

Project proposals for telematics

These UIP Guidelines should facilitate the submission of project proposals for EU funding under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for 2021-2027. The guidelines have been prepared in a Q&A format to guide members and individual Keepers through the application process. It focuses on project proposals for telematics.

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), which is based on the [new CEF Regulation \(EU\) No 2021/1153](#) was revised by the European Commission (EC) under the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 with the aim to **co-finance transport**, energy, and telecommunications projects. CEF defines the funding elements in transport with the following goals:

- **To build, develop, modernise and complete the TEN-T network** in transport, taking into account the long-term decarbonisation commitments and the goals of increasing European competitiveness, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, social and economic cohesion and access to and integration of the internal market
- To contribute to the development of **projects of common interest** relating to efficient, interconnected and multimodal networks and infrastructure for smart, interoperable, sustainable, inclusive, accessible, safe and secure mobility with the objectives of the TEN-T Regulation
- To support actions on **sustainable freight transport services and reducing rail freight noise**

What is the call about?

On 13th September 2022 a [new CEF transport call](#) worth €5.12 billion opened, among other priorities, for removing interoperability barriers ([CEF-T-2022-SIMOBGEN-REMIB-WORKS](#)) under the general and the cohesion envelope. Like last time there is **no indicative budget as €400 million are envisaged to be distributed among 13 different priorities** depending on the successful proposals received.

The relevant call text is very short and vague this time and refers to actions (both works and studies) for *removing interoperability barriers in compliance with the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) adopted by [Directive 2016/797 on the interoperability](#) of the rail system, including automatic gauge-change facilities in rail freight traffic in accordance with Article 9(2)(b)(v) of the CEF Regulation, as well as terminals and their equipment necessary for the transfer between different track gauges. The EC underlined that it should help railway undertakings, infrastructure manager and wagon keepers to implement and ensure compliance of the rail system and its subsystems with the technical specifications for interoperability (TAF/TAP TSI and other relevant TSIs).*

As in the last call, **costs of the sensors themselves and their installation on the wagons will not be eligible** in the current call and neither in any future call under the new CEF Regulation. However, any pilot projects around sensors and their related use cases could be eligible.

With this call, the European Commission wants to support activities towards the introduction of predictive and condition-based maintenance. This

means in particular that projects aiming at capturing data by installing sensors and telematic devices on freight wagons to track and trace, detect collisions, identify wear and tear and monitor the proper functioning or the condition of rolling stock can be proposed for funding.

The projects with pilots are considered as studies and should last a maximum of 2-3 years. Normally the starting date will be after the grant signature but in duly justified cases it could also start earlier as of the proposal submission date. The project should however not go beyond 31st December 2027.¹

Under the general envelope, CEF funding offers 50% reimbursement of the eligible costs for such studies.

The evaluation and selection process for project proposals is managed by CINEA², the Commission's Executive Agency for Innovation and Networks, which is also responsible for awarding the funds and monitoring the realisation of the approved projects under their relevant programmes.

Who can apply?

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in a Member State (including overseas countries and territories)
- Third countries associated to the CEF

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the participant register before submitting a proposal which needs to be validated. Please see point 6 of the [call text](#).

What projects are eligible?

Since the call text does not provide much information it is difficult to say which projects are eligible.

In general, one could say that:

- Projects must take place on the core network OR core and comprehensive network³.
- Early engagement of the Transport Ministerium in the concerned Member States to secure letters of support is recommended. (see [National contact points](#))
- Projects should show European added value and market potential, i.e. promotion of rail freight services around Europe, ensuring cross-border interoperability, developing capability status or oriented/preventative maintenance, etc.

What costs are eligible?

To find out what costs are eligible, please check point 10 in the [call text](#). Generally, project management costs should not exceed 10% of the total costs for the project.

The grant will be a budget-based actual cost grant. 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). The only exception is for ERTMS where it will be a unit grant.

