



**CALL FOR PROPOSALS CONCERNING PROJECTS OF COMMON INTEREST UNDER THE
CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY IN THE FIELD OF TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK
MULTI-ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2014-2020
CEF TRANSPORT 2020 - GENERAL AND COHESION ENVELOPES
ON THE BASIS OF COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION C(2020) 8813 OF 15 DECEMBER
2020 – ANNEX**

**Pre-identified projects on the Core Network Corridors
and on the other sections of the Core Network**

1. OBJECTIVES

In the context of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)¹ and on the basis of the multi-annual work programme², a call for proposals is launched under the general and cohesion envelopes of the CEF – Transport sector.

This call for proposals addresses **actions related to the funding objective “removing bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections”**.

The envisaged actions need to contribute to completing **pre-identified projects on the core network corridors and on the other sections of the core network (railways, inland waterways, roads, maritime and inland ports)** as stipulated in Annex I, Part I, points 2 and 3 of the CEF Regulation.

The general objective of this call is to prepare for the implementation of TEN-T core network projects by supporting studies within the meaning of Article 2(6) of the CEF Regulation, addressing the necessary preparatory steps for the forthcoming works. These steps relate e.g to technical design, permitting procedures and preparation of the tendering process.

Financial assistance shall focus on studies concerning:

- Infrastructure projects for railways, inland waterways, maritime and inland ports;
- Infrastructure projects for 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.

This call for proposals also aims at accelerating the deployment of technologies which have been developed, tested and validated by projects funded under EU’s research programmes,

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L 348 of 20.12.2013, p.129.

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2020)8813 of 15 December 2020 amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2014) 1921 establishing a Multi-Annual Work Programme 2014-2020 for financial assistance in the field of Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) - Transport sector for the period 2014-2020.

notably by the Horizon 2020 programme³.

2. FURTHER SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Type of Actions

Proposals must only address **studies** within the meaning of Article 2(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013.

Priority will be given to studies leading to the start of works between 2021 and 2024, such as studies related to the environmental impact assessment or other environmental permits, advanced design, building permits, geological surveys or public procurement. Studies for new or extension of projects leading to the start of works after 2024 are also eligible, but will be given a lower priority.

In line with the multi-annual work programme, further specifications are herewith required for maritime ports and roads studies.

2.2 Maritime ports

Studies concerning maritime ports must relate to infrastructure projects addressing hinterland connections to the port (road connections may be eligible only if other hinterland connections are not an option), port sea access, basic infrastructure, capital dredging, waste reception facilities, and facilities related to the provision and use of alternative fuels or energy.

Support will not be given to studies related to cargo and passenger terminals, maintenance and/or superstructure.

Support will also not be given to studies for dedicated infrastructure and facilities for cruise ships, unless related to the provision and use of alternative fuels or energy.

2.3 Roads

Actions related to roads shall be in line with Chapter III (Core Network) of the TEN-T Guidelines and the specific requirements of Chapter II, section 3 (roads) of the TEN-T Guidelines and may address high-quality roads (motorways, express roads or conventional strategic roads) including bridges, tunnels, junctions, crossings, interchanges, hard shoulders and their associated equipment).

Support shall only be granted to Actions compliant with the road safety⁴ and tunnel safety Directives⁵.

Support will not be given to Actions related to road maintenance.

2.4 Cross-cutting priorities

Where applicable as part of a broader project of common interest, some of the activities included in the Action (studies) may relate to the adaptation of TEN-T infrastructure to ensure the continuity of bicycle infrastructure for long-distance cycling paths such as the EuroVelo routes. These studies may relate to relevant adaptation of traffic signaling systems or the

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en>

⁴ Directive (EU) 2019/1936 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management (OJ L 305, 26.11.2019, p. 1).

