

HPC Data Center Energy Challenges and Sustainable Solutions

May 2025

www.HyperionResearch.com www.hpcuserforum.com

Jaclyn Ludema

The Energy Challenge

Growing energy demand is heavily influencing global market

- Data centers consumed 240-340 TWh in 2022 (IEA estimate)
 - That's 1-1.3% of total global demand
 - This is expected to double by 2026
- The US is seeing rapid growth in electricity demand
- Many European markets are shifting
 - Ireland-halted new data center developments near Dublin until 2028 to ensure grid stability
 - Amsterdam maintains a similar moratorium to address environmental concerns
 - Shifting investments towards countries like Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Finland
- Al and HPC workloads drive higher power densities

Energy Resource Program

Global initiatives powering sustainable HPC data centers

- United States: COOLERCHIPS (2023)
 - Program for energy-efficient cooling
 - Support for solar, wind, and battery storage projects
- European Union: REPowerEU Plan (2022)
 - Accelerating clean energy projects to reduce dependency on fossil fuels
- China: Hydropower Investments for Hyperscale Centers (2023)
 - Leveraging renewable energy for major data hubs
- Japan: Cool Japan Initiative (2023)
 - Encouraging the adoption of advanced cooling technologies in high-density data centers
 - Focuses on R&D funding for next-gen cooling solutions

Innovative Solutions for Efficiency

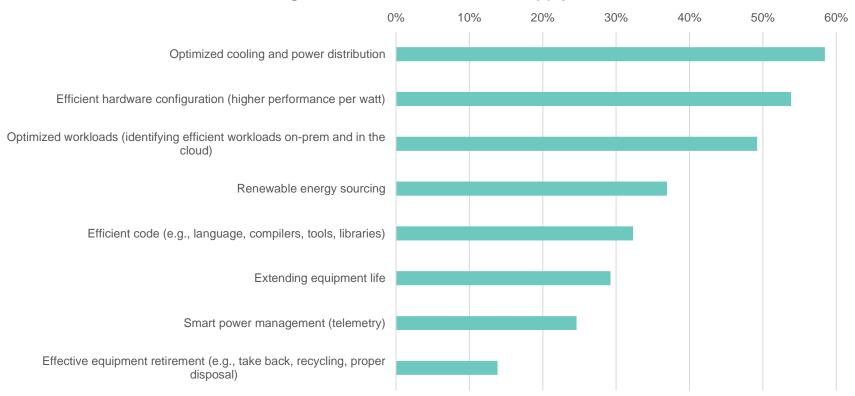
Liquid cooling, heat recovery, and innovative server solutions

- Liquid cooling adoption in HPC centers
 - Recent study finds 67% of sites use some form of liquid cooling today
 - Projected to increase to 80% in 12-18 months
 - Incremental cooling upgrades more commonly found in brownfield sites (L2A cooling)
- Heat recovery systems
 - Nebius tripling the capacity of data center in Mäntsälä, Finland. Currently recovers 20,000MWh/yr
 - Microsoft data center cluster Expected to supply heat for 40% of Espoo, Finland (100,000 homes)
- More players in single-socket server market: doubling core count while reducing power usage

Trends in Sustainability Strategies

On average, sites implement 3 priorities for sustainability goals

Which of these priorities are you implementing today to reach your sustainability goals? Please select all that apply.



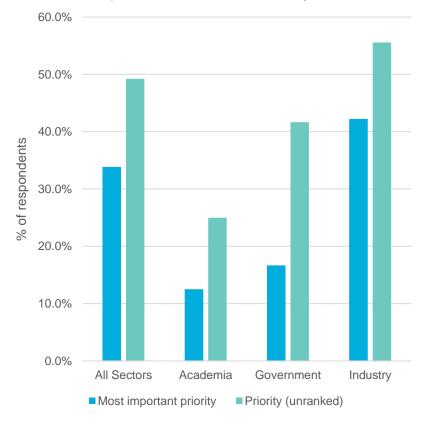
Hyperion Research 2025, n = 65

Adding Cloud in Sustainability Strategies

Sites are using Cloud as another tool to reach ESG goals

- "Neo-clouds" avoiding costly upgrades while reducing carbon footprint
- Hyperscalers (AWS, Google, Microsoft) lead with 100% renewable energy goals
 - NVIDIA's Reno, NV facility (solar and hydroelectric)
 - Google's Groningen, Netherlands center (renewable energy infrastructure)

Optimizing Workloads (Identifying Efficient Workloads On-prem and in the Cloud) to Reach Sustainability Goals



Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

Harnessing nuclear innovation for HPC energy needs

Movement Towards SMRs

- Consistent, carbon-free power suitable for 24/7 HPC operations, in compact, near-site design
- Addresses energy demands of AI and HPC workloads
- Recent Initiatives:
 - Google- Kairos Power
 - Amazon- Energy Northwest
- DOE Support: \$900M in federal funding for nextgen nuclear

Challenges

- High initial costs:

 NuScale's Utah project
 failed due to cost
 escalation
- Regulatory hurdles: Complex permitting and compliance requirements
- Need for LARGE stable customer commitments to ensure project viability





Questions or comments are welcome!

Please contact me: jludema@hyperionres.com