



Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Call for proposals

CEF Digital – 5G Large Scale Pilots
(CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of “5G Large Scale Pilots” under the Digital strand of the **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)**.

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

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act ([CEF Regulation 2021/1153](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the [2024-2027 Work Programme](#)² and will be managed by the European Health & Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) (hereafter ‘the Agency’) on behalf of the European Commission.

The 5G Large Scale Pilots call covers the following two topics³:

- **CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS: 5G large scale pilots – 5G coverage along transport corridors – Works**
- **CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-SMARTCOM-WORKS: 5G large scale pilots – 5G and Edge for Smart Communities – Works**

Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

NOTE: The term ‘project’ used in the call documentation is synonymous to the term ‘action’ used in the CEF Regulation 2021/1153.

We invite you to carefully read the **call documentation** on the Funding & Tenders Portal Topic page, 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](#).

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. 38–81).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 6891 final of 9 October 2024 on the financing of the Connecting Europe Facility – Digital sector and the adoption of the multiannual work programme for 2024-2027.

³ Legal base: art. 8.4.a and 9.4.a (for 5G for smart communities) and art 8.4.c, 9.4.c (for 5G corridors) of the CEF Regulation

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, and 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 the successful applicants will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc.*).

1. Background

Decision (EU) 2022/2481 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030⁴ reaffirms the crucial role of digital connectivity and sets levels of ambition for 2030, namely a Gigabit network for all European households and 5G in all populated areas.

The White Paper on "*How to master Europe's digital infrastructure needs?*"⁵, adopted in February 2024, proposed the development of a "Connected Collaborative Computing" Network ("3C Network"), an ecosystem that spans across several segments of the digital communications value chain, both technically (integrating connectivity with edge cloud and computing capacities) and in terms of stakeholder collaboration (bringing together players from different segments of the digital sector and beyond).

⁴ [Decision - 2022/2481 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵ [White Paper - How to master Europe's digital infrastructure needs? | Shaping Europe's digital future \(europa.eu\)](#)

The White Paper puts forward the idea of launching **large-scale pilots** that set up end-to-end integrated infrastructures and platforms for telco, cloud, and edge. These pilot infrastructures could enable innovative technologies and applications for various use cases. For instance, by combining advanced 5G standalone systems with other technologies, such as edge cloud, High Performance Computing (HPC), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Worlds and Web 4.0, it could be possible to support innovation and better services in application fields such as transport, healthcare, education, agriculture, and manufacturing.

For the purposes of this call, **5G large-scale pilots are defined as the combined deployment and take-up of 5G standalone⁶ networks (5G SA), including their integration with edge computing capacities, that meet the requirements of innovative use cases in terms of very-high reliability, security, low latency, communication symmetry, and high throughput.**

The innovative use cases under the present call are⁷:

- 1) 5G SA connectivity and computing continuum to be deployed along major terrestrial transport routes that would integrate edge cloud capacities, thus enabling the development of Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM) services, advanced digital transport and logistics applications, emergency services, as well as a broad range of digital services for the vehicle, the driver (e.g. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems, ADAS), the passengers, and other relevant players (e.g. health monitoring services); 5G SA connectivity infrastructure may also enable use cases for automated train, in-land waterway and coastal maritime operations, as well as a multimodal combination thereof aiming at rendering said transport infrastructure more secure, efficient, and sustainable.
- 2) 5G SA deployment to improve the connectivity used to support the activities of socio-economic drivers (SEDs), i.e. entities whose mission, nature, or location can directly or indirectly generate significant socio-economic benefits for citizens, businesses, and local communities. Socio-economic drivers can include a variety of entities such as schools, universities, transport hubs such as train stations, ports and airports, hospitals, security and public safety services, local governments, as well as digitally intensive enterprises.

Based on the second CEF-Digital Work Programme, this call supports scaling up the current project portfolio while broadening its scope and involving more stakeholders along the 3C Network value chain. The aim is to facilitate the defragmentation of the EU supply and create the critical mass needed to compete at the global level, one of the main challenges identified in the White Paper and in consultation with private investors⁸ to advance the single market for telecommunications.

2. Objectives — Scope (including digital security requirements) — Expected impact

Objectives

⁶ A standalone 5G network (5G SA) is a type of 5G network architecture that operates independently without relying on a 4G LTE network infrastructure. It uses the 5G New Radio air interface for both control plane and user plane functions. Deploying a 5G SA network that requires a significant investment in new infrastructure, including 5G base stations, core network equipment, and transport networks, would in principle qualify as “step change” under Articles 52(6) and 52b(4)(iii) of Commission Regulation (EU) N° 651/2014 of 17 June 2014.

⁷ See Projects of Common Interest defined under Article 8.4(a) and (c) of the CEF Regulation.

⁸ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/commissioner-breton-calls-more-private-investment-connectivity-infrastructure>

The overall objective of the call “5G Large-scale pilots” is to deploy large-scale 5G SA infrastructures that integrate connectivity and edge cloud capacities along the 3C Network value chain. Each pilot is expected to maximise the number of use cases enabled by 5G systems in areas such as healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing, education, mobility, transport (including use cases for Connected and Automated Mobility for road, railway and inland waterway as well as coastal maritime automation, or multimodal transport as appropriate) etc., targeting urban, sub-urban, rural, and cross-border areas.

The strategy is to bring together the demand side of individual projects (vertical sector use cases) with supply chain actors across the EU in the 3C Network ecosystem.