⁵ Directive 2004/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the trans-European road network (OJ L 167, 30.4.2004, p. 39).

addition of infrastructure dedicated to cyclists and pedestrians, such as tunnels, bypasses, bridges, aerial cycling and walkways and protected cycling paths. The studies may cover extensions along TEN-T routes or at crossings between TEN-T routes and long-distance cycling paths.

In combination with other activities, in particular for railway stations, the scope of the proposed study may include improved accessibility to transport infrastructure for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility according to Article 10 (2)(b)(v) of the CEF Regulation.

3. RESULTS EXPECTED FROM THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The results expected under this call are defined in section 1.4 of the multi-annual work programme.

4. INDICATIVE BUDGET

The indicative amount to be allocated on the basis of this call for proposals is EUR 200 million, divided as follows:

- EUR 160 million under the General envelope; and
- EUR 40 million under the Cohesion envelope.

The budget under the Cohesion envelope is exclusively reserved for Actions located in Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund (Cohesion Member States).

This call includes two different call sections, the ‘General’ call and the ‘Cohesion’ call, and applications have to be submitted under the corresponding call. It is not allowed to submit the same Action under both calls.

If a multi-applicant proposal concerns an Action for which some parts are entitled to funding under the General envelope and other parts under the Cohesion envelope, so called **twinned proposals**, the application must be split and each part submitted separately under the relevant call. The proposal code or application number and the title of the twinned proposal must be cross-referenced in order to allow clear identification of the two proposals in the appropriate part of the application form. Twinned proposals will be evaluated jointly to appreciate their common EU added value.

5. TIMETABLE

Date of publication of call for proposals	15 December 2020
Deadline for the submission of proposals	22 March 2021
Deadline for the submission of translations (if applicable)	29 March 2021
Evaluation of proposals	12 April – 15 June 2021
Consultation of CEF Coordination Committee; information to European Parliament	First half of July 2021
Adoption of Selection Decision	August 2021
Preparation and signature of individual grant agreements	As of August 2021

6. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Proposals **must be**:

- submitted electronically in the TENtec Information System eSubmission module. In this respect, proposals or part(s) of proposals submitted by email or in hard copy shall not be admissible.
- submitted by the deadline for submission of proposals (*see sections 5. "Timetable" and 14.2. "Submission process"*).
- complete (i.e. application form (A, B, C and D) are uploaded in the TENtec).
- duly signed by the applicant(s).

Failure to comply with any of these requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

7. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

7.1 Eligible applicants

General eligibility criteria

Pursuant to Article 9 of the CEF Regulation, only those proposals submitted by one of the following types of applicants are eligible:

- One or more Member States; and/or
- With the agreement of the Member State(s) concerned, international organisations, joint undertakings, or public or private undertakings or bodies established in an EU Member State.



For UK applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement⁶ on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK legal entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call.

Neighbouring/third countries and entities established in neighbouring/third countries

Neighbouring/third countries and entities established in neighbouring/third countries may participate in actions contributing to projects of common interest where necessary in order to achieve the objectives of a given project of common interest. They may not receive financial assistance except where it is indispensable to the achievement of the objectives of a given project of common interest.

In such cases and pursuant to Article 8(1) of the TEN-T Guidelines⁷, applications may be presented by neighbouring/third countries or entities established in neighbouring/third

⁶ Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU, OJ L 348 of 20.12.2013, p.1.

countries, with the agreement of a Member State concerned.

Applicants without legal personality

Proposals may be submitted by entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and offer guarantee for the protection of the Union's financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons.

Natural persons

Proposals submitted by natural persons are not eligible.

Affiliated entities

Applicants may designate affiliated entities within the meaning of Article 187 of the Financial Regulation⁸, for the purpose of supporting the implementation of the action submitted for funding. Such affiliated entities must comply with the eligibility criteria for applicants as specified in this section.

Member State agreement

Any applicant that cannot provide the agreement of the Member State(s) concerned shall not be eligible.

