



Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Invitation to submit a proposal

CEF 2 Transport – Technical Assistance – General Envelope

CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-MS-LS

CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-RFC-LS

CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-RNE-AC

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EUROPEAN CLIMATE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE AGENCY (CINEA)

CINEA.B.B1 - CEF Transport: Northern Europe, Austria + MoS and ERTMS

Invitation to submit a proposal

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0. Introduction

This is an invitation to submit 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 invitation is launched in accordance with the 2021-2023 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** ('Agency').

It concerns the direct award to the Member States for the support in the form of lump sums to MS for CEF related activities, participation of MS in the RFC and CNC, and on TEN-Tec for updating and reporting via automated data exchange with TENtec, to Infrastructure Managers for the support in the form of lump sum for stakeholders involved in the governance structures of the EU Rail Freight Corridors (except Member States), and to RailNetEurope for Development of common rules, processes, functions and IT requirements / architectures for international rail capacity and traffic management, as well as activities related to data sharing, information provision, performance and market analysis, with a view to support effective implementation of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and Directive 2012/34/EU.

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-MS-LS - Technical Assistance to Member State – General Envelope**
- **CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-RFC-LS - Technical Assistance to Rail Freight Corridors – General Envelope**
- **CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-RNE-AC - Technical Assistance to RailNetEurope – General Envelope**

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 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2023 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

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:
 - 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*).

1. Background

In compliance with the objectives of the CEF Regulation 2021-2027, the specific objective of the CEF Programme is 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 on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T).

To achieve this objective, technical assistance is provided to Member States as well as to infrastructure managers and allocation bodies as the main stakeholders responsible for the successful implementation and effective management of TEN-T related infrastructure investments.

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

CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-MS-LS - Technical Assistance to Member State – General Envelope

Objectives (expected outcome)

The objectives pursued under this call are defined in section 4 of the multiannual work programme. More specifically, this call aims at support accompanying measures pursuant to Article 9(1) of the CEF Regulation (“technical assistance”).

Themes and priorities (scope)

The scope of activities supported under this technical assistance will support the Member States to successfully implement and effectively manage the TEN-T related infrastructure investments.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Technical Assistance to Member States projects shall address the following Work Packages and their corresponding tasks and deliverables as defined in the lump sum decision³.

- WP1. Cooperation within the Core Network Corridors⁴
 - a) Participation in meetings such as Corridor Fora, working groups and conferences;
 - b) Consultation and approval of the regularly updated Corridor Work Plans;
 - c) Cooperation with the European Coordinators, national stakeholders and other Member States.

- WP2. Cooperation within the Rail freight Corridors ensuring adequate coordination with the Core Network Corridors⁵
 - a) Preparation of, participation in and follow-up to meetings at corridor level involving stakeholders of the rail freight corridor and of the corresponding core network corridor;
 - b) Preparation of, participation in and follow-up to meetings for coordination between several or all rail freight corridors;
 - c) Coordination activities within the Member State involving in particular the infrastructure manager(s), railway undertakings, terminal owners and managers, regional and local authorities and other relevant stakeholders;
 - d) Preparation of the report pursuant to Article 22 of the Regulation aligned with the guidance of the Commission on the structure and content of the report (Ares(2020)377972).

- WP3. Updating and reporting via automated data exchange with TENtec⁶
 - a) Phase 1: Initiating and planning phase to identify appropriate staff internally and externally and to kick-start the analysis. Mapping and analysis of existing systems/databases at national and regional level. Setting up a project implementation plan up to 2024. Drafting of the first

³ [Decision](#) of 23 July 2021 and [corrigendum](#) of 8 December 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions for technical assistance under the Connecting Europe Facility – Transport Sector.

⁴ Corresponding to WP 3 in the above lump sum decision.

⁵ Corresponding to WP 4 in the above lump sum decision.

⁶ Corresponding to WP 5 in the above lump sum decision.

report;

- b) Phase 2: Implementation and coordination with relevant stakeholders at MS and DG MOVE level on the implementation. Preparation of the IT infrastructure and the necessary processes including internal and external testing with DG MOVE TENtec, before deployment of the final solution in production and real-time tests;
- c) Phase 3: Closing and evaluating the project with the implementation of potential additional modifications and adaptations and drafting of the final report summarising the entire project lifecycle.