Specific objectives are the following:

- 5G SA large-scale pilots will stimulate a wider and faster deployment and take-up of 5G across Europe, while providing the foundation for developing “lead markets” for 5G and edge cloud systems, relying where applicable on technologies and standards developed under other EU programmes, in particular the Digital Europe Programme and Horizon Europe.
- 5G SA large-scale pilots should demonstrate the benefits gained in specific vertical applications, following the evolution from current electronic communications networks towards virtualised and cloud-native network functions and distributed telco edge cloud, opening new opportunities to Europe’s key industries.
- 5G SA large-scale pilots funded under this call for proposals are expected to leverage 5G infrastructures delivering leading-edge connectivity characteristics e.g.: symmetric gigabit performance, high-user-density, ubiquitous coverage (e.g. to connect IoT devices), low latency and very high reliability. They will contribute to the integration of devices, networks, cloud and edge computing, and communication capabilities for telco edge cloud deployment to realise a ubiquitous mesh of computing and communication resources. Where necessary, the pilots should bundle 5G networks with a cloud-to-edge middleware stack⁹ capable of supporting the data-intensive use cases and applications designed for a multi-purpose context (5G corridors and/or 5G applications for socio-economic drivers).
- These large-scale *pilots* are encouraged to cover multiple use cases. Cross-sector synergies between multiple use cases are expected to be enabled by 5G SA supporting local smart communities and connecting multiple sites distributed across multiple countries and regions.
- 5G SA large-scale pilots should be designed in a way that, with adaptations due to possible different requirements, they can be replicated across Europe, for instance under other funding programmes such as ERDF, EAFRD or national investments. Projects may be preceded by inception studies or best practices funded in earlier calls under this programme or may be based on any other preparatory work funded under other programmes (such as R&I under Horizon Europe).

⁹ See topic 2.2.1 of the [2021/2022 Work Programme of the Digital Europe Programme](#)

Scope

CEF funding will cover the deployment of 5G SA infrastructure, plus relevant connectivity and computing, elements, required to implement innovative use-cases targeting either 5G corridors or 5G smart communities. Therefore, the proposals should address only one of the two topics below.

- **CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS: 5G large scale pilots – 5G coverage along transport corridors – Works**

In the case of 5G Corridor use cases, large-scale 5G SA pilots can be deployed along key European transport paths and the TEN-T network corridors including, but not limited to, the indicative list of 5G corridors in the Part V of the CEF Regulation¹⁰, with a co-funding rate of up to 50%. The priority will be to support investments in cross-border sections involving two or more Member States.

The deployment of 5G corridors has been identified as a Multi-Country Project (MCP)¹¹ in the Path to the Digital Decade Policy Programme. In addition, the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking (SNS JU) provides guidance in reviewing the 5G Strategic Deployment Agendas for both road and rail, with a particular focus on deployment scenarios, cooperation models, and regulatory incentives. Therefore, each proposal must foresee cooperation with relevant Programme Support Actions funded under CEF Digital as well as relevant working groups and fora of the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking (SNS), which is expected to provide strategic input to the implementation of the CEF Digital programme with the support of dedicated CSA projects.

Applicants may apply for grants towards work projects, covering the following categories:

- Deployment of passive network elements including civil works, e.g., ducts, dark fibre, 5G radio stations, towers, masts and/or pylons.
- Deployment and installation of active network elements, e.g., antennae, storage and computing capabilities such as network controllers, routers, switches, edge MEC/node etc.
- Deployment and installation of specific tracks-side devices (e.g., road, rail) for CAM use cases, such as sensors, cameras etc. for traffic monitoring purposes, including connected road-side units.
- Studies for preparatory works to be deployed as part of proposed works within the same application, such as network planning.

The proposed cross-border section of a 5G corridor must cross at least one Member State border, while its length on both/all sides of the border may vary, depending on national circumstances, such as means of transport, geographic situation and maximum size of the project/EU funding indicated in the call.

As regards Member States with large highway and rail networks (over 1000 km), cross-border segments of 5G corridors may span up to 15% of the corresponding combined length of TEN-T comprehensive corridors, per mode of transport (e.g.,

¹⁰ Part V of CEF Regulation - DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS OF COMMON INTEREST

¹¹ MCPs aim to help Europe meet its digital targets and objectives through large-scale projects that no one Member State could achieve alone [Europe's Digital Decade | Shaping Europe's digital future \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.eu)

road, rail) in a Member State¹². If justified by the project objectives and in the absence of 4G coverage or where 5G networks cannot support services addressing evolving end-users' needs), longer cross-border sections may be considered. As regards Member States with significantly smaller highway and rail networks, similar conditions to adjust the scale of corridor length may apply, and could thus exceed 15%¹³ of the corresponding TEN-T sections of the 5G corridors in a Member State, provided that market failure is demonstrated in the proposal.

In the case of Member States without intra-EU borders due to their geographic situation, or with no relevant sections of TEN-T corridors inside their borders, actions aiming at 5G coverage of intra-national corridor sections with insufficient mobile coverage suitable for CAM services, or sections without 4G coverage,¹⁴ are eligible. Similarly, 5G corridor deployment projects crossing the border of a third country or terminating at a port with maritime connections to other EU Member States are also within the scope of this call.

Cross-border deployment projects may also cover intra-national corridor sections where justified, if demonstrating market failure, and could be supported by CEF Digital with a maximum of 30% funding rate; complementary national deployment initiatives funded under other programmes, in line with state aid rules would be included.

In both cases, *i.e.* cross-border sections with or without intra-national sections, projects supported by CEF Digital shall not undermine coverage obligations of the mobile network operators stemming from spectrum licence conditions. Should the same area be considered for deployment, the applicants must demonstrate that service requirements fulfilled by the CEF funded project for future CAM services along the section concerned are going beyond requirements of coverage obligations, in particular service continuity with guaranteed quality of service, such as data capacities offered per vehicle, speeds, latency, or other service enablers. Costs related to fulfilling coverage obligations under spectrum licences will not be eligible for financing under CEF Digital.

Funding projects that foresee sharing both, passive and active infrastructure, e.g. through wholesale offers, is encouraged in order to allow for an efficient use of funds provided under this programme. Sharing passive, as well as active equipment on the part of mobile network operators (e.g. using the neutral host model), should aim at substantially reducing network deployment costs and acilitating an energy efficient use of resources when deploying and operating the 5G SA infrastructures. Existing infrastructures such as ducts, fibre, equipment shelters, power supply and utility poles should be used¹⁵ as needed and if possible. Large-scale pilot proposals should clearly outline the benefits of deploying 5G corridors, as well as their integration with edge and cloud infrastructure. This should be reflected in the design of the proposed supporting network architecture, its evolution towards the computing continuum, and should enable the development of innovative applications and use cases in the field of CAM (e.g. solutions for multi-modal mobility).

