlefield assets

Technical Approach: Soldiers will transmit multiple images and X-scans of the target structure via a live link between the battlefield and the DHPI system. X-scans reveal discontinuities in the density of structural members and identify the material used to form each member via a database of X-scan profiles for 1 million possible known materials. Image and X-scans will be processed using the advanced XYZ method for automatically determining the load that each square inch of a structure's surface can bear, thereby, identifying a strategic path for crossing a target bridge. AutoBridgeAnalyzer developed by the ABC agency will be used to apply the XYZ method, using structured grids.

Dedicated HPC Hardware: 512 compute core shared memory system with 1GB of memory per core; 2 additional nodes for image and scan preprocessing; 1 addition node for communication with the satellite earth station; 10 TB of scratch disk space; 1 GigE interconnect or better; Linux OS; must not exceed 4 racks; must not exceed 45kW

Special Circumstances: TOP SECRET, real-time response required

Major Applications Software: AutoBridgeAnalyzer

Technical and Computational Challenges: The XYZ method is new and has not been applied in the field, although controlled experiments have shown that its accuracy is consistently 99% at one square meter resolution and 90% at one square inch resolution. AutoBridgeAnalyzer is memory and communications intensive and benefits greatly from shared memory.

Duration: FY 2020 – FY 2023 (4 years)

Acronyms

ARS	Advanced Reservation System
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DHPI	Dedicated High Performance Computing Project Investment (HPCMP)
DREN	Defense Research and Engineering Network (HPCMP)
DSP	Dedicated Support Partition
DSRC	DoD Supercomputing Resource Center (HPCMP)
FFRDC	Federally Funded Research & Development Center
GPU	Graphics Processing Unit
HPC	High Performance Computing
HPCAP	High Performance Computing Advisory Panel (HPCMP)
HPCMP	High Performance Computing Modernization Program
O/S	Operating System
O&M	Operations & Maintenance
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
PDF	Portable Document Format
RDT&E	Research, Development, Test and Evaluation
SCI	Sensitive Compartmented Information
TS	Top Secret
UARC	University Affiliated Research Center

FY 2021
DoD Dedicated HPC Project Investment (DHPI)
Proposal Cover Sheet Template

All fields must be completed

Project Title ¹ : ▶			
▶			
Requirements Project Number ² : ▶			
▶			
Funding Amount Requested ³ : ▶	Duration of Project: ▶	Security Classification ⁴ : ▶	CTA & COI ⁵ : ▶
Government Point-of-Contact: (name, title, phone, email) ⁶ ▶			
Name ▶		Title ▶	
Phone ▶		Email ▶	
Sponsoring Service/Agency and Organization: ▶			
▶			
DHPI Project Leader: (name, title, phone, email) ⁷ ▶			
Name ▶		Title ▶	
Phone ▶		Email ▶	
Proposer's Government Contracting Official for DHPI Acquisition: (name, title, phone, email) ⁸ ▶			
Name ▶		Title ▶	
Phone ▶		Email ▶	

Comments and explanation in table above

Comments:	
¹ Unclassified project title	
² Provide the project number(s) (as reflected in the HPCMP requirements database) representing the project requirements that the DHPI will address. A proposal cannot be considered unless its resource requirements are reflected in the HPCMP's requirements database. More info can be found at: https://centers.hpc.mil/users/index.html Please contact require@hpc.mil for further details.	
³ Dollar amount requested for HPC hardware; cannot exceed \$2.0 million without prior written concurrence from the Director of the HPCMP; cannot include facility preparation, maintenance, labor, or software beyond that typically provided by the HPC equipment OEM and required for basic system operation.	
⁴ The classification of the requested system at full operating capacity.	
⁵ CTA & COI: List the computational technology area (CTA) that best fits this project (see https://www.hpc.mil/index.php/technology-areas/computational-tech-areas). List the DoD Community(ies) of Interest (COIs) that best fit this project (see https://www.acq.osd.mil/chieftechnologist/COIs.html)	
⁶ This person is the primary contact for all interactions with the HPCMP.	
⁷ Only one person should be listed here. This individual is responsible for all interactions with the HPCMP office regarding their proposal and all interactions with other parties associated with the proposal.	
⁸ The primary individual responsible for interactions with the HPCMP Business and Finance office. The requestor's ability to meet the financial execution schedule is paramount to award and post-award success . DHPI systems require significant host organization resources and expertise to execute the necessary contracts for HPC systems. If the DHPI system contract has not been awarded after a maximum period of one year from award , the HPCMPO will re-evaluate the status of the project. Results from this evaluation could result in an award rescission .	