As regards the project budget (maximum grant amount), projects of any budget are admitted. However, the EC emphasises that in order to ensure efficiency in EU funding interventions, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications for projects with a total requested EU contribution to the eligible costs of no less than €1.000.000. Where

¹ Please see point 10 of the [call text](#)

² Previously called INEA. More on CINEA:

https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/index_en

³ See Annex I of [TEN-T Regulation](#) what constitutes a core and comprehensive network.

possible, related projects should be grouped and submitted as one proposal.

Do I need to carry out a Cost Benefit Analysis before submitting the application?

The EC has explained that no CBA is required for this call.

When is the deadline and how do I submit the proposal?

The deadline of the Call is **18th January 2023 (17h00 Brussels time)**. All proposals must be submitted electronically (no paper submission) by using the [Funding & Tenders Portal](#). The Portal serves as a one-stop-shop for all external parties to the grant management process (applicants, beneficiaries, experts, external auditors) via a dedicated front office.

Before being able to use the tool, you will need to create an account⁴.

We advise you to submit your proposals and all the relevant documents well in advance of the deadline as it is extremely strict. We advise you to save your proposal frequently during the process and to proofread your proposal several times.

What should be the type of the proposal?

- The call co-finances studies with a pilot (technical demonstration/testing) rather than studies alone. Pilot activities should be on a limited scale and at a reasonable price.

Pilots need to serve at least one of the following objectives:

- to develop, improve or adapt a new technology or an innovative solution and implement it in order to test its feasibility and suitability as well as its added value before deploying it on a larger scale;

- to deploy an existing technology, infrastructure or service (i.e. already in use elsewhere but new to the sector, system or geographical area) in order to gain experience and/or create market conditions for deployment on a larger scale.

What are the different parts of the proposal?

Applications PART A (administrative information) and B (narrative technical description of the project) and annexes may be submitted 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.⁵

Part A is generated by the IT system and is based on the information you enter into the system.

Part B needs to be uploaded as PDF (+ Annexes) into the system. There is a specific template to be used. **The application (part B) is limited to 120 pages and specific formatting rules are applying.**

Please read the [introduction of the two application forms](#) as well as the [user guide for applicants and beneficiaries](#) when preparing your application.

Do I need to fill in the environmental compliance file?

Yes, all project proposals need to fill in the environmental compliance file. Where the action lead to limited physical intervention not affecting the environmental compliance, you should tick the box of `works` in the environmental compliance file and then specify `no/not applicable` in other fields of environmental relevance with a brief explanation in the comments. No declarations signed by the authorities would be needed. However, it would be safer to check with CINEA beforehand, depending on your action.

⁴ See the [ppt guide](#)

⁵ See p. 42 of the [call text](#)

CEF Calls Application

UIP

Guidelines

What is the application process and how long does it take from the time the call is launched until the project is approved?

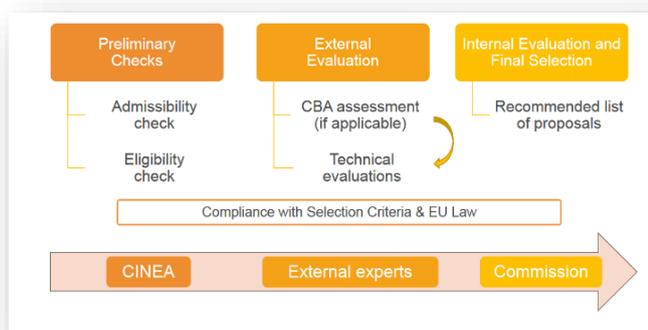
Here is the timeline of the call:

call timeline	Date
Call opening	13 September 2022
Deadline for submission	18 January 2023 (17h00 Brussels time)
Evaluation of proposal	January – May 2023
Information on evaluation results	June 2023
Grant agreement signature	September/October 2023

What are the different phases of the evaluation?