7.2 Exclusion criteria⁹

An applicant will be excluded from participating in the call for proposals procedure if it is in any of the following situations:

- a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national legislation or regulations;
- b) it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that it is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with applicable law;
- c) it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that it is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - i. fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection

⁸ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, OJ L 193, 30.07.2018, p.1.

⁹Articles 136,137,139,141,142 and 225 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Financial Regulation) are applicable.

- criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
 - ii. entering into agreement with other persons with the aim of distorting competition;
 - iii. violating intellectual property rights;
 - iv. attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Agency during the award procedure;
 - v. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- d) it has been established by a final judgement that it is guilty of the following:
- i. fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - ii. corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of EU Member States, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;
 - iii. conduct related to a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - iv. money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - v. terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - vi. child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an Authorising Officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that it has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
- g) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;

- h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
- i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant for the is subject to:
 - i. facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors, OLAF or internal audit, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;
 - ii. non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
 - iii. facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
 - iv. information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;
 - v. decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of the Union's competition rules or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or
 - vi. decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU Institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

Remedial measures

If an applicant/affiliated entity declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above, it should indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) above.

Rejection from the call for proposals

Grants will not be awarded to applicants who:

- a. are in an exclusion situation established in accordance with the list above;
- b. have misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- c. were previously involved in the preparation of calls for proposal documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

These same exclusion criteria also apply to affiliated entities. Applicants and their affiliated entities, if applicable, must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed above.

Administrative sanctions may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

7.3 Eligible Actions

General eligibility criteria

Only actions which can be qualified as projects of common interest identified in Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 (TEN-T Guidelines) and which address pre-identified projects listed in Annex I, Part I, points 2 ‘Core network corridors’ and 3 ‘Other Sections on the Core Network’ of the CEF Regulation are eligible under this call.

Concerning inland ports, all core inland ports, as identified in Annex II, point 2 of the TEN-T Guidelines, and all inland ports located on a pre-identified section of a Core Network Corridor or of one Other Section on the Core Network, as stipulated respectively in Annex I, Part I, points 2 and 3 of the CEF Regulation, are eligible under this call.

Concerning maritime ports, all core maritime ports, as identified in Annex II, point 2 of the TEN-T Guidelines are eligible under this call.

Concerning roads, as mentioned in section 1, only Actions located in Member States with no railway network established in their territory or located in a Member State, or part thereof, with an isolated network without long-distance rail freight transport, are eligible under this call.

Cross-border sections

Actions involving a cross-border section or a part of such section shall be eligible to receive Union financial assistance only if there is a written agreement between the Member States concerned, or between the Member States and neighbouring/third countries concerned by the completion of the cross-border section.

Twinned proposals

In case of Actions for which some parts are entitled to funding under the Cohesion envelope and other parts under the General envelope, the application must be split and each part submitted separately under the relevant call (see Section 4).

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria are detailed in section 6b of the multi-annual work programme. The operational and financial capacity of applicants will be assessed as specified below.

The need to demonstrate financial and operational capacity **does not** apply to applicants which are:

- a Member State,
- a neighbouring/third country,
- a public sector body established in the EU (i.e. regional or local authority, body governed by public law or association formed by one or several such authorities or one or several such bodies governed by public law),
- international organisation¹⁰,
- a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) established in line with Council Regulation (EEC) N° 2137/85 of 25 July 1985, in which at least one member is a public body, or

¹⁰ As per article 156 of the Financial Regulation

- a Joint Undertaking in line with eligibility criteria established under Article 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The requirement to demonstrate operational and financial capacity also applies to affiliated entities **only where**, according to the proposal, the affiliated entity(ies) will be the only one(s) implementing the proposed Action.

8.1 Financial capacity

The applicant(s) must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the proposed activities throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to participate in its funding.

Together with the application, applicant(s) whose requested amount exceeds EUR 750,000 must provide their financial statements certified by an external auditor for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed.

