



Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Call for proposals

CEF-Digital-Submarine cables repair capacities Works
(CEF-DIG-2026-CABLE-REPAIR-CAPACITIES)

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HEALTH AND DIGITAL EXECUTIVE AGENCY (HaDEA)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This call for proposals aims to fund projects that increase the European capacity to repair submarine communication cables in the main sea basins of the Union: Mediterranean and Atlantic. It is a key part of "Digital Global Gateways" to ensure Europe's digital infrastructure remains resilient against sabotage or in the event of critical technical failure.

The regulatory framework for this Programme is set out in:

- [The EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509](#)¹
- [the CEF basic act Regulation 2021/1153](#)²

This call is launched in accordance with the [2024-2027 Work Programme](#)³ and will be managed by the European Health & Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA), hereafter 'the Agency'.

The call covers the following topic:

CEF-DIG-2026-CABLE-REPAIR-CAPACITIES- WORKS - Submarine Cable Repair Capacities – Works

NOTE: The term 'project' used in the call documentation is synonymous with the term 'action' used in the CEF Regulation 2021/1153.

How to use this documentation:

Navigating EU grants can be complex. We recommend you review the documents in this order:

- This Call Document (Start Here): read Sections 1 & 2 first to understand the objectives and what can be funded.
- [The Online Manual](#): a "how-to" guide for using the Portal to submit your application.
- [The Annotated Grant Agreement \(AGA\)](#): the "fine print" regarding costs and payments once your proposal has been selected and turned into a grant agreement with the Agency.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 2024/2509, 26.09.2024).

² 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).

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2026) 552 final of 4 February 2026 amending 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.

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

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

1. Background

Submarine cables handle 99% of global internet traffic between continents, making them crucial for digital connectivity. The EU prioritises secure and resilient infrastructure to ensure digital sovereignty. To support this, the EU already invested over €600 million in more than 70 [Digital Global Gateways](#) projects through [the Connecting Europe Facility-Digital \(CEF-Digital\) programme](#).

Various sources mention an average of 200 failures per year globally across the 600 cable systems spanning up to 1.5 million km on the seabed. Lately concerns about deliberate disruptions in this critical infrastructure of the EU have increased. While submarine cables are more commonly damaged unintentionally, recent incidents suggest that this critical infrastructure could be the target of deliberate hostile acts. By disrupting connectivity, essential functions and services may be discontinued in the EU-served areas, affecting the daily lives of citizens and representing a significant risk to the security of the EU and its Member States. An initial [pilot call for proposals was funding repair modules for the Baltic Sea submarine cables](#). This new call now expands the geographical scope to the main sea basins of the Union: Mediterranean and Atlantic.

The need for action at the EU level has been recognised by the Member States on 9 March 2022 in the [Nevers Call](#). This was followed up by the NIS Cooperation Group's high-level risk assessment that identified physical attacks and sabotage, as well as power cuts affecting "repeated" submarine cables to be key threats. On 8 December 2022, the Council published a [Recommendation on a Union-wide coordinated approach to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure](#), inviting the Commission to carry out a comprehensive study concerning the resilience of submarine communication cables.

[The June 2023 Joint Communication on a European Economic Security Strategy](#) proposed that risks for the physical and cybersecurity of critical infrastructures continue to be assessed in line with the Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 and identified submarine cables as critical infrastructures. In [the Report on the state of the Digital Decade 2023](#), the Commission recommended that Member States "boost their efforts, including through necessary investments, to ensure that European digital infrastructures are secure and resilient, especially backbone infrastructure and submarine cables."

In February 2024, the European Commission published a [report on the cybersecurity and resiliency of the EU communications infrastructures and networks](#), followed by [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2024/779 on "Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures"](#).

On 21 February 2025, the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy adopted the "[EU Action Plan on Cable Security](#)". It aims, *inter alia*, to strengthen the cable repair capacities of the Union in case of incidents, in order to rapidly recover from possible damages to submarine cables connecting EU territories.