¹² An indication of the overall length of TEN-T corridors within a Member States, per mode of transport, can be found in annex of the [WIK Consult study](#) on "Investment and funding needs for the digital Decade targets" conducted for the European Commission.

¹³ See the current TEN-T lengths covered by CEF-Digital 5G Corridors projects at https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/connecting-europe-facility/about/5g-coverage-along-transport-corridors_en

¹⁴ See section 4.2 of the [Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107\(1\) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#)

¹⁵ See Regulation (EU) 2024/1309 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2024 on measures to reduce the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks, the "Gigabit infrastructure act"

Proposals concerning corridors should demonstrate how the infrastructure will be made available for other service providers or users inside or outside the consortium, e.g. providing access on an open, fair, non-discriminatory basis to all operators that hold relevant spectrum licenses in the territory concerned, while keeping in mind the respective levels of risk undertaken. The provision of open, fair and non-discriminatory wholesale access is a key consideration for ensuring consistency with State aid rules. Proposals may include limitations to third party wholesale access to active network elements for the provision of FRMCS or ITS if justified on security grounds.

5G corridors proposals should describe how the project will be used for the provision of CAM or FRMCS services along the entire corridor. Any arrangements for network sharing options to ensure uninterrupted provision of services along the entire corridor should be clearly defined.

- **CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-SMARTCOM-WORKS: 5G large scale pilots – 5G and Edge for Smart Communities – Works**

Concerning the use cases involving smart communities, the CEF Digital Programme will co-fund the deployment of the connectivity infrastructure elements required by vertical innovative applications. The access to an existing backhaul Gigabit network close to the location where the 5G-supported project will be deployed is a prerequisite. The project may however include a limited investment to complete the access to such Gigabit backhaul.

Large-scale pilots for advancing the 3C Network will demonstrate the benefits gained from the evolution of the current network infrastructures towards virtualised and cloud-native ones. This will include the deployment of 5G SA networks and their integration with edge cloud infrastructures enabling innovative applications in European vertical sectors, social innovations, new operation models for public services, as well as new business models opening new opportunities to Europe's key industries working across the 3C Network value chain.

Projects will need to demonstrate the soundness of the financing for the remaining parts of the project (infrastructure or otherwise) enabling the intended 5G SA use cases (e.g. end-user devices, sensors, connectivity subscriptions), which are not eligible for support under the CEF Regulation and may therefore be supported by other programmes or the consortium's own contribution. Projects will also need to demonstrate that the infrastructure will be operated in a future-proof way based on state-of-the-art protocols and standards, such as IPv6, and that they are located in areas where no 5G SA network is providing services addressing evolving end-users' needs.

The beneficiaries will be operators that will deploy 5G SA networks and provide access to 5G SA services to socio-economic drivers (SEDs)¹⁶. The SEDs should apply together with the above-mentioned operators and therefore endorse the planned 5G innovative use case(s). Eligible cost items may include 5G radio equipment and – where necessary for installation of additional base stations for densification – the passive infrastructure. Priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate multiple 5G-based use cases relying on the same 5G SA network.

¹⁶ According to the definitions under [CEF Regulation](#) (Art. 2 of the General provisions), "socioeconomic drivers" means entities which by their mission, nature or location can directly or indirectly generate important socioeconomic benefits for citizens, business and local communities located in their surrounding territory, or in their area of influence;

In line with the CEF Regulation¹⁷ (see recital 40), internet services and software services that make use of the digital infrastructure are not in scope of CEF financing.

The innovative aspects of 5G to support the use case will be assessed during evaluation.

The maximum CEF co-financing rate will be 75% of the CEF-eligible costs as a general rule. The financed 5G infrastructure may only be used to provide 5G services to the SEDs that will benefit from the innovative use cases.

In general, the requested co-funding and the number of SEDs that will benefit from the 5G service will be considered as part of the assessment of the catalytic effect of EU assistance and the economic impact award criteria.

Specific use-cases demonstrably addressing green policy objectives, in particular in terms of reducing the carbon footprint, are encouraged and will be taken into account when evaluating the proposals under the "Impact" criterion.

Proposals of greater scale in terms of scope, size of the coverage area, number of use-cases/end-users/countries involved, are encouraged and will be taken into account under the Priority & Urgency criteria.

In case of co-funding from national or shared management funds (including Cohesion Policy funds), State aid rules within the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU apply (see section 10 for details). However, if the projects concern the provision of dedicated 5G SA connectivity to enable highly demanding use cases by socio-economic drivers that are public administrations or public or private entities using it for the operation of SGIs (services of general interest) or of SGEIs (services of general economic interest) and that such connectivity is necessary for discharging those services, such co-funding will either not constitute State Aid (when no economic activities are supported) or can be considered compatible with the TFEU without the need of its notification and approval by the Commission, if compliant with the SGEI Decision¹⁸.

The CEF Digital grant does not constitute state aid; however, it must be consistent with the state aid framework from the outset. In particular, the grant should be used to address market failures or sub-optimal investment situations of a given use case, in a proportionate manner, without duplicating or crowding out private financing, in particular where actions are not commercially viable but where they have a clear Union added value.

Market failures exist when the private sector fails to address demonstrated end-users' needs. This may also occur when connectivity is provided at an insufficient level of quality or at excessive prices possibly due to insufficient competition. Market failures are often linked to the geographical areas concerned (e.g., cross-border sections of a transport corridor, rural vs. urban, etc.)¹⁹. State intervention should be used where it is impossible to address such market failure through less distortive policy and measures.