Member States may decide not to include all the above Work Packages or years in the scope of their application ensuring smooth transition with CEF 2014 - 2020 "Programme Support Action" (PSA) Grant Agreements.

As the lump sum support will be calculated at the level of the defined work packages, the content of a chosen work package cannot be modified.

Payment of the lump sum is conditional on the completeness of the deliverables addressing the elements listed above and defined in the lump sum decision. In case of Member States benefitting from the CEF support in 2021, notably in the form of Programme Support Action (PSA), there should be no overlap with an application subject to this call. Therefore, the start date in the application can only be after the end of the respective PSA for a given Member State.

Expected impact (expected results)

The results expected under this Call are defined in section 5 of the multiannual work programme.

CEF-T-2021-TAGENE-RFC-LS - Technical Assistance to Rail Freight Corridors – General Envelope

Objectives (expected outcome)

The general objective of this technical assistance is to promote an effective implementation of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 (hereafter: "the Regulation") by supporting infrastructure managers and allocation bodies, in particular the management board set up in accordance with Article 8(2) and the one-stop shop set up in accordance with Article 13(1) of the Regulation.

In this context, the specific objectives of the technical assistance are equivalent to the objectives of the Regulation⁷:

- Objective 1: Improve coordination between infrastructure managers, Member States, railway undertakings and terminal owners/operators, both between these different groups of actors and – within the groups – across borders;
- Objective 2: Coordinate and plan investments to ensure that infrastructure capacities and capabilities available along the corridor meet the needs of international rail freight traffic, including as regards interoperability;
- Objective 3: Improve operational conditions for international rail freight services,

⁷ See section 2.2 of the evaluation of the Regulation, SWD(2021) 134 final, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0134>.

in particular by coordinating traffic management along the corridors, including in the event of disturbance and monitor the performance of rail freight services on the corridors;

- Objective 4: Guarantee international freight trains access to adequate infrastructure capacity, recognizing the needs of other types of transport, including passenger transport;
- Objective 5: Facilitate the use of rail infrastructure for international rail freight services and support fair competition between rail freight service providers;
- Objective 6: Improve intermodality along the corridors.

The supported projects are expected to deliver deliverables, to be produced by the Management Boards and the RFCs' One-Stop Shops (OSS) as defined in Articles 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19 of the Regulation.

Themes and priorities (scope)

The scope of activities supported under this technical assistance covers the entire scope defined by the Regulation as well as any other activity that contributes to achieving the objectives of the Regulation.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The applicants are requested to produce the following deliverables as identified in the Lump Sum Decision⁸, Work Package 6:

- (1) Implementation plan prepared and reviewed in accordance with Articles 9(1) and 9(2) of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 (including objectives, procedures to coordinate traffic management, etc.);
- (2) transport market study updated in accordance with Article 9(3);
- (3) the document containing infrastructure works restricting available capacity published in accordance with Article 12;
- (4) documentation of the assessment of capacity needs and of the capacity provided and allocated to freight trains in accordance with Articles 13 and 14;
- (5) the register of capacity requests referred to in Article 13(5);
- (6) the document published in accordance with Article 18 of the Regulation ('Corridor Information Document');
- (7) the document(s) presenting the results of the monitoring of the performance of rail freight services and of the user satisfaction survey in accordance with Articles 19(2) and 19(3);
- (8) insofar as not covered by the documents referred to above, any other appropriate documentation of the activities carried out by the management board in implementing Articles 8(7), 8(8), 10, 14(6), 14(8), 15, 17(1) and 17(3) and, if applicable, of the coordination with the corresponding core network corridor in accordance with Article 48 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013.

⁸ [Decision](#) of 23 July 2021 and [corrigendum](#) of 8 December 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions for technical assistance under the Connecting Europe Facility – Transport Sector.

Payment of the lump sum is conditional on the completeness of the deliverables addressing the elements listed above. Particular deliverables may be further specified in a Grant Agreement taking into account status and characteristics of a particular Rail Freight Corridor.

As the lump sum support will be calculated at the level of the defined work package, the content of the work package cannot be modified.

