



Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Call for proposals

Support to the coordination of ITS National Access Points
(CEF-T-2025-TAGENDG-NAPCORE)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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O. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU action grants in the field of Transport under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (CEF Regulation [2021/1153](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2027 Work Programme² and will be managed by Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE).

The call covers the following topic:

CEF-T-2025-TAGENDG-NAPCORE — Topic 1 Support to the coordination of ITS National Access Points.

We invite you to read the call documentation carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (**'Portal'**)
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility (OJ L 249, 14.7.2021, p. 38).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021)5763 final of 5.8.2021 on the financing of the Connecting Europe Facility - Transport sector and the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2027.

- detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [CINEA website](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously, as well as the websites of the NAPCORE (<https://napcore.eu>) and Data4PT (<https://data4pt-project.eu>) projects.

1. Background

In the context of the implementation of Commission Delegated Regulations (EU) No 885/2013, No 886/2013, 2015/962, 2017/1926 and 2022/670 supplementing Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport (the ITS Directive), Member States have established National Access Points (NAPs). The NAPs organise the access to and reuse of transport-related data to help support the provision of EU-wide interoperable travel and traffic ITS services to end users. This transport-related data should be accessible to data users in digital machine-readable format.

The NAPs, together with regional and local access points that might exist in the Member States, are an important component of the common European mobility data space under the European strategy for data and should be relied upon in particular as regards the accessibility of ITS data. By cooperating on the facilitation of access to **data via the NAPs, Member States should strive to improve the NAPs' effectiveness, interoperability, and cooperation across the Union as well as to facilitate the data users' access to them.**

Despite NAPs being operated in all Member States, there is still a need to improve accessibility of data concerning many data types that are deemed crucial to support the development of essential services providing the necessary information to the end users.

A first CEF Programme Support Action NAPCORE (<https://napcore.eu>) supported during April 2021 and June 2025 the implementation of Delegated Regulations under the ITS Directive. In parallel, the CEF Data4PT project (<https://data4pt-project.eu>) supported during 2020 and 2024 the development of data exchange standards and use to fulfil the needs of multimodal travel information service providers. Building on those two projects, the objective of this action is to further support the harmonised implementation of Delegated Regulations under Directive 2010/40/EU and of the ITS Directive itself which was revised in 2023.

2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact

CEF-T-2025-TAGENDG-NAPCORE — Topic 1 Support to the coordination of ITS National Access Points

Objectives (expected outcome)

Building on and integrating the outcomes of the CEF Programme Support Actions NAPCORE (<https://napcore.eu>) and Data4PT project (<https://data4pt-project.eu>), the objective of this action is to further support the harmonised implementation of Delegated Regulations adopted under Directive 2010/40/EU. This action should support implementation of the requirements to make infrastructure, safety, traffic and travel data accurate and accessible to users (such as transport authorities or service providers) via the NAPs, i.e. all NAPs and associated data stemming from the implementation of Delegated Regulations (EU) No 885/2013, No 886/2013, 2015/962, 2017/1926 and 2022/670, including their possible revision during the lifetime of this action in the framework of the implementation of the working

programme of the ITS Directive. This action should also support implementation of the requirements to make data available to users as mandated by the revised ITS Directive.

Based on the work already achieved within the CEF programme support actions NAPCORE and Data4PT, this action is expected to further support the coordination and harmonisation of a standardised NAP data distribution ecosystem throughout the EU, contributing to the creation of a digital twin of the physical transport infrastructure and its operations, providing for a data layer supporting transport services.

Themes and priorities (scope)

The scope is the ITS Directive, and the Delegated Regulations relating to access to transport data, which have been adopted to define European specifications for priority actions of the ITS Directive:

(a) - the provision of EU-wide multimodal travel information services: Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/1926, amended by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/490;

(b) - the provision of EU-wide real-time traffic information services: Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/962, repealed and replaced by Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/670;

(c) - data and procedures for the provision, where possible, of road safety related minimum universal traffic information free of charge to users: Delegated Regulation (EU) No 886/2013;

(e) - the provision of information service for safe and secure parking places for trucks and commercial vehicles: Delegated Regulation (EU) No 885/2013.

These Delegated Regulations mandate the setting up of NAPs and specify the access to related ITS data to data users to foster the development of ITS services re-using this data.