If an applicant has been operating for less than one financial year, the financial statements may be replaced by a letter of support obtained from a third party (e.g. the applicant's parent company) or by another applicant of the proposed Action, accompanied by the financial statements of the party providing the support. The template for such letter of support is available in the form to be completed for the financial capacity check.

8.2 Operational capacity

The applicant(s) must have the operational and technical competencies and capacity required to complete the Action for which the grant is sought and must provide appropriate documents and information attesting to that capacity, such as:

- description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the operation (e.g. accompanied by curriculum vitae);
- the organisations' activity reports for at least the last year;
- a list of previous Actions and activities performed in the field of TEN-T infrastructure Actions of the same kind;
- an inventory of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicant and relevant for the Action.

If compliant with the abovementioned requirements, the information submitted by applicants who benefited from TEN-T support as from 2004 or CEF support as from 2014 may be taken into account in the evaluation of these applicants' operational capacity.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

Proposals failing to comply with the admissibility and/or eligibility criteria will not be further evaluated.

The award criteria are specified as follows:

i. Relevance

This criterion refers to the contribution of the proposed Action to the TEN-T priorities as laid out in Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, the funding priorities as laid down in

Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 and specific priorities and objectives described in the Multi-Annual Work Programme and addressed by the call for proposals.

In addition, the following aspects will be assessed under the relevance criterion:

- the European added-value as defined in point (d) of Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013;
- the cross-border dimension, when applicable;
- removal of bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, bridging missing links and improving cross-border sections as stipulated in Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013;
- contribution to innovation, sustainable transport and decarbonisation.

In line with this, under this criterion, it will also be assessed to what extent the proposal contributes to accelerating the deployment of technologies which have been developed, tested and validated by projects funded under EU's research programmes (see section 1).

ii. Maturity

This criterion refers to the state of preparation of the proposed study/studies and the readiness to start the implementation of the proposed activities for the study/studies. This will be determined by the degree of financial maturity and completion of preparatory steps as well as the conditions required for the start of the proposed study/studies. Proposed studies that have received political commitments, completed a number of administrative procedures and committed financial resources, as well as proposed studies which involve the final steps of implementation, can be considered as demonstrating strong maturity. Maturity will also be evidenced by low uncertainty/risks about the start of the study/studies. Proposed studies should be ready to start, at the latest, within nine months after the closure of the call and shall be completed by 31 December 2024 at the latest.

iii. Impact

This criterion refers to the extent to which the proposed Action (study) is expected to advance the preparation of a works proposal for submission under the successor programme.

In this context, the extent to which the output of the study will be relied upon for decision-making, in particular in relation to possible future CEF Transport Action, will be given particular attention.

Moreover, the relevance and economic value of the study in terms of costs and benefits and the degree to which elements of the studies could be used to develop best practices will be assessed.

Studies leading to an earlier start of the works are considered as having a comparatively higher impact than equivalent proposals leading to a later start of the work.

This criterion will also assess the anticipated and expected socio-economic effects of the works that are subject of the study as well as their impact on the climate and the environment in view of the Green Deal's objectives.

iv. Quality

This criterion refers to the soundness and clarity of the proposed Action. This will be determined by the coherence between the objectives of the proposed Action, the proposed activities, the planned resources, and the appropriateness of the project management processes. Under this criterion, the capacity for the Action to be completed in accordance with the proposed timeline, implementation plans and the technical specifications will be assessed. In particular, the soundness of the implementation plan proposed will be assessed.

The completeness and clarity of the information provided by the applicant(s), in particular in application forms A and D, will be the basis for the assessment of this criterion. To this effect, applicants should make sure that the Action's objectives, activities (and related objectives, tasks, deliverables) and milestones are clearly and concisely indicated.

Applicants are requested to answer to all the applicable questions in the application forms in order to provide relevant information for assessing the above award criteria. It is highly recommended to provide clear information and to follow the guidance available in the guide for applicants and in the application forms themselves.