In case of the Rail Freight Corridors benefitting from the CEF support in 2021, notably in the form of a Programme Support Action (PSA) "Support for the establishment and implementation of the Rail Freight Corridors" there should be no overlap with an application subject to this call. Therefore, the start date in the application can only be after the end of the respective PSA for a given Rail Freight Corridor. Consequently, the lump sum for 2021 will also be reduced proportionally to the duration of the CEF supported Action in 2021.

Expected impact (expected results)

The technical assistance should contribute to achieving the six objectives defined above.

CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RNE-AC - Technical Assistance to RailNetEurope – General Envelope

Commission Implementing Decision C(2021) 5763 final of 5.08.2021 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2023 identifies RailNetEurope as beneficiary of Technical Assistance in the period 2021-2024.

The present call covers the eligibility period 2021-2022 (Phase 1). A subsequent call will be launched by the end of 2022 for the eligibility period 2023-2024 (Phase 2).

Objectives (expected outcome)

The general objective of this call is to support accompanying measures pursuant to Article 9(1) of the CEF Regulation ("technical assistance") with a view to promote effective implementation of Regulation (EU) N° 913/2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight, and Directive 2012/34/EU establishing a single European railway area.

The first specific objective (Regulation (EU) N° 913/2010) is to provide technical assistance to support the promotion of international rail corridors for a European rail network for competitive freight with implementation of high quality, interoperable infrastructure for international freight traffic and traffic management.

The second specific objective (Directive 2012/34/EU) is to provide technical assistance to support the rail Infrastructure Managers and Railway Undertakings in the implementation, monitoring and management of rail infrastructure in the EU.

Themes and priorities (scope)

Technical Assistance to RailNetEurope shall address the support to Rail Freight Corridors and the Infrastructure Managers for the development of common rules, processes, functions and IT requirements / architectures for international rail capacity and traffic management, as well as activities related to data sharing, information provision, performance and market analysis.

Technical assistance covers the following themes and priorities:

1. Coordination and cooperation between RNE, RFCs and rail sector stakeholders
2. Scoping and feasibility study for a European transport market study
3. Further development and implementation of new approaches for rail capacity management and allocation
4. Specification, development and deployment of IT systems and applications for rail capacity management ('digital capacity management')
5. European traffic and contingency management including the related data exchange and monitoring
6. Performance monitoring and management for rail infrastructure and transport services, including intermodal context
7. Providing information on rail infrastructure and services in user-friendly, digital formats
8. Ensuring consistency of coordinated funding proposals involving multiple rail stakeholders as regards the implementation the areas covered in the above WPs:

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Technical assistance shall cover the following work packages and activities:

- WP1. Coordination and cooperation between RNE, RFCs and rail sector stakeholders:
 - Provide secretariat services for the cross-corridor coordination between the management boards of the EU rail freight corridors ('RFC Network') and ensure coordination and alignment between programmes and activities carried out by RailNetEurope and rail freight corridors;
 - Ensure alignment with and contribution to the strategies and the work of the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) and the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (ERJU) their work, ideally on the basis of cooperation agreements with ERA and ERJU;
 - Ensure close and continuous coordination with and consultation of railway undertakings and other applicants on the entire portfolio of RNE activities;
 - Engage with and consult customers of rail freight services and partners in intermodal freight transport, such as terminal and intermodal operators, logistics services providers and final customers, with a view to strengthen the integration of rail freight in multimodal transport and the customer orientation of the rail sector, via common frameworks and concepts such as collaborative decision-making;
 - Engage with other relevant structures and stakeholders, including public authorities at EU, Member States and other levels, including rail regulatory bodies, national safety authorities, sector associations, the Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF) and others and facilitate information exchange and synergies with sector initiatives and projects related to the activities carried out under this technical assistance.
- WP2. Scoping and feasibility study for a European transport market study:
 - Identification and description of use cases in various planning and marketing processes, by different stakeholder groups and in different geographical contexts;

