



PRACE Preparatory Access

Terms of Reference

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1 Terms of Reference

PRACE (*Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe*), the European research infrastructure on High Performance Computing (HPC), makes it possible for researchers from public and private institutions from across Europe and the world to apply for resources on high-end Tier-0 HPC systems via a centralised peer review process.

The objective of **PRACE Preparatory Access** is to allow PRACE users to optimise, scale and test codes on PRACE Tier-0 systems before applying to PRACE calls for *Project Access*. Production runs are not allowed as part of PRACE Preparatory Access.

Currently, PRACE offers the following schemes for Preparatory Access:

- **Type A:** this scheme is intended to produce scalability plots of the performance of the codes on PRACE HPC systems, as well as other parameters that may be relevant to apply for PRACE calls for *Project Access*. The maximum duration of Type A projects is 2 months.
- **Type B:** the objective of this scheme is to undertake code development and optimisation. Applicants will need to describe the proposed work plan in detail, including the human resources and expertise available to implement the project. The maximum duration of Type B projects is 6 months.
- **Type C:** in this scheme, PRACE experts are requested to provide the necessary support to undertake adaptations (development and optimisation) to the codes of PRACE users. The maximum support that can be requested is the equivalent to **6 person-months of effort**. The maximum duration of Type C projects is 6 months.
- **Type D:** this scheme allows PRACE users to start a code adaption and optimisation process on a **PRACE Tier-1 system**. PRACE experts help in the system selection process. In addition to Tier-1 computing time, the PRACE user will also receive Tier-0 computing time towards the end of the project (in form of the Type A scheme) to test the scalability improvements. The work is supported by PRACE experts. The maximum support that can be requested is the equivalent to **6 person-months of effort**. The maximum duration of Type D projects is 12 months.

The Call for Proposals for PRACE Preparatory Access Type A and Type B schemes is a continuously open call, with a maximum time-to-resources-access (start-date) of two weeks after the date of submission.

Requests for Type C and D scheme are evaluated and granted on a quarterly schedule, with cut-offs for evaluations to be set at 11:00 AM CEST / CET of the first working day of March,



June, September and December. Awarded proposals for Type C will have a maximum time-to-resources-access (start date) of two months after the relevant cut-off date.

Before the end of Preparatory Access projects, users are requested to provide a final report of their project, using the corresponding PRACE template form [available here](#).

The following table shows PRACE Tier-0 HPC systems and their current availability for Preparatory Access:

	Architecture	Type A	Type B	Type C
Curie, hosted by GENCI at CEA (France)	Bull Bullx Cluster	✓	✓	✓
Hazel Hen, hosted by GCS at HLRS (Germany)	Cray XC40	✓	✓	✓
JUQUEEN, hosted by GCS at JSC (Germany)	IBM BlueGene/Q	✓	✓	✓
Marconi, hosted by CINECA (Italy)	Lenovo NextScale	✓	✓	✓
MareNostrum, hosted by BSC (Spain)	IBM System X iDataplex	✓	✓	✓
Piz Daint, hosted by CSCS (Switzerland)	Cray XC30 System	✓	✓	✓
SuperMUC, hosted by GCS at LRZ (Germany)	IBM System X iDataplex	✓	✓	✓

The following table lists the PRACE Tier-1 HPC systems, which are available in the context of Preparatory Access **Type D**. The specific system will be selected by PRACE, but applicants can specify preferences:

	Architecture
ARCHER, hosted by EPCC (United Kingdom)	Cray XC30
Aris, hosted by GRNET (Greece)	Lenovo NextScale
Bem, hosted by WCSS (Poland)	Haswell based Cluster
Cartesius, hosted by SURFsara (Netherlands)	Bull Bullx B720/B710
CY-TERA, hosted by CaSToRC (Cyprus)	IBM System X iDataplex
GALILEO, hosted by CINECA (Italy)	Lenovo NextScale
Salomon, hosted by VSB-TUO at IT4I (Czech Republic)	SGI ICE-X
Sisu, hosted by CSC (Finland)	Cray XC40



1.1 How to Apply

All proposals must be submitted via the [Online Application Form](#).