Each award criterion will be given a score on a scale from 0 (insufficient) to 5 (excellent).

Projects with less than 3 points on an award criterion will be rejected and hence will not be further assessed nor recommended for funding.

10. FINAL SELECTION PROCESS

During the final selection process, the Commission will in particular take into account the following elements:

1. The contribution of the proposed Action to the balanced development of the network;
2. The complementarity of the proposed Action with other Union funded projects, in view of optimising the impact of investments already made in the region/country/global project;
3. The comparative Union added value of the proposed Action in relation to other proposed Actions.

For this purpose, the above elements are condensed in a single final selection factor that will take into account the contribution of the proposed Action to the balanced development of the network, notably its comparative Union added value in relation to other proposed Actions. Where appropriate, this factor will also assess the complementarity of the proposed Action with other Union funded projects.

Proposals that have obtained at least 3 points on all award criteria (section 9) will receive a score on a scale from 0 to 10 under this final selection factor.

For the proposals assessed in this phase, the scores obtained on both the award criteria and the final selection factor will be added, resulting in two ranking lists, one under the General envelope and one under the Cohesion envelope.

Within each ranking list, proposals with the highest scores will be recommended for funding, in descending order until the available budget has been exhausted.

The other proposals, if any, will be put on a reserve list per envelope. The Commission may subsequently decide to fund projects from these reserve lists, in the order of ranking, should more budget become available within the respective envelope.

In case of ex aequo, the proposals with the highest total scores on the final selection factor will be prioritized for funding. If this would still result in an ex aequo, then the proposals with the highest scores on the maturity award criterion will be given priority. If the ex aequo remains, then proposals with the highest scores on the relevance award criterion will be prioritized. If the ex aequo remains, then proposals with the highest scores on the impact award criterion will be prioritized. Finally, the proposal with the highest score on the quality award criterion will be prioritized if an ex aequo situation persists.

The reserve list(s) will be valid until 31 December 2021.

11. COMPLIANCE WITH EU LAW

In accordance with Article 23 of the CEF Regulation, only actions in conformity with EU law and which are in line with the relevant EU policies, in particular, in the areas of interoperability, environmental protection¹¹, competition and public procurement, shall be financed.

12. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

12.1 General principles

12.1.1 Non-cumulative award

No grant shall be awarded for Actions receiving funds from other sources of Union financing, without prejudice to Article 15(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013

Under no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate in the grant application the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its (the applicant's) functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.

In that respect, any proposed Action or part thereof that receive or have already received EU funding under the CEF or other EU Programmes (i.e. TEN-T, Marco Polo II, Cohesion Fund, FP7, Horizon 2020, ESIF, etc.) will not be funded under this call.

12.1.2 Non-profit principle

For projects generating income, the no-profit principle applies, as defined in Article 192 of the Financial Regulation.

¹¹ In particular, but not limited to: the EIA (Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, OJ L 124, 25.4.2014), SEA (Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001), Habitats (Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L206, 22.7.1992, p.7) and Birds (Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p.7) Directives, as well as the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p.1)

12.1.3 Non-retroactivity principle

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun provided that the applicant can demonstrate the need for starting the action prior to signature of the grant agreement.

In accordance with Article 193 of the Financial Regulation, costs eligible for financing shall not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

Costs incurred as of the date of submission of the grant application and until 31 December 2024 are considered eligible for financing.

No grant may be awarded retroactively for Actions already completed.

12.2 Form of Union Contributions

Grants to be awarded under this call for proposals will take the form of reimbursement of a specified proportion of the eligible costs actually incurred, as provided in Article 125(1)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

12.2.1 Co-funding rates

For the **General** envelope of CEF - Transport:

In accordance with Article 10(2) of the CEF Regulation, the amount of Union financial assistance shall not exceed **50%** of the eligible costs.

For the **Cohesion** envelope of CEF - Transport:

In accordance with Article 11(5) of the CEF Regulation, the maximum funding rate shall be **85%** of the eligible costs.

