

# DoD offering up to \$3 million to help make 5G more compatible

The contest is open to hardware and software submissions.

As the Defense Department prepares to further its 5G investments into 2023, the military is amping up its work with industry and academia to build a more coherent next-generation infrastructure.

The Pentagon announced Wednesday that it is launching a competition to accelerate the "development and adoption of open interfaces, interoperable components, and multi-vendor solutions toward the development of an open 5G ecosystem," according to a DoD release.

The contest is in conjunction with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and will award up to \$3 million to participants with hardware or software solutions.

"The Department is committed to supporting innovation efforts that accelerate the domestic development of 5G and future G technologies. 5G is too critical a technology sector to relinquish to countries whose products and technologies are not aligned with our standards of privacy and security. We will continue our support of all necessary efforts to unleash innovation while developing secure 5G supply chains," said Amanda Toman, acting principal director of 5G-Future G, a cross functional team in the Pentagon.

The goal of the challenge is to create a large vendor community that will help DoD build a true plug-and-play environment with 5G. The current ecosystem uses custom software and hardware that often increases costs and leads to

security issues.

DoD is putting heavy investments in 5G since it wants to create data-centric weapons systems that are able to communicate with each other.

The Joint All-Domain Command and Control, which is one of DoD's joint flagship systems, will need fast networks to connect multiple weapons and inform decision makers.

The 2023 budget request asks Congress for \$250 million for 5G investments.

However, the Pentagon and military services have been working on 5G for years. Last month, DoD stood up 5G-Future G to focus on everything from acquisition to policy of 5G.

At the end of 2020, DoD [announced](#) \$600 million in contracts for 5G in five bases.

Each base will have its own specialty. For example, Joint Base Lewis-McChord will "rapidly field a scalable, resilient and secure 5G network to provide a test bed for experimentation with a 5G-enabled augmented reality/virtual reality capability for mission planning, distributed training, and operational use," according to a DoD press release.

Other projects include building smart warehouses to improve naval logistics efficiency and improving command and control capabilities.

Industry partners range from AT&T and KPMG to GE Research and Booz-Allen Hamilton.

The Pentagon has about 20 other bases that are fielding or developing 5G.

"5G is going to be a game changer," said Fred Moorefield, DoD deputy chief information officer for command, control and communications. "One underpinning aspect of that is spectrum and how we share the airwaves with 5G and 6G and 7G, what's coming. In the department we will want more access. I think 5G will require an overarching overhaul of how we do business."

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