Work on improving the NAPs coherence and functionality is essential for efficient implementation of both the ITS Directive and its Delegated Regulations and of Regulation (EU) 2023/1804 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (AFIR). This goes in particular through the definition of a deployment roadmap for NAP architecture (in line with the common European mobility data space) including for EU access points, the development and maintenance of tools for the management of data, the development, maintenance and use of interoperable data standards for multimodal data with EU reference profiles, the definition of a data and service quality framework, the monitoring of data availability, the harmonisation of compliance assessments and enforcement strategies, training, documentation and deployment support, etc. This also includes a specific work on access nodes identifiers for multimodal passenger transport, including possible definition of unique EU identifiers, in the framework of the implementation of the working programme of the ITS Directive.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Activities to be supported under this action shall consist of technical and organisational activities to facilitate the development and deployment of the coordination mechanism to harmonise the NAPs under the ITS Directive.

Activity 1 – Governance and strategy

a. Project management

- Management of the action: establishment of a Steering Committee with all participating Member States at appropriate level (i.e. with representatives able to cover all aspects and all data types, including multimodal topics), establishment of an Advisory Board grouping relevant stakeholders, appointment of leaders and teams of experts for each work package, appointment of Ambassadors for horizontal or strategic topics (e.g. UVARs, MaaS, cycling, alternative fuels), annual work plans, annual activity reports, quality and risk management, organisation of internal communication and exchange (e.g. on best practices or national legislations related to the implementation of the Delegated Regulations), administrative and financial management, daily project management / secretariat, reporting to EC and liaison with CEF ITS deployment projects etc.
- Regular coordination with the Commission services, the European ITS Committee and the European ITS Advisory Group, the Sustainable Transport Forum, Member States expert groups, other relevant CEF-funded ITS deployment projects and industry stakeholders. Liaison with similar initiatives, in the transport and other sectors, in particular the common European (mobility) data space(s), the European Alternative Fuels Observatory (EAFO) and the Single Digital Gateway.
- Coordination of the participation of the NAPs in the common European mobility data space, e.g. regarding the participation in the interlinking layer.
- Internal coordination and communication, including via the action of thematic ambassadors overseeing the work of different working groups on a specific topic.
- Management of high-level relationship (such as through the signature of cooperation agreements) with major organisations.
- Define common strategies and responses towards challenges raised by global players.

b. Long-term governance of the coordination mechanism

- Establishment of a long-lasting sustainable governance structure that allows for a continuation of the project activities beyond its planned timeframe, and with the following objectives:
 - Strategic coordination between the NAPs and National Bodies/competent authorities.
 - Definition of strategic objectives at mid (5 years) and longer (10 years) terms, in particular setting goals on data quality and availability, accessibility, and harmonisation of NAPs, while remaining compliant with EU legislation.
 - Promotion of NAPs and dissemination of information on their benefits and their best practices in the field of ITS.
 - Liaison with similar initiatives, in the transport and other sectors, in particular the common European (mobility) data space(s) and the European Alternative Fuels Observatory (EAFO).

Activity 2 – Monitoring of accessibility of data on NAPs

- Support to Member States reporting obligations stemming from the ITS

Directive and its Delegated Regulations.

Activity 3 - Interoperability of NAP architectures

- Create a coherent operational deployment roadmap for NAP architecture (in accordance with the NAPCORE NAP reference architecture and Level of Service KPI frameworks) in order to enhance the convergence of compatibility and interoperability of the features (access, management, look & feel etc.), as well as the harmonisation of the levels of service of the NAPs, as far as possible, taking account of the existing architecture of the NAPs in the Member States and building upon existing investments.
- Continuous maintenance and update of the NAP reference architecture framework and periodical updates of the NAP Level of Service KPI framework, considering market developments and stakeholders needs. Monitoring of potential technical challenges, including data flow issues, compatibility between systems. This shall take into account future compatibility of the NAPs with the common European (mobility) data spaces, the common European access point for alternative fuels and the C-ITS data ecosystem.
- Carry out NAP Level of Service assessments to ensure monitoring and continuous development of NAP features and functionalities.
- Where appropriate, develop specifications and/or support/implement sustainable EU-wide data access solutions for specific needs (e.g. cross-border data for rail and aviation, common European access point for alternative fuels data, urban vehicle access regulations etc.).

Activity 4 - Data accessibility and data exchange

Design, develop and maintain common tools, and organise and maintain the necessary communities to support data accessibility and exchange (definitions, standards, EU harmonised profiles, metadata, quality requirements, training etc.).

