

3. OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

3.1. Priorities for the objective of removing bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections

3.1.1. Railways, inland waterways and roads projects on the core network including connections to inland and maritime ports and airports

(Priority open only to the Cohesion Member States under the cohesion envelope)

General objectives

This priority covers all transport infrastructure projects (studies and works) aimed at implementing the core network which are not included in the pre-identified sections and projects of Part I of Annex I of the CEF Regulation.

This priority also aims at increasing the use of private finance in trans-European transport infrastructure financing as an alternative and complement to the traditional grant funding. It also aims at plugging financing gaps for strategic investments, in particular for TEN-T priorities such as rail and inland waterways projects or complex pan-European deployment of EU standards (such as SESAR and ERTMS). This priority will support the development of a larger pipeline of structured projects using Public Private Partnership (PPP) or other forms of project finance models.

Specific objectives

In particular this priority covers:

- Cross-border projects for railways, inland waterways and roads;
- Removal of bottlenecks for railway, inland waterway, and road networks in the case of Member States with no railway network established in their territory or in the case of a Member State, or part thereof, with an isolated network without long-distance rail freight transport and maritime infrastructure;
- Other infrastructure projects for railways and inland waterways on the core network, including connections to inland and maritime ports and airports;
- The coordinated development and management of rail, as well as road networks in the case of Member States with no railway network established in their territory or in the case of a Member State, or part thereof, with an isolated network without long-distance rail freight transport and inland waterway infrastructure;
- Technical, legal, financial or feasibility studies to assess the potential for private-public partnership (PPP) or other project finance schemes as well as the preparation of tender documentation and permission procedures.

i) Railways

Under this specific objective, Actions related to Core Network sections which are not included in Part I of Annex I of the CEF Regulation may be funded.

Actions to be selected under this Priority shall concern works or studies and shall be in line with Chapter III of the TEN-T Guidelines.

Priority will be given to proposed Actions addressing the following areas:

- Cross-border sections of the Core Network. Cross-border sections that ensure connection between two Member States via a third country may also be supported.

- Works or studies aiming at accelerating the removal of bottlenecks (in terms of capacity and service quality) which hinder the traffic flows on Core Network.
- Studies that shall contribute to the start-up of the implementation of works on sections or parts which are most critical to the "success" of the completion of the Core Network, i.e. which are of vital importance for smooth traffic flows along the entire axis and would, if not completed within the agreed period of time, reduce the benefits drawn from investments made on other sections of the axis. First priority will be given to those studies where the Member States directly involved have given due priority to the respective sections in their political decision-making process and in their investment planning. Priority will also be given to studies where activities have been coordinated across national borders, where financing schemes have been optimised and which shall result in launching procurement for execution of construction works.
- In Member States or regions that are eligible for support under the Cohesion Fund or the European Regional Development Fund, it shall be demonstrated that CEF funding shall be used in a complementary way so as to optimize the effect of the EU support as a whole and promote an efficient and timely implementation of the Core Network.
- Connections between the rail network and inland and maritime ports and airports.

Applicants are reminded to take due account of provisions of Directive 2008/57/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 on the interoperability of the rail system within the Community.

Proposed Actions covering railway stations, and in particular station buildings, are of lower priority unless they concern the railway infrastructure component. If included in the application, they should be clearly described, quantified and priced separately.

Support is not given for maintenance.

ii) Inland waterways and inland ports

Under this specific objective, proposed Actions related to Core Network sections which are not included in Part I of Annex I of the CEF Regulation may be funded.

The specific objective is to reinforce the contribution of inland waterways and ports to a sustainable European freight transport network, in particular to the completion of the Core Network, in line with the Naiades II policy framework adopted by the Commission on 10 September 2013 .

Only Actions (works or studies) in line with Chapter III (Core Network) of the TEN-T Guidelines and the specific requirements of Chapter II, section 2 (Articles 14, 15 and 16) of the TEN-T Guidelines on transport infrastructure requirements for inland waterways may be funded.

Inland waterways and inland ports facilities supported under the CEF must be accessible for use by all operators on a non-discriminatory basis.