All mandatory fields must be filled in before the application form can be submitted. After the form has been saved, applicants can still access and update it before final submission. No changes can be made after submission.

1.2 Eligibility

Proposals can be submitted by researchers from both public and private institutions. Only proposals with a civilian purpose will be eligible to participate in PRACE calls for proposals. PRACE Hosting Members may have further restrictions on who is eligible to access their own systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they are eligible to access the system(s) they have applied for.

Researchers from public research organisations are eligible to apply as long as the project leader has an employment contract with its institution valid for at least 3 months after the end of the allocation period.

Researchers from private companies are eligible to apply when the following criteria are fulfilled:

- a) The company has its head office or substantial R&D activity in Europe.
- b) The project leader has an employment contract with the organisation valid for at least 3 months after the end of the allocation period.
- c) Resources awarded are devoted solely for open R&D research purposes.

1.3 Evaluation of proposals

The evaluation of proposals is done using a light-weight procedure based on the technical assessment of the projects submitted. Scientific merits of the proposal are not evaluated.

Technical evaluations are performed by recognised technical experts from the relevant PRACE Hosting Members. In the case of proposals for **Type C and D** scheme, appropriate software experts from PRACE will also be involved in the review. All reviewers are instructed to evaluate the proposals as submitted. No interaction between the reviewers and the applicants is expected during the evaluation of proposals.

In case of Type D the specific Tier-1 system will be selected during the review process by the PRACE review team, the PRACE expert and taking into account the applicant's preferences, if provided in the proposal.

The results of the evaluation of applications to Type A and B schemes are communicated to the applicants within two weeks of the submission. For Type C and D scheme, the results are communicated within two months of the cut-off date following the submission of the application. For those proposals accepted, either totally or partially, this communication will include the corresponding start date for the project.

The evaluation decisions for PRACE Preparatory Access, including timing, duration and resources allocated, are not open for negotiation.



1.4 Criteria for assessment

Proposals for Preparatory access Types B and C must provide a detailed description of the issues hindering the scalability of the code to higher computing performances, so as to facilitate the technical assessment. In addition to this, a clear plan for code development must be proposed and the available human resources and expertise (available and/or required) to execute this planning must be quantified.

Proposals for Preparatory access Type D must provide information about the system(s) used so far and a short description of scalability issues already discovered (if known). In addition, similar to Type B and C, a clear work plan for code development must be proposed and the available human resources and expertise (available and/or required) must be specified.

1.5 Award of resources

The awarding of Preparatory Access proposals is limited by the amount of resources available. The systems and schemes available will be regularly updated on the PRACE website. For those proposals with a positive technical evaluation, awarding will be based on a first-come, first-served basis, according to the final submission date.

For Type C and D, there are also limitations regarding the availability of the support from PRACE experts, in terms of staff hours, and the type of expertise required. The expertise is provided by PRACE Hosting Members, and may not be available for certain research fields. If the requested support is not available from PRACE experts, the proposal will be rejected.

1.6 PRACE HPC Systems available

The Tier-0 computer systems and their operations accessible through PRACE are provided by the following PRACE members: BSC representing Spain, CINECA representing Italy, CSCS representing Switzerland, GCS representing Germany, and GENCI representing France. These members offer the following Tier-0 HPC systems:

1.6.1 Curie

Bull Bullx cluster – hosted by GENCI at CEA, Bruyères-Le-Châtel, France.
Details and terms of usage can be found [here](#)

Curie is an x86 system composed by 5 040 blades, each node having 2 eight-core Intel Sandy Bridge EP 2.7 GHz processors, 4 GB/core (64 GB/node) and around 64 GB of local SSD acting as local/tmp. These nodes are interconnected through an Infiniband QDR network. The peak performance of Curie is 1.7 Petaflops.

1.6.2 Hazel Hen

Cray XC40 System – hosted by GCS at HLRS, Stuttgart, Germany.
Details and terms of usage will be made available [here](#)

Hazel Hen is the new Cray XC40 system (upgrade of Hornet) and is designed for sustained application performance and highly scalable applications. It delivers a peak performance of 7.42 Petaflops. This new system is composed of 7 712 compute nodes with a total of 185 088



Intel Haswell E5-2680 v3 compute cores. Hazel Hen features 965 TB of Main Memory and a total of 11 PB of storage capacity spread over 32 additional cabinets containing more than 8 300 disk drives. The input-/output rates are +/- 350 GB per second.