¹⁷ [CEF Regulation](#)

¹⁸ [Decision - 2012/21 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹⁹ See section 2 of the Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 'OJ C 262, 19.7.2016

Proposals concerning smart communities should identify the owner(s) of the infrastructure supported by the project and describe the conditions of access to it, as well as the operational relationship(s) between the different participants in the value chain for providing services. Therefore, the proposal should describe the methodology that the operator of the supported infrastructure uses to calculate the tariffs charged for access to it for the providers of the 5G innovative use case; and it will be taken into account in the evaluation of the “impact” criterion. In any case, the price charged by the entity operating the 5G funded infrastructure to the public authority or provider of the SEDs for the 5G access service should not exceed the price charged under market conditions, such as those prevailing in other competitive markets and should take into account the public funding received. The price charged should contribute to encourage to the maximum extent possible the use of the deployed capacity by its end-users.

Digital security requirements

Due to the sensitivity of the 5G infrastructures and data needed to implement the use cases and their relevance for security and public order (e.g. safety-related services such as automated driving, traffic management, functioning of healthcare, environmental security, etc. and their relevance to public order and security), there is a need to ensure cybersecurity of infrastructures funded under this action.

The dependence of many critical services on these infrastructures would make the consequences of systemic and widespread disruption particularly serious. For instance, if a 5G corridor infrastructure is compromised, problems affecting public order and security may arise such as perturbed or even closed traffic, traffic accidents, collisions, the spread of dangerous misinformation related to traffic conditions or other, etc. Impact could also extend to supply of critical inputs such as energy, raw materials, food, etc.

Furthermore, the interconnected and transnational nature of the infrastructures underpinning the digital ecosystem, and the cross-border nature of the threats involved, mean that any significant vulnerabilities and/or cybersecurity incidents concerning these infrastructures happening in one Member State would affect the Union as a whole.

A cyberattack perpetrated, for instance, through or against the 5G infrastructure connecting medical equipment and devices used for the monitoring or control of vital physiological functions may endanger the life of patients wherever they are, at the hospital, in the ambulance or at home. The fault of the network infrastructure caused by a cyberattack could paralyse the functioning of public utilities such as gas or water in an entire area, but could also cause the malfunctioning of equipment to monitor and control critical safety systems such as, for instance, those used in power plants or transport.

Therefore, the 5G infrastructures supporting those use cases and applications must comply with the strictest security principles, including the necessary controls concerning the participating entities. This will significantly reduce the risk that cyberattacks are perpetrated against users, businesses or public institutions, which could have severe consequences for public order and security.

In addition to the criteria set out in Article 200 of the Financial Regulation, Article 11 of the CEF Regulation sets out the eligibility conditions for participation to CEF and includes the possibility to restrict participation based on security reasons²⁰.

²⁰ Art. 11 (4) of the CEF Regulation “The work programmes may provide that legal entities established in third countries associated to the CEF in accordance with Article 5, and legal entities established in the

Legal entities established, or deemed to be established, in Member States and directly or indirectly controlled by Member States or by nationals of Member States will be eligible to receive funding under this topic.

The assessment of the foreign (non-EU) control will be addressed in principle during the evaluation of proposals and at the latest during the grant agreement preparation. Participants will be requested to submit an ownership control questionnaire for this purpose to determine their control status. They will also be requested to submit supporting documents in order for the Commission to determine that the entities are not controlled by third countries or nationals of third countries or by entities established in third countries.

In case the ownership control assessment concludes that an entity established in the EU is not controlled by a EU Member State, this entity will be notified of the outcome of the assessment and shall be eligible to participate under the condition that the entity provides a security guarantee, approved by the Member State of establishment, within 30 working days of the receipt of the notification or before 7 October 2025 (whichever is earliest). Where entities established in an associated country are EU-controlled, security guarantees are not necessary.

Legal entities established in third countries, including associated countries, will exceptionally be eligible to participate (*only for topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS*) where this is indispensable for the achievement of the objectives of a given PCI²¹, on the condition that those entities provide security guarantees, approved, on the basis of national law, by the country in which they are established.

The above-mentioned security guarantees shall certify that the legal entity:

- a) Exercises full control over its corporate structure and decision-making process in a manner that does not restrain or restrict in any way its ability to perform and complete the action;
- b) Is not subject to non-eligible third country jurisdiction obligations that may undermine the security of the Union;
- c) Ensures that the results of the CEF funded action shall remain within the beneficiary/beneficiaries and shall not be subject to control or restrictions by non-eligible third countries or non-eligible third country entities during the action and for 3 years after its completion.

Concerning eligible legal entities established in third countries, the “non-eligible third countries” mentioned above under points (b) and (c) should be understood as any third country other than the country of establishment.

All the proposals submitted to this topic must include **security declarations** by the participating entities²² receiving funding for the deployment of equipment and technologies. The declarations should demonstrate that the network technologies and equipment (including software and services) funded by the project will comply with this call’s security requirements, in accordance with the applicable EU law, national

Union but directly or indirectly controlled by third countries or nationals of third countries or by entities established in third countries, are not eligible to participate in all or some of the actions under the specific objectives set out in Article 3(2), point (c), for duly justified security reasons. In such cases, calls for proposals and calls for tenders shall be restricted to entities established, or deemed to be established, in Member States and directly or indirectly controlled by Member States or by nationals of Member States.”

²¹ Article 11(5) of the CEF Regulation

²² In line with Council Decision (EU) 2021/1764 of 5 October 2021, persons and entities established in overseas countries and Territories (OCTs) are eligible for funding subject to the rules and objectives of the CEF and possible arrangements applicable to the Member State to which the relevant overseas country or territory is linked.

law, and EU guidance in place on cybersecurity²³. In addition, where the project provides that network technologies and equipment funded under the project could interconnect (or are part of the same network) with other network technologies and equipment not funded under the project, in a way that could undermine the security of the networks, the requirement to comply with the security requirements of this call shall apply also to any network technology and equipment that would represent a risk as regards the security of networks.