- Review and analysis of relevant methodologies, tools and arrangements for stakeholder involvement, taking into account existing frameworks and tools as well as good practises, including at European, corridor and national level and in different modes of transport; consultation of relevant stakeholders;
 - Definition of a set of options to elaborate a transport market study and comparison of these options, e.g. in terms of use cases covered, feasibility, costs, risks and implementation timeline;
 - Proposal for further analysis and implementation as of 2023 (second phase).
- WP3. Further development and implementation of new approaches for rail capacity management and allocation:
 - Overall programme and project management for the “timetable and capacity redesign” programme (TTR for a Smart Capacity Management);
 - Further development of relevant processes, rules and practical arrangements for TTR (IT tools (to be addressed separately under work package 4));
 - Analysis and recommendations on legal issues;
 - Engagement with and consultation of stakeholders concerned, notably railway undertakings and other applicants, Member States authorities, regulatory bodies, the European Commission and European agencies and other stakeholders as far as relevant;
 - Assistance for and monitoring of programme implementation by various stakeholders, notably infrastructure managers and applicants / railway undertakings;
 - Further development of the programme documentation (process descriptions, guidelines, handbooks, etc.) and of harmonised templates for reference documents to be prepared by other stakeholders (network statements, corridor information documents).
 - WP4. Specification, development and deployment of IT systems and applications for rail capacity management and allocation (‘digital capacity management’):
 - Specification of functional and technical requirements for IT applications and systems supporting rail capacity management and allocation (incl. basic infrastructure data), for central (European) and national (company-level) components, taking into account interoperability with existing systems and applications;
 - Development and deployment of IT systems and applications, including through subcontracting and in particular for the purposes of prototyping and testing (‘piloting’);
 - Engagement with and consultation of railway undertakings and other applicants and sector stakeholders;
 - Ensure full compliance with relevant specification at European level, notably TAF/TAP TSI and OPE TSI.
 - WP5. European traffic and contingency management and related data exchange and monitoring:
 - Management and steering of relevant projects and activities, in particular in the context the “Virtual European traffic management network” project and the “Handbook for International Contingency Management”;
 - Define frameworks, processes, rules and IT systems/application for traffic management supporting cross-border traffic;

- Monitoring implementation of the processes and rules defined by the “Handbook for International Contingency Management” by infrastructure managers and of the effects of its application in practise; further development of the handbook;
 - Analysis and recommendations on legal issues, e.g. on legal barriers at national level preventing the implementation of harmonised European processes and rules for traffic and contingency management.
- WP6. Performance monitoring and management for rail infrastructure and transport services, including in intermodal context:
 - Based on a consultation of relevant stakeholders, strengthen performance monitoring with a view to improve operations, covering in particular reliability (punctuality, business continuity in case of major disruptions), operations on cross-border sections (dwelling times), infrastructure availability (impact of TCRs on traffic), including on procedural aspects (respect of deadlines);
 - Review, with a view to identify synergies, existing frameworks for monitoring the performance of rail infrastructure and transport services, including in the context of rail freight corridors, core network corridors, PRIME and RMMS, as well as frameworks at industry or national level (e.g. by sector associations, regulatory bodies, statistical offices, etc.);
 - Investigate innovate ways of disseminating results of performance monitoring, including interactive dashboards and maps as well as technical options to restrict sensitive information to specific target groups (e.g. operational stakeholders);
 - Further develop monitoring-driven processes to improve the performance of rail infrastructure and transport services, building on existing work in rail and other modes ('train performance management', 'collaborative decision-making').
 - Taking into account the results of the activities above, develop structure and contents for performance review reports; the reports should provide an effective basis to monitor performance levels, identify causes of underperformance and define remedial measures to eliminate the key barriers that affect the performance of rail infrastructure and transport services. Preparation of a first pilot report on the basis of readily available statistics and roadmap for further development of the reports in the second phase of the technical assistance (2023 and later).
 - WP7. Providing information on rail infrastructure and services in user-friendly, digital formats:
 - Manage, update and further develop the Customer Information Platform (RNE CIP) within the scope of the Digital Railway Infrastructure Information System – Big Data 2.0;
 - Activities to digitalise of infrastructure managers' network statements;
 - Manage, update and further develop centralised infrastructure data solutions for specific railway applications (CRD, BigData).
 - WP8. Ensuring consistency of coordinated funding proposals involving multiple rail stakeholders as regards the implementation the areas covered in the above WPs:

- Facilitate multi-beneficiary funding proposals involving beneficiaries from different Member States, in particular rail freight corridors and infrastructure managers, either as (co-) beneficiary;
- Advisory on the specification of interoperable deliverables, and on administrative, financial and legal issues.

Expected impact

The results expected under this call are defined in section 5 of the multiannual work programme.

