

FAQs - Sovereign Defense Cloud for High-Performance Computing

Last updated June 9, 2026

Will the SDC replace the HPCMP's 5 DSRCs?

No, SDC nodes are not envisioned to replace the 5 DSRCs.

What GOV-owned HPC or AI systems should the proposed solution include as GFE?

The Government is seeking innovative solutions from industry; therefore, it is the discretion of the offeror to articulate in their submission any GFE necessary to achieve the solution presented. The tech challenge and the HPCMP Strategic Plan do not mandate the inclusion of specific, existing Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) as the foundation for the Sovereign Defense Cloud (SDC). The overarching vision for the SDC is a modernized, contractor-furnished ecosystem.

Should the proposed solution purchase and install any on-premises systems?

The Government is seeking innovative solutions from industry; therefore, it is the discretion of the offeror to articulate in their submission all requirements necessary to achieve the solution presented. The SDC is envisioned as a hybrid cloud model integrating both commercial cloud and on-premises resources, which would include advanced architecture and large-scale AI/HPC systems.

What classifications and caveats should the proposed solution include?

The submitted solution must support or allow consideration of support at all classification levels, including Unclassified, Secret, and Top Secret, along with caveats such as Special Access Program (SAP), Special Access Required (SAR), and Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI).

Should the proposed solution support user-developed foundational AI models and agentic workflows?

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How much compute, memory, and storage should the proposed solution accommodate?

The Government is seeking innovative solutions from industry; therefore, it is the discretion of the offeror to articulate in their submission how much compute, memory, and storage their solution can accommodate. Information regarding current HPCMP capacity can be obtained at hpc.mil.

What missions should the proposed solution anticipate?

HPCMP enables Research and Development (R&D), Test and Evaluation (T&E), digital engineering, sustainment, and operations.

How many SDC users does the GOV anticipate? How are they geographically distributed?

Specific quantities and geographical regions cannot be provided at this time. It is anticipated SDC users will directly map to the Department of War's operational realities across a range of geographies and long-term modernization goals.

Will all SDC users possess a common access card (CAC)?

Respondents should not constrain their proposed solutions by assuming a Common Access Card (CAC) is the sole or primary mechanism for user authentication.

What are the prerequisites to becoming an SDC user?

The exact, finalized prerequisites for becoming a Sovereign Defense Cloud (SDC) user remain undefined at this stage.

Does the SDC pIE need to preserve any HPCMP pIE functions, or will it be a greenfield endeavor?

No and it is not a complete greenfield endeavor.

What technical complexity levels must the required "concierge support services" include?

The support must include Level 3. The SDC will provide access to Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) with deep domain expertise in areas like advanced computing, AI/ML, and grand-scale problem-solving, which constitutes expert user assistance.

What funding ceiling does the GOV anticipate?

The tech challenge states that current funding is unavailable. It is the discretion of the offeror to articulate in their submission all requirements necessary to achieve the solution presented.

How should offerors treat commercial cloud consumption costs during Phase 2?

The Government is seeking innovative solutions from industry; therefore, it is the discretion of the offeror to articulate in their submission all requirements necessary to achieve the solution presented.

How many SDC awardees does the GOV anticipate?

The tech challenge explicitly maintains maximum flexibility, noting that the government may make one integrated award, multiple awards per focus area, or choose to make no awards at all.

When is this going to be awarded?

The award date for this effort is unknown at this time.

Will the government allow pages of the proposal to be in landscape format to accommodate graphics, tables, and charts?

No. The Government requires all pages to remain in standard portrait orientation. Strict adherence to standard formatting ensures submissions are comparable and equitable during the evaluation process.

Will the government permit the use of a smaller font size for graphics, charts, and tables?

No. The Government will not permit the use of a smaller font size for any section of the proposal, including graphics, charts, and tables. Enforcing a uniform font size across all standard formatting ensures submissions are comparable and prevents the circumvention of space constraints.

Can the government provide additional details on the number or scope of classification level environments to operate across?