Furthermore, the declarations will ensure that effective measures are in place to address underlying security issues, including, wherever relevant, measures to avoid falling under non-eligible third country jurisdiction obligations, or influence. The project should also comply with the strictest cybersecurity requirements, imposed by national law, in accordance with the 5G toolbox (where applicable) and other relevant EU guidance, of all the eligible countries where the infrastructure is deployed. Finally, the declaration will confirm that the results of the CEF funded action shall remain within the beneficiary during the action and for 3 years after its completion.

The content of the declarations and commitments in the project proposal will be assessed during the evaluation phase.

Proposals under this topic, in the digital security section in the application form, must address the following risk scenarios and mitigating measures as described in the [5G networks EU Toolbox of risk mitigating measures](#):

- involvement of high risk suppliers (as defined in the [EU coordinated risk assessment on cybersecurity of 5G networks](#) and addressed by [Commission communication on the implementation of the 5G cybersecurity toolbox](#))²⁴; restrictions applied against such suppliers for critical and sensitive key assets, and measures to avoid dependency on such high risk suppliers;
- measures to promote supply chain resilience and strategic autonomy (in line with the [5G networks EU Toolbox of risk mitigating measures](#))²⁵;
- security requirements for the involved network operators (*e.g. strict access controls, rules on secure operation and monitoring, limitations on outsourcing of specific functions, etc.*);

²³ Such as: the Commission Recommendation (EU) 2019/534 of 26 March 2019 Cybersecurity of 5G networks, C/2019/2335; the Report on EU Coordinated Risk Assessment of the Cybersecurity of 5G Networks of 9 October, 2019; the Council Conclusions on the Significance of 5G to the European Economy and the Need to Mitigate Security Risks Linked to 5G of 3 December, 2019; the Cybersecurity of 5G networks - EU Toolbox of Risk Mitigating Measures of 29 January, 2020; and COM(2020)50 of 29 January 2020 on Secure 5G deployment in the EU – implementing the toolbox, and Communication on implementing the 5G cybersecurity Toolbox C(2023)4049 of 15 June 2023.

²⁴ As provided in paragraph 8.2 of the Work-Programme, “Cross-border and internal member state infrastructures funded under CEF must comply with the highest security standards because they underpin the entire economy and society and vulnerabilities of those infrastructures can undermine public order and security within the Union. The Second report on Member States’ Progress in implementing the EU Toolbox on 5G Cybersecurity, published in June 2023 concluded that there is a “clear risk of persisting dependency on high-risk suppliers in the internal market with potentially serious negative impacts on security for users and companies across the EU and the EU’s critical infrastructure. A lack of swift actions by Member States regarding high-risk suppliers could also affect over time the EU consumers and companies’ trust in the internal market, and increase the risk of spill-over in case of cyber-attacks, especially where MNOs provide cross-border services and in case it affects critical 5G use cases or other sectors dependent on telecoms.”. For these reasons, the Communication on the implementation of the 5G cybersecurity toolbox should apply in this call.

²⁵ Principles underlined in the 5G cybersecurity toolbox and the related measures apply mutatis-mutandis to backbone infrastructures.

- measures adopted to prevent unsolicited transfer to, or access by third parties to data (personal or non-personal) stored or transported via the project infrastructure.

Based on the security declaration in the proposal, as well as the evaluation carried out by independent experts, the Commission or funding body, where appropriate, may carry out a security assessment, including the beneficiaries' suppliers and sub-contractors. Funding for actions which do not comply with the conditions related to security issues may be suspended, terminated, or reduced at any time in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

For further background on security requirements, please see sections 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 as well as sections 2.2 (paragraph "Strengthen cybersecurity and resilience") of the CEF Digital Work Programme. As provided in section 8.4, proposals submitted to this action will also have to involve only suppliers suitable for the deployment of secure systems, as they take a critical role for the security of critical communication systems such as the one needed for safety-related CAM services, i.e. critical services directly impacting public safety such as automated driving, traffic management, healthcare, environmental monitoring, etc.

In the context of 5G SA networks, the role of suppliers has been identified in the EU coordinated risk assessment and the EU 5G cybersecurity Toolbox on as of particular relevance²⁶. In particular, the Toolbox recommends assessing the risk profile of suppliers and applying appropriate restrictions – including necessary exclusions – for key assets considered as critical and sensitive.

This is notably the case for suppliers of equipment (including hardware and software) that implement core network functions, network management and orchestration functions, as well as access network functions.²⁷

The reason is that the deployment, operation or management of active and/or passive components of the infrastructure may entail security risks for the Union, for instance if critical data is shared with un-authorized parties or un-authorized parties are able to influence the use of such data or components and potentially compromise the integrity or availability of the deployed infrastructure. Such risks are more probable if the active components and related services are sourced from suppliers established in or controlled from third countries²⁸.

Expected impact

The projects funded under this call are expected to accelerate the deployment of 5G SA across the Union, thus directly contributing to the achievement of the Digital Decade connectivity goals and the other Digital Decade targets. The benefits and impact of these actions will equally depend on the level of innovation present in the use cases addressed.

By closing deployment gaps and removing capacity bottlenecks and technical barriers, the deployment of **5G Corridors along the TEN-T networks** will contribute to strengthening the social, economic, and territorial cohesion in the EU.

5G Corridor projects would deliver uninterrupted coverage, where service continuity will meet relevant quality-of-service requirements over the entire range of the

²⁶ COM(2020)50 of 29 January 2020.

²⁷ See p. 5 COM(2020) 50 final - Secure 5G deployment in the EU - Implementing the EU toolbox. See also COM(2023)4049, "Implementation of the 5G cybersecurity toolbox"

²⁸ According to the EU coordinated risk assessment of 5G networks, the risk profiles of individual suppliers can be assessed based on several factors. These factors include the likelihood of interference from a third country. This is one of the key factors specified in paragraph 2.37 of the EU coordinated assessment.

corridor section. In turn, this will enable the development of a broad range of 5G-enabled CAM services, including road, rail, inland waterways and coastal maritime, and if appropriate in combination with multimodal transport, as well as complementary safety-related services where appropriate. The latter could be based on direct short range communication technologies, such as V2X and ITS-G5, and supporting complementarities between existing and future infrastructure deployment actions.