Following up on the Commission 2024 Recommendation and 2025 EU Action Plan on Cable Security, the European Commission published in October 2025 an [EU risk assessment on submarine cable infrastructures](#), and in February 2026 an [EU cable Toolbox, including infrastructure and resilience-related options, and a priority list for Cable Projects of European Interest](#) (CPEIs). The risk assessment, Toolbox, and CPEI areas were prepared with a group of experts chaired by the Commission and including representatives of authorities from the Member States as well as ENISA.

CEF-Digital is expected to be one of the funding instruments supporting the EU Action Plan on Cable Security. Member States can also support projects receiving CEF grants with other complementary sources of funding such as RRF, NDICI, ERDF/EAFRD, and national funds.

This call builds on another call for proposals from the Digital Europe Programme ([DIGITAL-ECCC-2025-DEPLOY-CYBER-09-CABLEHUBS](#)) seeking to establish Regional Cable Hubs. This initiative aims to create Cable Integrated Surveillance Mechanisms per sea basin, enhancing the ability to detect threats to undersea cables. This call for proposals was closed on 31 March 2026, and the proposals were evaluated at the time this call opened.

In line with article 9(4) (d) of the CEF Regulation 2021/1153, this call aims to contribute directly to the increased performance, security and resilience of the backbone networks concerned.

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

CEF-DIG-2026-CABLE-REPAIR-CAPACITIES-WORKS- Submarine Cable Repair Capacities – Works

Objectives

This call aims to enhance emergency response capacities and the resilience of backbone networks' infrastructures by supporting the development and deployment of adaptable repair modules for swift emergency repair operations, enabling quick response to incidents that could severely impact the Union or its Member States.

The goal of the EU is to fund modules covering the main sea basins of the Union, the objective being to develop adaptable repair modules that can be deployed on existing vessels, as well as the necessary related operational capabilities.

The modules are expected to be rapidly operational in order to re-establish the service of submarine cables (through repair or substitution) in emergency situations, i.e. where the cut or the failure of the cable can cause a severe damage to one or more Member States, and the service disruption cannot be fixed timely by commercial services. Applicants will have to work in coordination with the authorities declaring the emergency situation, which are expected to be the future Regional Cable Hubs⁴.

The modules would be hosted in ports or shipyards with the capacity to install them on board of ships within a maximum of 3 days from the arrival of the vessel at the port/shipyard, following a request by the Regional Surveillance Hub envisaged in [the Action Plan on Cable Security](#).

Scope

This call funds modular equipment for the repair of telecom submarine cables, and targets public entities with an emergency response mandate such as entities active in the civil protection, national emergency response agencies, coastguards and military navies. Each Member State will confirm the nature of the applicant in the mandatory Letter of Support.

Beneficiaries can subcontract the activities covered by this call for proposals as well as the operation of the modules for repair intervention to third parties, including publicly or privately owned entities without an emergency response mandate. However, the modules can only be used to respond to emergency situations declared by the competent authority.

The pre-configured vessels are flat deck vessels that should be able to receive the modules with minor adaptation and operational preparation, and without regulatory or technical barriers. Therefore, the proposals should demonstrate the adaptability, portability and scalability of the solution put forward.

To make sure that the modular equipment will be ready for intervention, applicants should identify at least three vessels that are or will be pre-configured for receiving the modules. Costs for pre-configuration of the vessels can be included in the proposal provided that they comply with the eligibility conditions of this call.

Applicants should explain in detail in their proposal how the vessels are already pre-configured or how they plan to carry out the above-mentioned pre-configuration, and how many pre-configured vessels will be made available. For vessels owned by third parties, applicants should provide details on lease or service level agreement

⁴ [DIGITAL-ECCC-2025-DEPLOY-CYBER-09-CABLEHUBS](#)

guaranteeing the availability of these vessels to receive the modules over their economic lifespan (at least 10 years).