1.6.3 JUQUEEN

IBM BlueGene/Q Cray System – hosted by GCS at JSC, Jülich, Germany.
Details and terms of usage will be made available [here](#)

Juqueen is an IBM BlueGene/Q system that consists of 28 racks and has a peak performance of 5.9 petaflops. Each rack has 16 384 processing cores with 16 cores, forming a node with 16 GB of memory.

1.6.4 Marconi

Lenovo NeXtScale – hosted by CINECA, Italy.
Details and terms of usage will be made available [here](#)

The Marconi system consists of three partitions, from which the Broadwell is only one currently available for PRACE Preparatory Access. This partition consists of 21 Lenovo NeXtScale racks with 72 nodes per rack. Each node contains 2 Broadwell processors (18 cores each) and 128 GB of DDR4 RAM.

1.6.5 MareNostrum

IBM System X iDataplex – hosted by BSC in Barcelona, Spain.
Details and terms of usage will be made available [here](#)

MareNostrum is based on Intel Sandy Bridge EP processors 2.6 GHz (two eight-core CPUs, 16 cores per node), 2 GB/core (32 GB/node) and around 500 GB of local disk acting as local /tmp. A total of 36 racks, each with 84 compute nodes. All computer nodes are interconnected through an Infiniband FDR10 network, with a no-blocking fat tree network topology. MareNostrum has a peak performance of 1.1 Petaflops.

1.6.6 Piz Daint

Cray XC30 System – hosted by CSCS in Lugano, Switzerland.
Details and terms of usage will be made available [here](#)

Named after Piz Daint, a prominent peak in Grisons that overlooks the Fuorn pass, this supercomputer is a hybrid Cray XC30 system, and is the flagship system for national HPC Service. This supercomputer is a 28 cabinet Cray XC30 system with a total of 5 272 compute nodes. The compute nodes are equipped with an 8-core 64-bit Intel SandyBridge CPU (Intel® Xeon® E5-2670), an NVIDIA® Tesla® K20X with 6 GB GDDR5 memory, and 32 GB of host memory. The nodes are connected by the "Aries" proprietary interconnect from Cray, with a dragonfly network topology. This system is currently being upgraded.

1.6.7 SuperMUC

IBM System X iDataplex – hosted by GCS at LRZ, Garching, Germany.



Details and terms of usage will be made available [here](#)

SuperMUC Phase 1 is based on the Intel Xeon Architecture and will provide a peak performance of 3.2 Petaflops. SuperMUC Phase 1 consists of 18 Thin Node Islands with Intel Sandy Bridge processors and one Fat Node Island with Intel Westmere processors. Each Island contains slightly more than 8 192 cores. Each of these cores have approx. 2 GB of memory (~1.5GB/core available for running applications). All compute nodes within an individual Island are connected via a fully non-blocking Infiniband network (FDR10 for the Thin Nodes and QDR for the Fat Nodes). A pruned tree network connects the Islands.

Some code developments and scaling tests may also be performed on the SuperMUC Phase 2 (6 Node Islands based on Intel Haswell-EP processor technology, 512 nodes/island, 28 physical cores/node and available memory 2.1 GB/core). Both these system phases share common parallel filesystem.

The maximum time allocations (in core hours) for scheme A, B and C for these systems are listed in the following table:

PRACE System	Type A	Type B	Type C
Curie, hosted by GENCI at CEA (France)	50 000	200 000	200 000
Hazel Hen, hosted by GCS at HLRS (Germany)	100 000	250 000	250 000
JUQUEEN, hosted by GCS at JSC (Germany)	100 000	250 000	250 000
Marconi, hosted by CINECA (Italy)	50 000	100 000	100 000
MareNostrum, hosted by BSC (Spain)	50 000	100 000	100 000
Piz Daint, hosted by CSCS (Switzerland)	100 000	100 000	100 000
SuperMUC, hosted by GCS at LRZ (Germany)	50 000	100 000	100 000

1.6.8 Tier-1 systems for Preparatory Access Type D

For scheme D Tier-1 computer systems and their operations accessible through PRACE are provided by the following PRACE members: EPCC representing United Kingdom, GRNET representing Greece, WCSS representing Poland, SURFsara representing Netherlands, CaSToRC representing Cyprus, CINECA representing Italy, IT4I representing Czech Republic and CSC representing Finland.