In the future, deployed infrastructure may contribute to the improved safety of road/rail/waterway/coastal operations (e.g. Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), Future Rail Mobile Communication System (FRMCS), River Information Services (RIS)) and enable 5G services for multiple application domains.

Key parameters to measure impact for the 5G Corridor topic, will be:

- Aggregate length of the corridor sections covered by 5G
- Spectrum bands enabled along the sections
- Inter-antenna distance, or in the case of deployment limited to passive network infrastructure only, inter-pylone/mast/towers
- Availability of various service features along transport routes, and
- Target network performance such as data rate and latency for each vehicle.

Projects may also contribute to the objectives of the Commission's strategy on the mobility of the future²⁹ in terms of road safety, optimised road traffic and reduced CO2 emissions and traffic congestion, as well as the competitiveness of the European telecom and automotive industries.

5G smart communities use cases are expected to accelerate the take-up of 5G SA connectivity for the provision of innovative services and contribute to a wider deployment at the same time. Such services can help reboot the overall economy, as well as support the transition towards the provision of smart services in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal. 5G SA innovative use cases include:

- IoT infrastructure and community services that require a flexible, low-latency, reliable, high-user-density connectivity infrastructure, e.g. through a combination of fibre and wireless connectivity (5G, small cells, and Wi-Fi) that is IPv6-enabled.
- 5G- and edge cloud- based use cases that leverage new 5G characteristics, e.g.: higher bandwidth and ubiquitous coverage (eMBB), ultra-low latency (URLLC), massive machine-type (mMTC)³⁰.
- Process and data innovations that require connectivity infrastructures with advanced service features, e.g. quality-of-service guarantees enabled by edge computing facilities and support by network slicing.
- Projects that rely, where relevant, on open, disaggregated, and interoperable technology solutions and contributing to the emergence of a European 3C network ecosystem of suppliers.

²⁹ "On the road to automated mobility: An EU strategy for mobility of the future", Communication of 17 May 2018, [COM\(2018\) 283 final](#)

³⁰ eMBB: enhanced Mobile Broadband; URLLC: Ultra-reliable low-latency communication; mMTC: Massive machine type communications.

- Leveraged impact on investment in 5G and edge cloud for vertical sectors by all types of public and private investors.
- Positive spillover effect to Digital Decade indicators not only for “digital infrastructure” but also to other use cases in Digital Skills, Digital Transformation of Businesses and Digital public Services.

In addition to the support for local innovation, the EU added value is also based on the dissemination and the early adoption of concrete 5G SA use cases that will contribute to gaining insights and increasing maturity for 5G applications in different sectors. It is expected that this will generate spillover effects across the 3C Network value chain, in particular by nurturing consumer-supplier synergies between actors working on converged, cloud-enabled connectivity and computing infrastructures. In all 5G Large Scale Pilots proposals, the beneficiaries should demonstrate that they have access to use case resources and capacities, including relevant radio spectrum (in case of passive infrastructure deployment, either directly or contractually with 5G spectrum band owners). They should provide reassurances as to the operation of the service beyond the specific areas (e.g. 5G corridor section) supported by CEF, and beyond the time horizon of the CEF-funded project, in view of the long-term development of the infrastructures (e.g. more extensive pan-European corridor network, replication of a smart community use case, etc.).

All proposals should include a solid implementation plan, including access to services and applications with social, economic, and environmental benefits extending beyond the co-funded Member States, the beneficiaries or telecoms sector, as well as a commitment to maintain the infrastructure beyond the lifetime of the project. Proposals should also include a plan to enable uninterrupted service beyond the 5G cross-border sections (for 5G Corridors proposals) and, if applicable, beyond the scope of the funded 5G SA network at the SED location (for 5G smart communities proposals). Such a plan should include the same security conditions that apply to the CEF-funded project.

Each proposal must be supported by the relevant competent authorities involved in the deployment of 5G SA network infrastructure in the area where the deployment is foreseen to take place, e.g. along a transport path on the two sides of the border, at national and/or regional and/or local levels for the 5G Smart Communities.

All the proposals should define post-project ownership and describe the mechanism(s) set in place for long term cooperation and sustainability. The functional and operational relationship(s) between the different participants in the value chain for the provision of digital services should be clearly defined.

Beneficiaries will be asked during project implementation to share their knowledge, achievements and lessons learnt, including in the context of relevant Support Actions, in order to demonstrate the benefits of 5G SA by providing concrete examples of 5G based use cases for SEDs. Sharing of project information will be essential for project replication (e.g. requirements elicitation, scoping and templates for financial sizing, facilitating identification of complementary funding sources) across the Union, thus facilitating the spillover effect of CEF Digital investments.

During project implementation beneficiaries will be also asked to cooperate with the ongoing CSA projects (or follow up actions) that support and enhance 5G edge and distributed cloud integration for European 5G corridors and 5G smart communities and foresee specific budget for these activities.

The Broadband Competence Offices (BCO) Network will also play an important role in helping applicants and beneficiaries to overcome the challenges related to the envisaged deployment and take-up of 5G SA, e.g. by conveying knowledge and good practices.

Proposals funded under this call may include synergetic (ancillary) elements relating to another sector of the CEF programme, i.e. energy and transport, if these synergetic elements allow to significantly improve the socio-economic, climate or environmental benefits of the action. CEF co-funding may be provided as long as the cost of these synergetic elements does not exceed 20% of the total eligible costs of the action. Art. 10 of CEF Regulation.

Synergies³¹ between CEF projects and with other relevant EU programmes is encouraged. Maximising the value, impact, efficiency of EU funding and supporting delivering on EU priorities is an EU added value which will be positively considered under the “Priority and Urgency” criterion.

For more information about the call, see https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/calls-proposals_en.

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 105 000 000**. This budget might be increased by maximum 20% of the budget of the multiannual plan.