The proposal shall indicate the deliverables that will be produced as a result of this technical assistance and, to the extent possible, indications of the likely impacts of these deliverables on the performance of rail infrastructure management and transport services in Europe.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 31,800,000**.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below.

Topic	Topic budget
CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-MS-LS - Technical Assistance to Member State – General Envelope	EUR 19,000,000
CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RFC-LS - Technical Assistance to Rail Freight Corridors – General Envelope	EUR 10,000,000
CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RNE-AC - Technical Assistance to RailNetEurope – General Envelope	EUR 2,800,000

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call topics, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	16 / 12 / 2021
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>17 / 02 / 2022 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	March - April 2022
Information on evaluation results:	May 2022
GA signature:	July 2022

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 link in the invitation letter). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

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** (*to be uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table per WP/calculator (*template available in the Submission System*)
 - 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

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

According to section 9 of the Work Programme for 2021-2023 the grant is to be awarded to the Member States for topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-MS-LS, to Infrastructure Managers for topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RFC-LS and to RailNetEurope for topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RNE-AC.

The identity of the applicant (and compliance with general eligibility conditions) will be verified through the documents provided in the [Participant Register](#) during legal entity validation (copy of the resolution, decision or other official document establishing the entity, etc).

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

Project should normally be up to 31/12/2024 (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment) for the topics CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-MS-LS and CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RFC-LS, and up to 31/12/2022 (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment) for the topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RNE-AC.

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.

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).

Entities that have been identified as named beneficiary(ies) in the Work Programme are in principle considered to have sufficient operational capacity to carry out the action. In case of doubt, the granting authority will however undertake an 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 participate⁹:

- 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 misconduct¹⁰ (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

⁹ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁰ 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.

- 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 Regulation No [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 refused if it turns out that¹¹:

- 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

Invited proposals will be checked against the formal requirements (admissibility and eligibility) and then evaluated by an evaluation committee for operational capacity and award criteria (see sections 7 and 9). If it is successful, it will be invited for grant agreement preparation.

 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 are 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:

- **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. For military mobility under CEF Transport, the criterion will also serve to assess the potential of dual-use (civil-military) (5 points)

¹¹ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- **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)
- **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)
- **Impact:** assessing, when applicable, the economic, social and environmental impact, including the climate impact, and other relevant externalities. In addition, assessing the need to overcome financial obstacles such as those generated by insufficient commercial viability, high upfront costs or the lack of market finance . This criterion may be substantiated by a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA or CEA) or, in the absence of such tool, other forecast of end-user take-up, in which case the evaluation will look at the soundness, comprehensiveness, and transparency of the analysis as well as proposed means to monitor its impact. 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)
- **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.

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. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons even before proposal submission date back to 1 January 2021.

Project duration: up to 31/12/2024 (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment) for the topics CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-MS-LS and CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RFC-LS, and up to 31/12/2022 (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment) for the topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RNE-AC.

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): projects of any budget are admitted provided they are above EUR 500,000. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

 Please be aware that 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 32*).

For topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENEA-RNE-AC, 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 (**100%**).

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*).

For topics CEF-T-2021-TAGENE-MS-LS and CEF-T-2021-TAGENE-RFC-LS, the grant will be a lump sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum or financing not linked to costs. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the variable amounts it has prefixed and the estimates indicated by the beneficiaries in their project budget.

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.

For topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENE-RNE-AC, 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
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- 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 cost¹² : 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 cost¹³: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: full cost

¹² 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)7715).

¹³ 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).

- 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

For topics CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-MS-LS and CEF-T-2021-TAGENEА-RFC-LS, budget categories for this call:

- Lump sum contributions¹⁴

Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:

- eligible cost country restrictions: Yes, only costs/contributions for activities carried out in eligible countries or target countries are eligible

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 vary between 25% and 50%. 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*).

¹⁴ [Decision](#) of 23 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions for technical assistance under the Connecting Europe Facility – Transport Sector.

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and for topic CEF-T-2021-TAGENE-RNE-AC also 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 formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us 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.

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

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](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions)

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update.

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: CINEA-CEF-TRANSPORT-CALLS@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).
- **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 double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double 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 declared to two different EU actions.
- **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).
- **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 Model 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 a 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 one of them (or it 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 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](#).