The Commission reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicant.

In order to ensure efficiency in EU funding interventions, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications for actions with a total requested EU contribution to the eligible costs of no less than €500,000. Where possible, related actions should be grouped and submitted as one proposal.

12.2.2 Eligible costs

Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant which meet all the criteria laid down in Article 186 of the Financial Regulation.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The same criteria apply to the costs incurred by affiliated entities and implementing bodies designated by the beneficiary.

Applicants should refer to points (3) to (8) of Article 8 of the CEF Regulation concerning the eligibility of costs.

Costs will be eligible, at the earliest, from the date on which an application is submitted and, at the latest, to the date of completion of the Action, which **shall be 31 December 2024** at the latest.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs of the action are those costs which are not specific costs directly linked to the implementation of the action and can therefore not be attributed directly to it.

Indirect costs are not eligible.

VAT

In line with the first subparagraph of Article 8(7) of the CEF Regulation and Article 186(4)(c) of the Financial Regulation, VAT paid by beneficiaries of grants awarded following this call for proposals is eligible except:

- deductible VAT (for the General CEF-Transport envelope): (VAT paid by the beneficiary for the implementation of taxed activities or exempt activities with right of deduction);
- recoverable VAT under national VAT legislation (for the Cohesion Fund envelope);
- VAT paid for the implementation of activities engaged in as a public authority by the beneficiary where it is a Member State, regional or local government authority of a Member State or another body governed by public law of a Member State.

12.2.3 Payment arrangements

A single pre-financing payment corresponding to 40% of the total EU-contribution of grant awarded as specified in the grant agreement will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days after the last party signs the grant agreement.

In the event that the beneficiary's financial capacity is not satisfactory, the pre-financing payment(s) may be subject to the receipt of a financial guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing payment to be made.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the EU Member States. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, INEA may agree that a bank or financial institution established in a third country may provide the guarantee if the bank or financial institution is considered to offer equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts will not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint or several guarantees provided by third parties or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action that are parties to the same grant agreement. The guarantee will be released when the pre-financing is cleared against the interim payment, if applicable, and/or the balance of payment(s) made, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

In the event that the beneficiary's financial capacity is not satisfactory, a limited joint and several financial liability for recoveries may be applied in accordance with the terms and conditions of the model grant agreement.

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the Action, upon approval of the request for payment including, where applicable, the supporting documents as described in the model grant agreement.

For multi-beneficiary actions, a coordinator must be designated. The coordinator will be the contact point for INEA and will have, *inter alia*, the responsibility for receiving the payment(s) and coordinating the reporting exercise(s). It is strongly recommended that beneficiaries sign an internal cooperation agreement regarding their operation and coordination, including all internal aspects related to the management of the beneficiaries and the implementation of the

proposed Action. Such internal cooperation agreements shall not undermine, under any circumstances, the terms and conditions of the model grant agreement.

13. MODEL GRANT AGREEMENT

Applicant(s) will be invited to sign the grant agreement if a proposal is selected for funding. The standard model grant agreement is not negotiable and will be signed in English.

Submitting an application implies the acceptance of the terms and conditions of the model grant agreement, available on the call page. Applicants are invited to carefully read this document and its annexes before submitting an application.

14. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

All practical information on this call for proposals and the evaluation process is detailed in the Guide for Applicants. It is available, together with the application forms, model grant agreement, the multi-annual work programme, the CEF Regulation, the TEN-T Guidelines, and other relevant documents, on the call page, accessible via the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-transport/apply-funding/2020-map-transport-cef-call>

Applicants are requested to carefully read all call-related documents, including the instructions given in the Guide for Applicants and other guidance documents and information, in particular the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and use the checklists.

Documents available on the call page may be updated while the call is open. Applicants are strongly encouraged to subscribe to the call updates, via the form available on the call page itself, in order to receive a notification whenever the call page is updated.