Proposals should also demonstrate solid implementation plans, including the definition of compatible specifications for the vessels and the different types of modules, project's phasing (design, production-level deployment, operation), governance, allocation policies, financial aspects, as well as the rationale for the choice of the storage and installation locations. To this purpose, it is crucial that the proposals clearly demonstrate effective, reliable and efficient coordination with all relevant stakeholders, especially the entity declaring the emergency situation which is expected to be the future Regional Cable Hubs. The solidity of the plan will be taken into account when assessing the maturity of the proposal.

Proposals should demonstrate how they contribute to CPEI Area 8 ("Multipurpose vessel(s) and modular equipment stock") from the [CPEI list published in February 2026](#), and in particular to one or more of the CPEI criteria b, c, d and e of Point 26, and CPEI criteria a, b and c of Point 27 of [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2024/779](#).

Proposals must provide repair modules to increase repair capacity for all subsea cable systems, serving EU Member States in the main European sea basins following the current repair agreements when relevant.

Under this call, the modules must be able to repair cables in the Atlantic or Mediterranean sea basins and should take into account the needs of EU Outermost Regions, whose connectivity is critically depending on submarine cables.

Under this topic, the following non-exhaustive list of activities is considered part of the eligible action:

Design, construction and purchase of repair modules with:

- spares, repeaters and necessary elements to repair a cable – e.g. actual jointing tools, the splicing laboratory as well as testing and diagnostics equipment such as Optical Time Domain Reflectometer (OTDR),
- cable handling and management systems such as cable tanks, cable engines and tensioners, stern / bow sheaves, repeaters storage,
- launch and recovery systems such as cranes or A-frames to assist in deploying and recovering subsea equipment including remotely operated vehicle (ROV) or plow systems.

Preparatory works necessary for the operation of the modules, including:

- the pre-configuration of existing vessels to receive such modules, such as:
 - o Final layout and design for the placement of repair equipment and the workspace for personnel,
 - o Installation of support points for the identified fastening method,
 - o Definition of the loading and docking procedure/protocol.
- the construction, acquisition or modification of equipment and storage facilities, such as:
 - o Purchase or upgrade of shoreside equipment for the handling of modules (such as cranes and forklifts) and of spare cable parts (such as cable feeders, spooling equipment and tensioners),
 - o Construction, or purchase of the storage facility (deposit) for the modules and related cable spare parts up to 10% of the eligible costs.
- the initial training and certification of beneficiary's personnel:

- o Training/certification for the emergency repair team on the module operation,
- o Jointing systems training/certification for the emergency repair team.

The costs related to the operation and maintenance of the modules are not eligible under the CEF grant and applicants are expected to demonstrate how they intend to cover them over the economic lifespan of the modules. Rental fees for facilities, notably those used for the storage of modules or equipment or for the installation of the modules on board of vessels, are not eligible.

Security requirements

Because submarine cable infrastructure is critical to the Union's strategic interests, this call is subject to strict security requirements as provided under sections 8.3 and 8.4 of the Work Programme as specified below and under section 6 of this call document.no

Security declarations

All the proposals submitted to this topic must include security declarations by the participating entities⁵ 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 (as defined in the declaration), in accordance with the applicable EU law, national law, and EU guidance in place on cybersecurity⁶

In addition, the declarations must:

- For projects where network technologies and equipment funded by the grant could interconnect (or are part of the same network) with other network technologies and equipment not funded by the grant, in a way that could undermine the security of the funded infrastructure, demonstrate that compliance with the security requirements of this call will also be ensured in relation to any network technologies and equipment that would represent a risk as regards the security of networks.
- Confirm that the results of the CEF funded action shall remain with the beneficiary during the action and for 10 years after its completion.
- Demonstrate 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, during the project and for a minimum of 10 years after its completion.
- Demonstrate that the digital infrastructure will comply with the strictest cybersecurity requirements, imposed by national law, in accordance with the 5G toolbox (where

⁵ 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.