For Inland Waterways, priority will be given to the following:

- Upgrade of waterways in order to achieve stable or improved navigation conditions and/or more capacity for the passage of vessels in the meaning of Articles 15 and 16 of the TEN-T Union Guidelines;
- Creation of new waterways;
- Construction/upgrading/modernisation of locks (including the deployment of remote control systems), to improve the passage of vessels and pushed convoys;

- Increasing of under-bridge clearance;
- Facilities for ice-breaking, hydrological services and dredging to ensure year-round navigability;
- Creation and/or upgrade of infrastructure for mooring and waterborne operations along a waterway for use and access to all on a non-discriminatory basis
- Where relevant, proposed Actions should provide for interconnection between inland waterways and other modes of transport, in particular rail and maritime transport.
- Provision of alternate fuel infrastructure, such as LNG, Methanol or electric charging.

For Inland ports, priority will be given to providing or improving the following:

- Access to inland ports and connections between inland ports and rail and road sections of the Core Network;
- Access, including safe access through navigational aids, of inland ports to inland waterways;
- Basic infrastructure in inland ports in accordance with Article 16 g) of the TEN-T Guidelines;
- Water-side terminals/platforms infrastructure such as storage and stacking areas in accordance with Article 16 g) of the TEN-T Guidelines;
- Reception facilities for oil and other waste, to support the sustainability of waterborne transport services;
- ICT applications, in particular pilot Single Window applications, as well as applications to streamline administrative formalities through a better use of information, communication and positioning technologies;
- Providing or improving road/rail access and connections within inland ports;
- Facilities for loading/transshipment as well as for ice-breaking, hydrological services and dredging of the port and port approaches to ensure year-round navigability (facilities must be accessible for use by all operators on a non-discriminatory basis);
- Introduction or implementation of fixed infrastructure regarding alternative energy, e.g. LNG bunkering and shore-side electricity.

Water-side terminals and platforms infrastructure must be open for use by all operators on a non-discriminatory basis. Proposed Actions for such infrastructure shall be accompanied by an analysis of all terminals and platforms serving the targeted hinterland and demonstrating broader capacity constraints for the targeted hinterland. Support for water-side terminals/platforms superstructure, such as warehouses, shall not be granted.

Waterside infrastructure means infrastructure that enhance the navigability capacity in the meaning of Articles 15 and 16 of the TEN-T Guidelines or improves the multimodal connection of waterborne transport operations. This excludes infrastructure that does not directly benefit waterborne transport operations.

As regards support to dredging activities for both inland waterways and inland ports, routine maintenance dredging will not be funded; only capital dredging and rehabilitation dredging activities may be funded under this priority. Rehabilitation dredging may only be funded in connection with global actions that provide for year-round good navigation status for a given section of the waterway.

Such dredging activities and facilities may only be proposed as part of a wider project having the main focus on the upgrading of basic infrastructure or the provision of waterside terminals/platforms.

Finally, measures for the deployment of River Information Services shall not be supported.

iii) Roads

Under this priority, proposed Actions related to Core Network sections which are not included in Part I of Annex I of the CEF Regulation may be funded.

Proposed Actions to be selected under this priority shall concern works or studies and shall be in line with Chapter III of the TEN-T Guidelines.

The following interventions may be funded:

- Cross-border projects on the sections of the Core Network which are not included in Part I of Annex I of the CEF Regulation.

In addition, for Member States with no railway network established in their territory or in the case of a Member State, or part thereof, with an isolated network without long-distance rail freight transport and maritime infrastructure the following interventions may be funded:

- Removal of bottlenecks;
- Other infrastructure projects.

Applicants are also reminded of the fact that funds will only be granted to actions compliant with the road safety (ref. 2008/96/EC) and tunnel safety (ref. 2004/54/EC) Directives.

Support is not given for maintenance.

Studies should concern actions where the initial investment decision has already been taken before the application for CEF funding and in particular studies related to design, permits (including Environmental Impact Assessment), etc. that are close to the actual implementation of these actions.

General observation for all priorities under section 3:

In addition to specific objectives, priority will be given to projects that include the use of private finance, in particular EU-backed finance instruments such as the European Fund for Strategic Investments.