Indicative budget information per topic can be found in the table below:

Topic	Topic budget
CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS	EUR 52 500 000
CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-SMARTCOM-WORKS	EUR 52 500 000

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:	22 October 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>13 February 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u>
Evaluation:	March – May 2025
Information on evaluation results:	Summer 2025
GA signature:	Autumn 2025

³¹ “Synergies encompass compatibility, complementarity and coherence among different forms of EU funding. This requires good interaction of two or more programmes aiming at enhancing the effects that could be achieved by individual interventions”.

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). 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*). This description should contain the description of the infrastructure as well as the description of the use case(s).
- Part C (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table per Work Package (*template available in the Submission System*). The detailed budget table should contain one or several dedicated work packages related to the use case(s)
 - activity reports of the last finalized accounting year (unless exempted from operational capacity check; see *section 7*)
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)
 - timetable/Gantt chart (*template available in the Submission System*)
 - letters of support from all MS benefitting from the project³² (Member States agreement) (*template available in the Submission System*)
 - ownership control questionnaire, including for associated partners and subcontractors³³ (*template available in the Submission System*)
 - security declarations signed by the participating entities.
 - other annexes

Additionally, for topic **CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-5GCORRIDORS-WORKS**, proposals must also submit:

- self-declaration from all Mobile Network Operators involved in the proposal that the public funding of the CEF intervention will not be used by the involved MNOs for the purpose of the fulfilment of any relevant coverage obligation, for

³² The list of the national contact points can be found here: [National Contact Points \(europa.eu\)](#)

³³ If not provided at submission stage, the ownership control questionnaire for subcontractors will be requested later during the grant agreement implementation in order to perform the ownership control assessment.

instance in the context of spectrum licenses (*to be uploaded in the Submission System in "Other annexes"*)

- declaration from the coordinator, on behalf of the consortium, that no 5G infrastructure, present or credibly planned, is capable of providing an uninterrupted mobile coverage suitable for CAM services in the corridor section concerned (*to be uploaded in the Submission System in "Other annexes"*)
- security guarantees approved by the respective authorities of the associated third country or other third country, in case of third country entities participation (template available in the Submission System).

Exceptionally, should a third country require more time to provide its approval, the applicants must submit, by the call deadline, a copy of the security guarantee and the acknowledgment of receipt of the request by the third country. In this case, the security guarantees approved by the third country must be sent by the proposal coordinator to HADEA-CEF-DIGITAL-CALLS@ec.europa.eu by 11 April 2025, 17:00:00 (Brussels time) at the latest, identified with the proposal ID in the email subject.

Additionally, for topic **CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-SMARTCOM-WORKS**, proposals must also submit:

- self-declaration for any user of the planned funded 5G connectivity services that it is a public authority or a socio-economic driver (SED) (*to be uploaded in the Submission System in "Other annexes"*)
- self-declaration for any user of the planned funded 5G connectivity services that no 5G connectivity service ensuring sufficient performance and quality for the innovative use case(s) is available to them on the market (*to be uploaded in the Submission System in "Other annexes"*)
- self-declaration for any funded Mobile Network Operator that they will not count the coverage of the SGI provider(s) involved in the consortium against the fulfilment of their coverage obligation (if they are subject to any coverage obligation for example attached to a spectrum licence) (*to be uploaded in the Submission System in "Other annexes"*)
- letter from the local and/or regional authorities in the area where the deployment is foreseen to take place. This may take the form of administrative letters, letters of intent, memoranda of understanding, or similar support documents and include an indication that no plans for other type of public support for the roll out of a 5G network is known to the abovementioned authorities (*to be uploaded in the Submission System in "Other annexes"*)

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 discrepancy, 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)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies); and
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e. EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)).
 - (*for proposals submitted under topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS topic*) non-EU countries (except for topics with restrictions; see Digital Security Requirements section above and see below):
 - countries associated to the CEF Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#))³⁴

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*).

Please note however that this call is subject to restrictions due to security reasons. This means that only the following countries are eligible: EU Member States. Moreover:

- participation in any capacity (as beneficiary, affiliated entity, associated partner, subcontractor or recipient of financial support to third parties) is limited to entities from eligible countries
- project activities (included subcontracted work) must take place in eligible countries (*see section geographic location below and section 10*)
- the Grant Agreement may provide for IPR restrictions (*see section 10*).

Specific cases

³⁴ See Art 5.2 of CEF Regulation 2021/1153: the third countries associated to CEF and entities established in those countries, may not receive financial assistance under CEF except where it is indispensable to the achievement of the objectives of a given project of common interest or a project in accordance with Article 7(1) of this Regulation and under the conditions set in the work programme. In addition, the eligibility of associated countries is conditional to the entry into force of the Association Agreement by ratification by the respective national parliaments.

Exceptional funding (only for proposals submitted under topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS) — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible for projects of common interest if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action.

Countries currently negotiating association agreements (only for proposals submitted under topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS) — 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).

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 organisations³⁵ 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 provided they offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons³⁶.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

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)³⁷ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)³⁸). 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).

Following the [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments (including the grant agreement itself as well as subcontracts, purchase contracts, financial support to third parties etc.) can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties). In this case, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly”.

³⁵ An 'international organisation' means an intergovernmental organisation (other than the EU) with legal personality under international public law (including specialised agencies — with or without legal personality — set up by international organisations and referred to in Article 159(1) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

³⁶ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

³⁷ 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](#).

³⁸ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

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

Consortium composition

For topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS:

Proposals must be submitted by:

- minimum 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from at least two Member States, or a Member State and associated or third country (see Digital Security Requirements Section and section 6. above for the conditions to allow entities from Associated and Third countries)
- exceptionally, when there is no terrestrial border with a Member State, or in the case of outermost regions, 5G corridor deployment projects crossing the border of a third country or terminating at a port with maritime connections to other EU Member States, minimum 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from at least one Member State.