No. The Government will not provide additional details regarding the classification environments at this time. Offerors must base their proposals on the requirements as currently stated in the solicitation. Evaluating all vendors against this standard baseline ensures submissions are comparable.

Can the government confirm that cover page, table of contents, acronyms list, tables, and diagrams are not counted towards the 5-page limit?

The cover page, table of contents, and acronym list are not counted towards the 5-page limit. However, all tables and diagrams will be counted towards the 5-page limit. Enforcing this page limit on all substantive content and standard formatting ensures submissions are comparable.

Can the Government clarify how it intends to execute Phase IV (Implementation & Scaling) from a contractual standpoint? Specifically, should offerors expect Phase IV to be a separate contractual action as either under a FAR or OTA authorities contractual instrument?

No. The strategy for future phases has not been finalized and remains at the Government's discretion. Offerors must base their submissions solely on the requirements and phases explicitly detailed in the current solicitation document.

Can the Government clarify what scope of work the ROM should cover for the solution brief? Specifically, should the ROM estimate include only anticipated Phase II prototype development efforts, or should expected activities for Phases III (Demonstration) and IV (Implementation & Scaling) also be incorporated?

No. The ROM estimate should not incorporate anticipated costs or activities for Phase III (Demonstration) or Phase IV (Implementation & Scaling). The ROM must strictly cover only the Phase II prototype development efforts as defined in the current solicitation.

The evaluation criteria for Feasibility references 'operational viability.' To ensure alignment with HPCMP objectives, will the Government please clarify the specific operational factors (e.g., environmental scaling, user adoption, change management) that evaluators will consider under this criterion?

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What mechanisms, evaluation criteria, or oversight processes will the government use to assess, verify, and ensure that solutions comply with requirements for open standards, modular system design, and interoperability across platforms and agencies?

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Can the government provide a clear definition of the expected scale of operations along with the projected workload requirements?

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Are there defined performance targets, service-level agreements (SLAs), or other measurable benchmarks that solutions will be expected to meet?

Not at this time.

Outside current resource management processes, will there be any additional constraints (e.g., limiting access to cloud service catalog) that will need to be applied to the SDC?

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To what extent does the Government intend to standardize the underlying HPCMP and DSRC environments (e.g., middleware stacks, schedulers, storage architectures, identity systems, policies), and how should offerors account for varying levels of standardization when assessing performance, integration complexity, and overall cost?

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Can the Government clarify which APIs, data formats, workload schedulers, and orchestration frameworks are currently required or in operational use within HPCMP/DSRC environments? Understanding these mandated or legacy components (e.g., Kubernetes, OpenStack, SLURM, PBS) will help ensure prototype designs are interoperable with existing systems.

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Please confirm the prototype is unclassified? If no, please explain.

The Government is seeking innovative solutions from industry; therefore, it is the discretion of the offeror to articulate their solution to include all requirements necessary to achieve the solution submitted.

Can the Government clarify which on premises HPCMP/DSRC resources will be available to support Phase II prototype activities, including the expected technical environment, cybersecurity requirements/enclaves, and the level of operational support provided to offerors from the HPCMP experts?

The Government is seeking innovative solutions from industry; therefore, it is the discretion of the offeror to articulate in their submission any GFE necessary to achieve the solution presented. The tech challenge and the HPCMP Strategic Plan do not mandate the inclusion of specific, existing Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) as the foundation for the Sovereign Defense Cloud (SDC). The overarching vision for the SDC is a modernized, contractor-furnished ecosystem.

Can the Government clarify the technical environment and integration boundaries that will be provided for Phase II prototype development? Specifically, which HPCMP/DSRC infrastructure components (compute, storage, and networking), workload schedulers, and identity management systems will be accessible to offerors, and will the prototype environment operate in isolation from production networks, data, and cybersecurity policies?

The Government is seeking innovative solutions from industry; therefore, it is the discretion of the offeror to articulate their solution to include all requirements necessary to achieve the solution submitted. Information regarding current HPCMP capacity can be obtained at hpc.mil.