

Four innovative public-private consortia leading the design of the European hybrid cloud platform for science

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The goal of the HNSciCloud €5.3 million joint PCP tender is to establish a European hybrid cloud platform that will support the high-performance, data-intensive scientific use-cases of these ten procurers and of the research sector at large. On November 2nd, the four successful bidding consortia were announced.



Over the coming 10-15 years, the generation of vast amounts of data created by scientific research domains will create enormous challenges for capturing, managing, and processing of this data. Europe is well aware of this enormous challenge, and that is why the European Commission, in April this year, launched the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) initiative. The vision of the EOSC is to offer Europe's 1.7 million researchers and 70 million science and technology professionals a virtual environment with open and seamless services for storage, management, analysis, and re-use of research data across borders and scientific disciplines free at the point of use.

Cloud computing services for the science sector are clearly a key enabler for the establishment of this environment and, given the critical mass of data that science is called to manage, in-house resources of single research institutes are not sufficient anymore. Public e-infrastructures and commercial providers need to be brought on board to tackle this new challenge.

This is why, earlier this year, ten of Europe's leading public research organisations [1]- with co-funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Programme - launched the Helix Nebula Science Cloud (HNSciCloud) Pre-Commercial Procurement. The goal of the HNSciCloud €5.3 million joint PCP tender is to establish a European hybrid cloud platform that will support the high-performance, data-intensive scientific use-cases of these ten procurers and of the research sector at large.

Out of 28 proposals from 12 countries submitted during the summer, 4 enter the Design Phase of the HNSciCloud PCP and are granted approximately 500,000€ in total.

The four successful consortia [2] were announced on November 2nd, in Lyon during the award ceremony. The ceremony was followed by around 80 participants, and the representatives of the four winning consortia presented their vision and approaches for the design of the hybrid cloud platform.

The tender called for the design and implementation of innovative Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) solutions for compute and storage, network connectivity, and Federated Identity Management and Service Payment Models.

"The tender was launched in July 2016 and closed on the 19th of September. The tender material was downloaded more than 200 times and more than 90 written questions were received. Overall, the bids that we received engaged 28 multinational companies, small medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as public research organisations. We are very pleased with the response to the tender and we would like to thank all the organisations that took the effort of submitting a bid. We realised it was a lot of work for those companies and we want to acknowledge it" says Bob Jones from CERN who is the coordinator of HNSciCloud.

Innovation is the common denominator of all the winning consortia. The contractors will now start working in parallel on the design of the future hybrid cloud platform. The results of the design phase will again be part of a competitive tender, of which only the three most convincing design studies will go to the next phase: Solution Prototyping.

More on the HNSciCloud award ceremony here www.hnscicloud.eu/events/hnscicloud-pcp-tender-results-announcement-ceremony-design-phase-kick-2-november-2016-lyon.

[1] The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Lead procurer; Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS); the Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (DESY); The European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL); the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility, ESRF; the Institut de Física d'Altes Energies (IFAE); The National Institute of Nuclear Physics (INFN); The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT); the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC); SurfSARA.

[2] 1. T-Systems, Huawei, Cyfronet, Divia; 2. IBM; 3. RHEA Group, T-Systems, exoscale, SixSq; 4. Indra, HPE, Advania, SixSq <http://snurl.eu/1C9T6z>

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Keywords

Helix Nebula The Science Cloud, Pre Commercial Procurement, Public Procurement of Innovation, Cloud Procurement, Cloud Computing, Infrastructure as a Service, Science Cloud, European Open Science Cloud, Tender, H2020, research institutes, commercial providers

Last updated on 2016-11-25

Category: New products and technologies

Provider: WIRE

Revision: 0