Please refer to the [Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#)

Once submitted, the proposals are examined and evaluated in 3 phases:



Phase 1: Preliminary check by CINEA on admissibility and eligibility criteria

Applications have to be submitted only electronically before the deadline via the funding portal and the application has to be complete, including all the annexes and supporting documents. CINEA has emphasised during the CEF Transport Info day that there will be no follow up on missing documents, like it was custom during the past. For a proposal to be admissible, all forms need to be filled in properly, with the

necessary documentation and signatures, otherwise the proposal will be rejected. CINEA also checks the eligibility of the proposals: are the applicants eligible? Is it an eligible action? Furthermore, the financial and operational capacity of the applicants are checked. If the application has met all eligibility and administrative criteria, it is approved and can continue to the second phase which evaluates the content of the proposed action.

Phase 2: External evaluation by independent external experts

CINEA hires external independent experts, which have no conflict of interests and which perform the technical evaluation. For the technical evaluations there are usually 3 experts that first do an individual and independent assessment and rate the application. This means that they assess to what degree the proposed actions fulfil the 5 award criteria of **Priority and Urgency, Maturity, Quality, Impact and Catalytic effect.**

With priority and urgency the experts are evaluating in how far the project corresponds with the sector's policy and has an EU added value. In maturity, they will check how ready and technical mature the project is and the EC has announced to give more importance to it this time. With Quality the soundness of the implementing plan is assessed as well as the organisational structure in place. In Impact, the economic-social impact is scrutinised as well as the cross-border impact and the results of the CBA (CBA is not needed for the rail noise call). What is new is the fifth award criteria of catalytic effect, which will assess how the EU grant will facilitate or accelerate the project.

All 3 experts than meet and agree on a consensus grade, 0 (insufficient) to 5 (excellent). The EC may also attend these evaluation sessions as an observer. Only proposals that have passed the minimum threshold of the assessment (15 out of 25 points) will go to the next evaluation phase. The experts will also recommend a priority order for proposals with the same score.



Phase 3: Final selection of successful proposals by the EC

The relevant applications and the outcome of the external evaluations are presented by CINEA to the EC. On the basis of several criteria (i.e. balanced development of network, complementarity, EU added value, potential synergies with other EU programs, budgetary constraints) the EC will select the application and draft a list of proposals for recommended funding. During this phase and on the basis of competitive rating, the EC may also reject proposals which have passed the minimum threshold. This list of recommended proposals will be presented to the Member States representatives of the CEF coordination committee for an opinion. Once the list is formally adopted by the Commission, CINEA will start informing the applicants/the project coordinator. Applicants whose projects were rejected receive an explanation and the rating of their proposed action.

What will happen after the proposed action has been selected?

The Grant Agreement Preparation Phase:

Once the project coordinator has been informed, CINEA prepares with the project coordinator the grant agreement (GA)⁶ directly in the Portal Grant

⁶ There is a specific Grant Agreement model for calls involving unit contribution:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/cef/agr-contr/unit-mga_cef_en.pdf

management system. The GA is a contract, which defines concretely the project plan and the budget allocation. It is usually drafted on the basis of the proposal, but is formulated more targeted and adding more milestones and outputs if not already mentioned in the proposals. Comments from the evaluation are also taken into consideration in this phase.

When will CINEA make the payment?

Usually, CINEA will do a first pre-financing (usually 30 days after signing the grant agreement) which will vary between 25 – 50% of the maximum grant amount awarded. Please bear in mind, that if the beneficiary's financial capacity is not satisfactory, a pre-financing can only be made upon receipt of a financial guarantee for up to the same amount of pre-financing. For more information please see point 10 in [the call text](#)⁷. Final payment will be done after demonstrating that the action has been completed and deliverables are verified. Costs eligibility will no longer be verified.

For more information, please contact your National Contact Point or CINEA Help Desk:

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⁷ See point 10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements