

PPI4HPC: European Joint Procurement of Supercomputers Launched

Several European supercomputing centers have started a joint effort to buy their next generation of supercomputers within a Public Procurement of Innovative solutions (PPI). This PPI is co-funded by the European Commission and a fraction of the supercomputing resources will be made available to European scientists through PRACE.

Five partners from four different countries agreed to coordinate their procurement activities to facilitate a joint procurement: BSC from Spain, CEA and GENCI from France, CINECA from Italy and JSC from Germany. The procedure is organized in four different lots such that in each country next-generation supercomputing systems can be realized.

A PPI is a new funding instrument, which the European Commission (EC) introduced with the H2020 framework. It aims on promoting innovation through public procurement by providing financial incentives for the public sector acting as launching customer for innovative products and services. It requires public procurers that face challenges requiring solutions which are almost on the market but are not yet available at scale. This scenario is well-known for leading supercomputing centers.

The PPI4HPC project implements a PPI with several goals in mind. First of all, it wants to foster science and engineering applications in Europe by providing more computing resources. It furthermore wants to promote research and development on HPC architectures and technologies in Europe by requesting strong relationship between the procurers and the suppliers for large scale testing, tuning and maturation. Finally, it aims for creating a greater weight and more impact on common topics of innovation in the area of HPC. This should lead to solutions designed according to the need of scientists and engineers in Europe.

For preparing the joint tender documentation the project, which officially started in April 2017, performed already market consultations. In this context, an Open Dialogue Event has been organized in Brussels on September 6 (see Fig. 1). More in-depth technical discussions happened during meetings of the group of procurers with individual vendors. A joint contract notice is planned to be published in April 2018. Thereafter, in each of the countries, competitive dialogues will take place resulting in the award of one contract per lot. Systems are planned to be installed in the time frame 2019-2020.

The PPI4HPC is performing steps towards stronger coordination of the activities of different European supercomputing centers towards exascale. The co-funding by the EC will allow for a significant enhancement of the planned pre-exascale HPC infrastructure from 2018 on.

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References

[1] <http://www.ppi4hpc.eu>

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Pictures



Figure 1: Sergi Girona (BSC) provides the welcome address during the Open Dialogue Event in Brussels on September 6, 2017.