- Maintain and further improve the data dictionary as interpretation guideline at EU level for all data types regulated under the ITS Directive, including consistency with related existing definitions from EU standards and legislation.
- *Standards/profile maintenance and development:* maintain Transmodel, SIRI, NeTEx, DATEX II and TN-ITS standards and their profiles (including common technical tools), ensuring alignment with one another and relevant EU legislation (e.g. ITS Directive, AFIR), AFIR & ITS data exchange standards (e.g. METR) or projects / outcome of projects (e.g. UVARBox). In agreement with the Commission, further develop standards where gaps are identified (e.g. cycling infrastructure, volumes and patterns, UVARs). Develop guidance on how to develop national profiles. Monitor the use of these standards and profiles in the NAPs.
- *Standards use:* where relevant organise training and set up help-desks for data holders to support the use of ITS data exchange standards.
- *Metadata:* definition and maintenance of common metadata catalogues, taking into account the need to contribute with harmonised metadata to the common European mobility data space. Monitor the use of metadata in the NAPs and their contribution to the common European mobility data space.
- *Quality:* definition and maintenance of a reference data and service quality framework (e.g. development and extension of Quality Frameworks), provide validation tools to support the implementation of the standards and the

enrichment of datasets. Monitor the use of quality frameworks in the NAPs.

This task will ensure the coordination of relevant stakeholders and with relevant Standards Developing Organisations (SDOs), in particular through contributions to the annual updates of the Rolling plan for ICT standardisation and to the related work of the SDOs.

Activity 5 - Data collection and creation

- Support data collection/creation (in line with the obligation of the revised ITS Directive) with training activities (e.g. in particular for urban nodes).
- Where necessary and agreed with the Commission, maintain and develop data acquisition and validation tools (e.g. UVARbox tools), including by coordinating with the relevant communities.
- Identification of needs for data collection and creation (note: data collection activities themselves will not be funded through this action).

Activity 6 - Compliance assessment

Coordination of national bodies/competent authorities for the:

- Maintenance of compliance assessment and self-declaration forms (including possible changes stemming from the revisions of the Delegated Regulations).
- Continuous improvement of harmonised approaches, strategies and processes for compliance assessment, with focus on the assessment of international organisations, including the definition and organisation of possible approaches for compliance assessment and enforcement at multi-country or EU level.
- Communication with international stakeholders for multiple/all national bodies/competent authorities.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the compliance assessment processes (as specified in the Delegated Regulations).
- Definition of (common) evaluation and quality criteria to be used by national bodies/competent authorities. Test and implementation of (semi-)automated tools in the compliance assessment process.

Activity 7 - Creation of unique EU identifiers for access nodes

- Map existing frameworks in place to identify access nodes (for scheduled modes and transport on demand where relevant) in the different Member States. This includes the consultation of relevant stakeholders, in particular those already operating related national databases of identifiers or journey planners.
- Report and assess the efficiency of the governance frameworks that maintain identifiers in the different modes.
- Explore how to further harmonise identifiers and/or develop unique Union identifiers for access nodes.
- Propose a governance framework to maintain and support the use of those harmonised and/or common identifiers for access nodes, for further discussion between the Commission and Member State experts in the framework of the implementation of the working programme of the ITS Directive. To contribute

efficiently to the implementation of the ITS working programme, this activity should start as soon as possible.

Activity 8 - Dissemination and outreach activities

- User support and training, knowledge dissemination (helpdesk, user forum, website, guidelines, webinars, workshops etc.) and promotion, including the organisation of own events such as the NAPCORE Mobility Data Days. Where necessary, these activities should be focused on support to the organisations in charge of the implementation of the revised ITS Directive, in particular cities and regions. The organisation of events within the EU shall take into account the practicability for all participants, in particular minimisation of travel times and emissions.
- Information and promotion of results, benefits and best practices on the activities of this action across ITS fora and congresses, stakeholder events and conferences, Member States, stakeholders/users, standardisation communities, web sites and any relevant communication mean. Participation in events outside the EU shall be subject to prior validation from the Commission.

Submitted proposals are expected to clearly demonstrate their EU-added value, and in particular provide all the following:

- A description of the baseline situation.
- A description of the problem(s) to be addressed by the proposed action.
- Explicit targets and deliverables, in terms of contribution to EU policies and interoperable deployment of ITS across Europe, as well as to the implementation of the common European mobility data space.
- A detailed description of how the technical expectations will be fulfilled.
- The description of the foreseen communication and liaison with corresponding standardisation organisations.
- Explicit targets and deliverables, in terms of contribution to EU policies (e.g. ITS Directive and its Delegated Regulations, AFIR, the European Green Deal, the European 2030 Climate Target Plan), implementation of the common European mobility data space and interoperable deployment of ITS across Europe
- The assessment of the achieved results. Technical and organisational processes established to ensure high-quality of results shall be foreseen.
- A description of partners involved (directly and indirectly) including their respective roles.
- A clear description of the project management planned for the effective delivery of the proposed Action, including internal cooperation and external interactions. Cost breakdowns aligned with level of efforts (i.e. by sub-activities, partners and sub-contractors) shall be provided. Communication strategy and risk management measures shall be anticipated.