14.1 Application forms

Proposals must be submitted using the application forms provided on the call page at the link above. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications in the English language as the evaluation of proposals is entirely conducted in English.

Notwithstanding, applicants also have the possibility to submit their proposal in another EU official language together with an English translation¹². The latter will be used for the evaluation.

The applicant(s) specified in the application form part A will automatically be considered as the beneficiary(ies) if the proposal is selected for funding. If applicants designate affiliated entities within the meaning of Article 187 of the Financial Regulation to support the implementation of the proposed Action, the information on these affiliated entities must be encoded in the application form part A, and any relevant supporting documents must be provided.

14.2 Submission process

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** using the TENtec eSubmission module at the

¹² The Commission will reimburse the translation costs resulting from the translation into English of a proposal submitted in response to this call, for a maximum amount of €2000 per proposal, provided that the translation was submitted before the specified deadline. Please see the Guide for Applicants for details on the reimbursement procedure.

following link: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tentec/grant/esubmission/> before the call deadline: **22 March 2021 at 17:00.00 Brussels time** (see also Section 6. "Admissibility requirements").

Application form part A is automatically generated by the TENtec eSubmission module. Application form parts B, C and D must be downloaded from the call page at the link above and duly completed. Application form part D may not exceed 40 pages. Once final, these must be uploaded into the TENtec eSubmission module. The same applies to any annexes or supporting documents accompanying the proposal.

Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that for application form part A, only the information encoded in the TENtec eSubmission module will be taken into account for the evaluation (notwithstanding the requirement to upload signed versions of application forms part A2.2 and A2.3). For the other forms and documents, only the last version uploaded in the TENtec eSubmission module will be taken into account for the evaluation.

Any parts of the application form that require signatures of applicants or relevant authorities must be scanned and uploaded into the TENtec eSubmission module. Information included in the uploaded forms must correspond to the information included in the TENtec eSubmission module. The forms must clearly indicate to which proposal and to which applicant they correspond and they must be perfectly legible so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures. Advanced electronic signatures based on a qualified certificate as defined by Regulation 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (eIDAS Regulation) and which comply with the signature formats specified in Commission Implementing Decision 2015/1506 shall be accepted.

Applicants must be able to provide the original documents and send them to the Commission/Agency services upon request.

15. INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Further information or clarifications on the call for proposals will be published on the call webpage. Please refer to all of the following documents, available on the call webpage, when preparing the application:

- Multi-annual work programme
- CEF Regulation
- TEN-T Guidelines
- Extension of the TEN-T network to the neighbouring countries¹³
- Application form (parts A, B, C and D)
- Guide for Applicants
- FAQs published on the call page
- Application checklists
- EU Financial Regulation
- Commission Decision on the reimbursement of personnel costs¹⁴

Applicants are invited to regularly consult this page and the INEA website/Twitter feed

¹³ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/758

¹⁴ Commission Decision C(2016)478 final of 3.2.2016 on the reimbursement of personnel costs of beneficiaries of the Connecting Europe Facility.

(@inea_eu) regularly until the deadline for submission of proposals.

Questions related to this call may be addressed to the call helpdesk: INEA-CEF-transport-calls@ec.europa.eu.

The answers to submitted questions will be published in a FAQ list on the call page, to ensure equal treatment of all potential applicants. Questions related to the call should be submitted at least by 22 February 2021 to ensure sufficient time for the last update of the FAQs by 8 March 2021. However, individual technical questions related to TENtec eSubmission module will be treated until the call deadline.

Questions which are specific to a particular proposal and where the answer would provide a comparative advantage to the applicant will not be answered.

Proposals must not be sent to the helpdesk e-mail address.

16. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725¹⁵ on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies and agencies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by INEA.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046¹⁶. For more information see the Privacy Statement on the call page:

<https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-transport/apply-funding/2020-map-transport-cef-call>

¹⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1725>

¹⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>