



National Science Foundation
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NSF 11-030

Frequently Asked Questions: Regarding High Performance Computing System Acquisition: Enhancing the Petascale Computing Environment for Science and Engineering ([NSF 11-511](#))

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1. **Why has "voluntary committed cost sharing" been prohibited in the proposal and what does this mean?**

Proposals submitted or due on or after January 18, 2011, are subject to the revised *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG), [NSF 11-1](#), including revisions to NSF's policy regarding cost sharing. For additional information, please see the [PAPPG](#) and the associated FAQs on cost sharing (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=costsharefaqs).

2. **Are vendor discounts considered cost-sharing?**

No, vendor discounts are not considered cost sharing. Please see the [PAPPG](#) for the definition of cost-sharing, and if necessary, consult with your Authorized Organizational Representative.

3. **Is providing power considered cost sharing?**

Maybe. If explicit power costs are identified in the proposal, but not included in the proposed budget, then funding of those power costs by the proposing institution would be considered cost sharing. When developing the proposal budget, you may want to consult with your Authorized Organizational Representative regarding potential indirect cost implications.

If these resources are only described in the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources (FER) section of the proposal, then they are not considered cost sharing. Please see [Chapter II.C.2.j of the GPG](#) for a complete description of what should be included in the FER section of the proposal.

4. Does power count as part of the \$6M limit in operating expenses?

If power is part of the budget, it is included in the \$6M limit.

5. Is contributing the cycles of nodes purchased by other sources considered cost-sharing?

Maybe. If explicit costs for the cycles are identified in the proposal, but not included in the proposed budget, then funding of those costs by the proposing institution would be considered cost sharing. If these resources are only described in the FER section of the proposal, then they are not considered cost sharing.

6. Is providing archival storage, networking, visualization systems, or other "non-HPC System" resources that are necessary to do the science, but are complementary to the system, considered cost sharing? The solicitation says they can be included in the budget, but it does not say they have to be included.

Again, the answer is maybe. These costs may be included in the proposal budget. However, if explicit costs for these resources are identified in the proposal, but not included in the proposed budget, then funding of those costs by the proposing institution would be considered cost sharing. If these resources are only described in the FER section of the proposal, then they are not considered cost sharing.

7. Why is the timeframe so much shorter than in the past Track 2 solicitations?

The timeframe is dictated by the needs of the science and engineering community.

8. Does "capable of at least a petaflop" mean peak or sustained?

Yes. Of course, easily achieved sustained performance on a breadth of applications has higher value than peak. However, since performance is one aspect of the solicitation, the precise balance is determined by the proposer.

9. If I choose to provide domain specific capabilities, how will these be compared with general capabilities?

If domain specific capabilities are chosen for the innovative component of the proposal, this will be evaluated in the context of other innovative capabilities. The innovative capability is one dimension of the evaluation.

10. If up to \$5M is attributable to the "innovative capability" does this mean that I am limited in the amount to be spent on innovation?

It means that up to \$5M may be attributable "solely" to an innovative capability, exclusive of the general capability. If, however, there is no difference between the general and innovative capability, then the budget limit of the entire solicitation applies.

11. Is the innovative capability required?

Yes, an innovative capability is required.