⁶ As defined in [the EU coordinated risk assessment on cybersecurity of 5G networks](#) and 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.

applicable) and other relevant EU guidance, of all the eligible countries where the infrastructure is deployed.

- Demonstrate, where relevant, that the project takes into consideration the relevant risk scenarios identified in the [EU risk assessment on submarine cables infrastructures](#) and relevant mitigating measures identified in the EU Cable Toolbox ([EU toolbox on security and resilience of submarine cable infrastructures](#)).

The content of the declarations and commitments in the project proposal will be assessed during the evaluation phase, but they should remain valid throughout the lifetime of the project.

Digital Security section of the proposal

In the digital security section of the application form (part of section 4.3 Social, environmental and other impacts of the Technical Description – Part B), proposals must consider risk scenarios and mitigating measures as described in:

- 1) the EU cybersecurity Toolbox⁷, notably:
 - measures adopted to exclude or restrict the involvement of high-risk suppliers (such as those addressed in the [Commission communication on the implementation of the 5G cybersecurity toolbox](#))⁸ insofar as they may affect critical and sensitive key assets, including measures to avoid dependency on such high-risk suppliers;
 - measures to promote supply chain resilience and strategic autonomy⁹;
 - 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.);
 - 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;
- 2) the EU Cable Toolbox, notably:
 - one or more of the risk scenarios from the [EU Cables Risk assessment](#), considering in particular risk scenarios 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 therein.
 - one or more of the risk mitigating measures from the [EU Cable Security Toolbox](#), considering in particular strategic measures 2, 3 and 6, and technical measure 4 therein.

Based on the security declarations in the proposal, as well as the evaluation carried out by independent experts, the granting authority, where appropriate, may carry out a security assessment, including the beneficiaries' suppliers and sub-contractors in accordance with Article 136 of the Financial Regulation. Funding for actions which do

⁷ NIS cooperation Group: *Cybersecurity of 5G networks EU Toolbox of risk mitigating measures* – 2020

⁸ As defined in the [EU coordinated risk assessment on cybersecurity of 5G networks and](#) 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.

⁹ Principles underlined in the 5G cybersecurity toolbox and the related measures apply mutatis-mutandis to backbone infrastructures.

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 section 2.2 (paragraph “Strengthen cybersecurity and resilience”) of the CEF-Digital Work Programme.

Expected impact

The expected benefits of the supported project:

- Provide quick response to emergency situations identified by the relevant Regional Cable Hub or other entity declaring the emergency situation (Key Performance Indicator).
- Provide quick average estimated time-to-repair for cable systems in the targeted EU sea basins with at least one landing point in an EU territory (Key Performance Indicator).
- Increase operational repair capacity in the main European sea basins (Key Performance Indicator).
- Strengthen the resilience of cable systems in the main European sea basins.
- Ensure digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy of the EU in the main European sea basins.



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 40 000 000. This budget might be increased provided that the total additional budget cumulatively allocated to the topic across all calls of the work programme is lower than 20% of the total budget of the multiannual plan.

The budget of this call is expected to be sufficient to fund at least one proposal per sea basin.

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	23 June 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>25 November 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u>
Evaluation:	December 2026-February 2027
Information on evaluation results:	Spring 2027
GA signature:	Summer 2027

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 [Calls for proposals](#) 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).

Project acronym — Please use the following naming convention: 'Year-Country-Topic-Project' (ex. 2021-BE-REI-Liquid Gas Drinks).

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 (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, then assembled, and re-uploaded*)
- Mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table per WP (*template available in the Submission System*)
 - activity reports of last 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 Member States¹⁰ benefitting from the project (Member State agreement), including a confirmation of the nature of the applicants, i.e. their public status and whether they are entrusted with an “emergency response” mandate (*template available in the Submission System*)
 - ownership control declaration for subcontractors¹¹ and associated partners, if any (*template available in the Submission System*)
 - security compliance declarations signed by the participating entities (*template available in the Submission System*)

¹⁰ The list of the national contact points can be found here: [National Contact Points \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹¹ If not provided at submission stage, the ownership control declaration for subcontractors will be requested later during the grant agreement implementation in order to perform the ownership control assessment.