The participation of the following actors as part of the consortium is encouraged:

- o mobile network operators
- o tower companies
- o telecom backhaul operators
- o road operators
- o rail infrastructure managers
- o original equipment manufacturers
- o mobility service providers (such as innovative solutions providers for traffic management and intelligent transport systems)

For topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-SMARTCOM-WORKS:

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium that is composed by minimum 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) including at least:

- an entity which deploys and operates mobile networks (hereafter referred to as "operator" or "MNO") and provides connectivity services to the public or to specific clients ("private networks") and
- a public authority or SED.

Exceptionally, proposals can be submitted by only one applicant or by one applicant and its affiliated entities, if both roles described above are fulfilled.

Moreover, entities that do not have themselves the right to use the frequency spectrum should justify whether e.g., they will use unlicensed spectrum or involve in the consortium an entity that has the right to use the necessary frequency spectrum.

Socio-economic drivers

As described above in the Scope section, the end-users in this topic should be socio-economic drivers (SEDs).

SEDs are defined in the CEF Regulation (Chapter 1 – General provisions, Article 2 – Definitions): “socioeconomic drivers” means entities which by their mission, nature or location can directly or indirectly generate important socioeconomic benefits for citizens, business and local communities located in their surrounding territory, or in their area of influence.

Examples of SEDs include schools, universities, libraries, local, regional or national administrations, main providers of public services, hospitals and medical centres, transport hubs as well as digitally intensive enterprises, as those entities can influence important socio-economic developments in the areas in which they are located, including rural and sparsely populated areas, where the market fails to deliver 5G SA connectivity.

Socio-economic drivers need to rely on cutting edge connectivity in order to provide access to the best services and applications, with a view to maximising their positive effects on the wider economy and society within their areas, including by generating wider user demand for 5G SA connectivity and services.

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 last, in general, up to 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Project budget

The maximum grant amount is expected to be between EUR 10 000 000 and EUR 20 000 000 per project. This amount may be exceeded if duly justified by the applicants.

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.

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 this 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
- applicants' activity reports of last year
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).

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 participate³⁹:

- 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 misconduct⁴⁰ (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 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 that⁴¹:

- 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

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

³⁹ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) 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 (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (3 phases: individual evaluation, consensus phase and panel review) and then ranked according to their scores (*see sections 7 and 9*).

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) 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. Proposals that are below the budget threshold (i.e. passed, but not ranked high enough to receive funding) will be awarded a Seal of Excellence.

⚠ 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 or CEF Digital topics and, where applicable, ensuring a geographical balance of the CEF Digital support in the respective area; (5 points)
- **Maturity:** assessing the maturity of the action in the project development. The criterion will measure among others, i) the readiness/ability of the project to start by the proposed start date and to complete by the proposed end date, ii) the status and planning of the contracting procedures and the necessary permits and iii) information on the availability of the financial resources 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 of the applicant. Moreover, when applicable, it will also assess the information related to the operations/maintenance strategy proposed for the completed project. (5 points)
- **Impact:** assessing, when applicable, the economic, social, competition and environmental impact, including the climate impact and other relevant externalities. This criterion may be substantiated by a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), 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. The criterion will also assess, where applicable, the safety, security, cybersecurity of telecommunication networks, interoperability and accessibility aspects of the proposal, innovation and digitalisation, as well as its cross-border dimension, and contribution to network integration and territorial accessibility, including in particular for Outermost Regions and islands. Moreover, the criterion will assess, where applicable, potential complementarities with other public funding programmes. (5 points)
- **Catalytic effect:** evaluating the effect of the EU financial assistance on the realisation of the project, for instance by i) overcoming a financial gap generated by insufficient commercial viability and high upfront costs; or ii) increasing the capacity to mobilise differentiated investments sources and address the lack of market finance; or iii) improving the quality or the scope/size of the project; or iv) accelerating the overall investment plan. (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.

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.

Beneficiaries will also be invited to check and update information about output indicators.

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 rates fixed in the Grant Agreement and following the rules set out in Article 15(4) of the CEF Regulation 2021/1153:

For topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS, the maximum co-funding rate is:

- maximum **50%** for the costs of preparatory studies, necessary to the works deployment within the proposal,
- maximum **70%** for the costs of works in outermost regions, and
- maximum **30%** for all other costs categories ('project funding rate').

You can apply for a higher project funding rate if your project concerns:

- strong cross-border dimension: maximum **50%**

For topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-SMARTCOM-WORKS, the maximum co-funding rate is :

- maximum **75%** for all costs categories ('project funding rate'). Applicants should ensure they choose the maximum co-funding rate of 75% when filling in the budget information in the Submission System.

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, the Granting Authority 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.*).

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*).

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
 - D.3 Synergetic elements
- 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 cost⁴² : 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 cost⁴³: No (only actual costs)

⁴² 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).

⁴³ 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).

- equipment costs: full cost
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - studies: Yes (*only for topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS*)
 - synergetic elements: Yes
 - works in outermost regions: Yes (*only for topic CEF-DIG-2024-5GLSP-CORRIDORS-WORKS*)
 - land purchases: No
- indirect cost flat-rate :0% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs, 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: Yes, costs related to purchase of land

 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 article 28 and 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 article 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 up to 30% of the maximum grant amount. The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required — whichever is the latest).

There will be **one or more interim payments** (with detailed cost reporting).

In addition, the granting authority may request one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, the Granting Authority will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, you will be requested (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 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 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.

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: Yes
- durability: Yes
- specific rules for blending operations: No
- special obligations linked to restrictions due to security:
 - implementation in case of restrictions due to security: Yes

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 EULogin user account](#).

Once you have an EULogin 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 4 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
- Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots; the budget table can be uploaded as Excel file).

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 [HaDEA 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: HADEA-CEF-DIGITAL-CALLS@ec.europa.eu. Please submit your questions⁴⁴ no later than 10 days before the submission deadline. Questions received after 4 February 2025 may not be answered.

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

⁴⁴ Interested applicants are invited to see first if a question is already answered from the existing Topic Q&A published on the Funding & Tenders Portal.

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 with legal or capital link 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 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 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](#).