

CableLabs chosen to host NTIA, DoD 5G challenge

By [Bevin Fletcher](#) - Mar 2, 2022 6:29pm



CableLabs is set to host NTIA's 5G Challenge, in support of the Department of Defense, which aims to advance open 5G networks with the goal of interoperability and plug-and-play operation from different vendor components.

The U.S. Department of Commerce named CableLabs as the host lab for the competition, which requires a 5G core network, testing and measurement capabilities.

NTIA launched an inquiry in early 2021 seeking input on a 5G Challenge as it explored ways to speed up development and interoperability of the open 5G ecosystem to support DoD missions. It's still working on design and execution of the competition, and previously received input from major vendors such as Ericsson and groups including the Open RAN Policy Coalition, which were among 51 [responses](#) submitted by a range of industry stakeholders.

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A goal of the competition is to help fuel a growing supplier community with interoperable, multi-vendor solutions – and CableLabs says its facility has all the right makings to see participants compete in testing and validation on-site.

The effort is going to leverage the CableLabs 17,000-square-foot lab, where it has deployed fully virtualized 5G networks that include multiple cores, radio access network and new network emulation equipment.

The organization said it has a standalone 5G network setup with engineering capabilities to integrate multiple vendors at the same time while also testing and measuring technical performance metrics.

In a [blog post](#) Wednesday, CableLabs VP of Wireless David Debrecht highlighted the group's growing expertise focused on mobile networks, such as involvement in industry efforts to build flexible 5G technologies including at 3GPP, the O-RAN Alliance and the Telecom Infra Project.

"CableLabs is well situated to host the 5G Challenge, given our long-standing role in the industry and our work with multiple vendors to drive interoperable network technologies," Debrecht wrote,

In a statement, CableLabs president and CEO Phil McKinney indicated work would continue beyond the challenge, as it's committed to ongoing R&D and interoperability testing in mobile network technologies.

"CableLabs is honored to be the host lab for the 5G Challenge," McKinney [commented](#). "The recognition from the US Department of Commerce is a testament to CableLab's continued and increasing investment in mobile wireless network technologies, and particularly, our focus on open and interoperable network technologies."

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The NTIA issued its initial notice of inquiry in support of the DoD's 5G Initiative, the latter which has committed [\\$600 million for 5G testbeds](#) to see how the military could use the technology for its networking needs. The DoD's focus on 5G is aimed at technology that will enable both military and commercial deployments.

The 5G challenge, meanwhile, is meant to specifically address the shift toward using open implementations of different components for a 5G system, and NTIA had said an aim is to maximize benefits for both 5G stakeholders and the DoD on an accelerated timeline.

It received feedback across standards and industry groups, equipment vendors, major operators, and others who weighed with comments on the NOI to help inform NTIA about how to structure the challenge and goals, incentives and scope, and timeframe and infrastructure.