The maximum time allocations (in core hours) for scheme D for Tier-1 systems and links to the details and terms of usage are listed in the following table:

	Type D	Details
ARCHER, hosted by EPCC (United Kingdom)	150 000	Link



Aris, hosted by GRNET (Greece)	150 000	Link
Bem, hosted by WCSS (Poland)	150 000	Link
Cartesius, hosted by SURFsara (Netherlands)	150 000	Link
CY-TERA, hosted by CaSToRC (Cyprus)	150 000	Link
GALILEO, hosted by CINECA (Italy)	150 000	Link
Salomon, hosted by VSB-TUO at IT4I (Czech Republic)	150 000	Link
Sisu, hosted by CSC (Finland)	150 000	Link

1.7 Terms of access

The Project Leader, also known as Principal Investigator (PI), shall lead the project and is expected to be an essential participant in its activities. The PI will have the overall responsibility for the management of the project and interactions with PRACE.

When accepting PRACE resources, awardees commit to:

- a) Provide a final report to PRACE, for each Tier-0 system awarded, using the proper [PRACE template](#), with the results obtained through the access to the PRACE Tier-0 system, as well as a qualitative feedback on the use of the resources. This report needs to be provided within the period established in the guide for applicants (see [here](#)). Type D proposals only have to provide one final report with the combined information of the granted Tier-0 and Tier-1 resources.
- b) Acknowledge the role of the HPC centre(s) and of PRACE in all publications which include results from PRACE allocations. Users shall use the following wording in such acknowledgement in all papers and other publications:

“We acknowledge PRACE for awarding us access to [resource-name hosted by at site] as part of PRACE Preparatory Access Type A/B/C during PERIOD OF TIME”

Use as many instances of the pattern [resource-name hosted by at site] as the number of systems awarded via PRACE. Please follow these examples:

- Curie at GENCI@CEA, France
- Hazel Hen at GCS@HLRS, Germany
- JUQUEEN at GCS@Jülich, Germany
- Marconi at CINECA, Italy
- MareNostrum at Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC), Spain
- Piz Daint at CSCS, Switzerland
- SuperMUC at GCS@LRZ, Germany

Respecting the words in bold above is very important since PRACE will use this word pattern when searching for bibliographic references in scientific articles.



- c) Where technical support has been received, the following additional text should also be used:
“The support of [name of person/people] from [organisation name], [country] to the technical work is gratefully acknowledged.”
- d) Allow PRACE to publish the submitted report after one year from the termination of the allocation period.
- e) Collaborate with PRACE, upon its request, in the preparation of dissemination material.

Access will be free of charge but conditional on the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria and terms of access described in this document and in the [Online Application Form](#). If this differs from the terms of access that the relevant Hosting Member may have in place, the terms of access of that Hosting Member will prevail.

Users will not hold PRACE and the relevant Members, including their Directors and staff, liable to any claim or expense arising out of the use of the awarded resources.

From the start to the end of the access period, the applicant should direct questions and requests for support to the user support of the Hosting Member(s) where resources have been awarded.

Applicants must inform promptly the Peer Review Team (via peer-review@prace-ri.eu) and the Hosting Member where the resources are allocated if resources cannot be consumed totally or partially during the allocation time. Any extension of the allocation has to be also requested through the Peer Review Team.

About PRACE

The Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe (PRACE) is an international non-profit association with its seat in Brussels. The PRACE Research Infrastructure provides a persistent world-class high performance computing service for scientists and researchers from academia and industry in Europe. The computer systems and their operations accessible through PRACE are provided by 5 PRACE members (BSC representing Spain, CINECA representing Italy, CSCS representing Switzerland, GCS representing Germany and GENCI representing France). The Implementation Phase of PRACE receives funding from the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement RI-312763 and from the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (2014-2020) under grant agreement 653838. For more information, see www.prace-ri.eu