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The digital economy can expand markets and foster more and better services, offer more choice and create new employment. Bringing down the barriers that are holding the EU digital single market back could contribute an additional EUR 415 billion to EU GDP.

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The availability of high-speed broadband Internet and access to digital service infrastructures are the elementary units of a digital single market, allowing communication, services and business to grow - allowing areas such as e-commerce and e-government to exploit their full potential.

The Connecting Europe Facility to support EU infrastructures

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) supports trans-European networks and infrastructures in the sectors of transport, telecommunications and energy. In this context the European Commission has proposed for the first time a series of guidelines covering the objectives and priorities for broadband networks and digital service infrastructures in the field of telecommunications.

Read the regulation establishing the [Connecting Europe Facility](#) [2].

Read the [guidelines for telecommunications](#). [3]

Objectives

The telecommunications part of CEF has a budget of 1.14 billion euros, out of which 170 million euros are for Broadband networks, while 970 million euros are dedicated to Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs) delivering networked cross-border services for citizens, businesses and public administrations. Supported projects are to contribute to:

- Improvements in the competitiveness of the European economy;

- Promotion of the interconnection and interoperability of national, regional and local networks;
- Access to such networks, thus supporting the development of a Digital Single Market.

Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs)

Digital Service Infrastructure projects deploy trans-European digital services based upon mature technical and organisational solutions in areas as diverse as electronic identification, online dispute resolution and interoperable health services. The projects contribute to improvements in daily life of Europeans through digital inclusion, to the connectivity and interoperability of European digital services, and therefore the development of a Digital Single Market.

CEF supports basic and re-usable digital services, known as building blocks, as well as more complex digital services. The building blocks can be combined with each other and integrated with the more complex services.

Building blocks supported so far include: eidentification; eSignature; eInvoicing; eDelivery; and Automated Translation. [The full catalogue of reusable digital services is available here](#) [4].

More complex digital services supported so far cover, among others, the areas of safer internet, access to reusable public sector information, cyber security, eHealth, and online dispute resolution.

[The list of digital services supported by CEF is available in the Annex of the guidelines](#) [3].

Implementation of Digital Services infrastructures

CEF is implemented via annual Work Programmes, identifying the priorities and the actions to be launched during the year. Concerning DSIs, the annual Work Programmes [2014](#) [5] and [2015](#) [6] are currently being implemented. The annual Work Programme for 2016 is being currently defined and will be adopted by the end of the year.

CEF offers funding opportunities either via calls for tenders to procure services for the core components provided by the European Commission, or calls for proposals (grants) to help linking the national infrastructure in the Member States to the core components. The next calls will open between September and October and will concern digital services in the field of eDelivery, eHealth, eInvoicing, Public Open Data, Safer Internet, eProcurement, eidentification and eSignature, Online Dispute Resolution. More information on the calls is available on [INEA's website](#) [7].

Broadband

The [Broadband](#) [8] component of the programme seeks to contribute to the achievement of the Digital Agenda [targets](#) [9] of all European households having access to internet connections of 30 Megabits per Second by 2020, and of 50% of households subscribing to internet connections above 100 Megabits per Second by 2020.

In view of these targets, CEF aims at facilitating an efficient flow of private and public investments to stimulate the deployment and modernisation of broadband networks.

Across the whole multi-annual financial framework (2014-2020), 15% of the CEF budget shall be allocated to Broadband. At least one third of the broadband projects financially supported under CEF shall aim at speeds above 100Mbps.

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[2] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AL%3A2013%3A348%3A0129%3A0171%3AEN%3APDF>

[3] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/cef-telecommunications-guidelines>

[4] https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/community/cef/og_page/catalogue-building-blocks

[5] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/WP2014%20-%20official%20published.pdf>

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