Furthermore, submitted proposals must at least:

- Concern the deployment along the TEN-T network including their urban nodes, hubs, terminals and infrastructure.

- Comply with EU legislations that will rule the implementation of the Action, in particular the ITS Directive and its Delegated Regulations and the legislative framework for the governance of common European data spaces.

- Demonstrate commitment and buy-in from all concerned stakeholders that will contribute to the successful delivery of the Action (i.e. proof of commitment required).

Expected impact (expected results)

The following impacts are expected:

- **enable the interoperable exchange of travel and traffic data in accordance with the requirements outlined in ITS Directive and its Delegated Regulations and other relevant EU legislation, such as AFIR as listed above,**
- **stimulate and accelerate the coordinated provision of road, traffic, and transport data to enhance the quality of services based on these data,**
- **reflect the continuous development of ITS services, and include user-oriented activities to ensure support, training, outreach and promotion,**
- **enhance multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnerships amongst public authorities and ITS information service providers.**

It is expected to accompany and facilitate the Member State's implementation of Delegated Regulations under Directive 2010/40/EU and of the Directive itself, and efficiently contribute to the harmonised development and evolution of NAPs in the long term.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is EUR 9 500 000.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	05 November 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>04 February 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	February 2025
Information on evaluation results:	March 2025
GA signature:	May/June 2025

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the call deadline (*see timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section).

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be complete and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table per WP
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)
 - timetable/Gantt chart

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the mandate to act for all applicants. Moreover you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be readable, accessible and printable.

Proposals are limited to maximum 120 pages (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc.*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

Only those proposals submitted by one of the following types of applicants are eligible:

- EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)).
- countries associated to the CEF Programme ([list of participating countries](#))
- where necessary in order to achieve the objectives of this action, and where their participation is duly justified, third countries and entities established in third countries may participate in a proposal under the approval of a Member State and without funding.
- international organisations, joint undertakings, non-profit associations, public and private undertakings, with the agreement of the Member States concerned.
 - o private undertakings providing services re-using data made available through the National Access Points can participate in proposals but cannot request any funding.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

Consortium requirements

In order to be eligible, a proposal must be submitted by a consortium composed of at least 17 Member States.

A coordinator must be designated. In order to achieve maximum coordination, the Commission invites that one Member State acts as coordinator for this action, with an objective of setting up one single grant with the European Commission. In the event that no Member State wishes to be the coordinator of the proposal, a designated coordinator that fulfils the eligibility criteria and can deliver the objective of the call may be proposed by the consortium if all partners agree.

Specific cases

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons³.

EU bodies — EU bodies can NOT be part of the consortium.

³ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations for participating in the programme (*see list of participating countries above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)⁴*). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Consortium composition

n/a

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Projects should take into account the results of projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

Duration

Projects should normally be up to 31.12.2027.

Project budget

Project budget (maximum grant amount) is expected to be around EUR 9 500 000.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

⁴ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with **the 'Quality' award criterion**, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- description of the consortium participants
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years; *template available in Part B*).

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate⁵:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for **the applicant's** debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with **unlimited liability for the applicant's debts**)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct⁶ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that⁷:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

⁵ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁶ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

⁷ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).


The proposals will have to follow the standard submission and evaluation procedure (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An evaluation committee will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria and then ranked according to their scores (*see sections 7 and 9*).

For proposals with the same score a priority order will be determined according to the following approach:

1. Score obtained under the 'Priority and urgency' criterion
2. Score obtained under the 'Maturity' criterion
3. Score obtained under the 'Catalytic effect' criterion
4. Score obtained under the 'Impact' criterion
5. Score obtained under the 'Quality' criterion.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (evaluation result letter). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a complaint (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The award criteria for this call are as follows:

1. **Priority and urgency:** evaluating correspondence of the proposal with the sectoral policy objectives and priorities, measuring its EU added-value and where applicable assessing the possible synergies with other sectors (5 points)
2. **Maturity:** assessing the maturity of the action in the project development. The criterion will measure, among others: the readiness/ability of the project to start by the proposed start date and to complete by the proposed end date, the status of the contracting procedures and of the necessary permits, and information on the financial availability needed to complement the CEF investment (5 points)
3. **Quality:** evaluating the soundness of the implementation plan proposed, both from the technical and financial point of view, the architecture and design approach, the organisational structures put in place (or foreseen) for the

implementation, the risk analysis, the control procedures and quality management and the communication strategy. Moreover, when applicable, it will also assess the information related to the maintenance strategy for the completed project (5 points)

4. **Impact:** assessing, when applicable, the economic, social and environmental impact, including the climate impact, and other relevant externalities. Moreover, when applicable, the criterion will assess, among others, the innovation and digitalisation, safety and interoperability and accessibility aspects of the proposal, as well as its cross-border dimension, effect/contribution to the network territorial accessibility (5 points)
5. **Catalytic effect:** evaluating the financial gap, the capacity to mobilise differentiated investments sources, the capacity to trigger important overall investments with limited EU support and when appropriate the extent to which externalities justify the CEF financial assistance. It also assesses the catalytic effect of the EU financial assistance (5 points).

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Priority and urgency	3	5
Maturity	3	5
Quality	3	5
Impact	3	5
Catalytic effect	3	5
Overall (pass) scores	15	25

Maximum points: 25 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 3/5, 3/5, 3/5, 3/5 and 3/5 points.

Overall threshold: 15 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive

starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Activities funded under this grant agreement cannot already be funded by other on-going projects such as the NAPCORE CEF Programme Support Action (Grant Agreement No MOVE/B4/SUB/2020-123/SI2.852232).

Project duration: *see section 6 above.*

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 6 above.*

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).


The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (85%).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).⁵

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

 Please be aware that project management costs (including related tasks, such as consortium-internal progress meetings, project reporting etc) should not exceed 10% of total costs for the project. Costs exceeding this limit will be rejected during grant preparation.


Budget categories for this call:


- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment


- C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - average personnel costs (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices): Yes
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost⁸: Yes
- subcontracting costs:
 - country restrictions for subcontracting costs: Yes, subcontracted work must be performed in the eligible countries or target countries
- travel and subsistence unit cost⁹: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: full cost
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate :0% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: VAT is NOT eligible
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' **websites or social media accounts** are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
 - eligible cost country restrictions: Yes, only costs for activities carried out in eligible countries or target countries are eligible
 - other ineligible costs: No

 Please be aware that in case of significant changes to the circumstances that have an impact on the project budget, you may be asked to request an amendment to reduce the maximum grant amount. If you do not comply with this request, we may have to terminate the grant and reduce it from our side (*see art 32*).


 Similarly, you may be asked to request an amendment to reduce the maximum grant amount, if your project encounters major delays during the project implementation. If you do not comply with this request, we may have to terminate the grant (*see art 32*).

 Please be aware that in case of significant changes to the circumstances that have an impact on the project budget, you may be asked to request an amendment to

⁸ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7115).

⁹ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

reduce the grant awarded. If you do not comply with this request, we may have to terminate the grant and reduce it from our side (*see art 28 and 32*).

 Similarly, you may be asked to request an amendment to reduce the grant awarded, if your project encounters major delays during the project implementation. If you do not comply with this request, we may have to terminate the grant (*see art 28 and 32*).

Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).


After grant signature, you will normally receive a prefinancing to start working on the project. The amount will be established based on the grant type or estimated project duration at the time of grant signature and will be 40%. The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required — whichever is the latest).

There will be no interim payments.

In addition, you will be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement (*art 23*).

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
 - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

Security rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 13 and Annex 5)*

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- communication and dissemination plan: No
- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes
- special logos: No

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

- Member State information: Yes
- specific rules for digital infrastructure projects: No
- specific rules for ATM common projects: No
- durability: Yes
- specific rules for blending operations: No

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

 For more information, see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the page limits (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the right category in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted before the call deadline (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, *please try to find the answers you need yourself*, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions)
- call information on the [[DG MOVE website](#)] [[CINEA website](#)]

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: MOVE-ITS@ec.europa.eu.

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait** until the end — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute technical problems. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- Consult the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System — By submitting the application, all participants accept to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- Registration — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- Consortium roles — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as beneficiaries or affiliated entities; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. Associated partners and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding).

- Coordinator — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- Affiliated entities — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- Associated partners — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- Consortium agreement — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate **funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions')**. Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants. If you would like to nonetheless benefit from different EU funding opportunities, projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: All applicants **need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected**.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).