- security guarantees approved by the respective authorities of the associated third country or other third country, in case of third country entities participation
- other annexes (if necessary).

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

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the mandate to act for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that 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 (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Your application must be readable, accessible and printable.

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

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



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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or publicly owned bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States, including Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).
 - Third countries associated to the CEF Programme ([list of participating countries](#)), unless the topic is subject to specific restrictions (see below).

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 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;
- Entities must not be directly or indirectly controlled from a country that is not an eligible country (ownership control restrictions)
- 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*).



For restrictions limiting participation to specific eligible countries:

The condition must in principle be fulfilled already at proposal submission stage (call deadline); you cannot change status during GAP — unless agreed by the granting authority.

The following participants (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners and subcontractors) will be checked by the EU. Other participants must be checked by the consortium.

For the EU checks, the participants must register in the [Participant Register](#) (i.e. have at least a draft PIC). For beneficiaries and affiliated entities, the checks will be done on the basis of the validated PIC data. For other participants, the checks will be done on the basis of publicly available information.



For ownership control restrictions:

'Control' means the possibility to exercise decisive influence on the participant, directly or indirectly, through one or more intermediate entities, 'de jure' or 'de facto'. This includes not only ownership of more than 50% (shareholding), but also any other elements and/or rights that can amount to control.

The condition must in principle be fulfilled already at proposal submission stage (call deadline); you cannot change status during GAP — unless agreed by the granting authority.

The following participants (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners and subcontractors) will be checked by the EU. Other participants must be checked by the consortium.

For the EU checks, the participants must register in the [Participant Register](#) (i.e. have at least a draft PIC). They will be required to fill in and submit an [ownership control declaration](#)* as part of the proposal (and later on be requested to submit supporting documents). Where guarantees are allowed, ineligible entities will be requested to fill in the [guarantee template](#)*, have it approved by the competent authority of their country of establishment, and submit it to the granting authority which will assess their validity.

For more information, see [Guidance on participation in EU restricted calls with ownership and control restrictions](#)*.

Specific cases

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above), namely entities from countries associated to CEF and from non-associated third countries, are exceptionally eligible for projects of common interest if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action, on the condition that those entities provide security guarantees, approved, on the basis of national law, by the country in which they are established.

Legal entities that are established in EU Member States, but are not EU controlled, shall also be eligible to participate on the condition that they provide security guarantees, approved, on the basis of national law, by the EU Member State in which they are established.

In case the ownership control assessment concludes that an entity established in the EU is not controlled from a EU Member State, this entity will be notified of the outcome of the assessment and shall be obliged to provide the security guarantee, approved, on the basis of national law, by the EU Member State of establishment, within 30 working days of the receipt of the notification and at the latest before the signature of the Grant Agreement.

Please note that security guarantees are not required for EU controlled legal entities established in third countries associated to the CEF Programme.

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 with 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 10 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.

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 organisations¹² are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

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

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

¹² 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](#).

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

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply to 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)¹³ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)¹⁴). 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).

EU conditionality measures - 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.



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

Consortium composition

There are no specific eligibility conditions concerning consortium composition for this call.

Eligible activities

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 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.*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc.*)¹⁵.

¹³ 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](#).

¹⁴ 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).

¹⁵ See, for instance, Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy.

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).

The modules shall be hosted in shipyards or other facilities within the EU territory bordering any of the two main sea basins of the Union: Mediterranean and Atlantic or within one of the EU's Outermost Regions.

Duration

Projects should normally be up to 24 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Project budget

The requested grant amount is expected to be around EUR 20 000 000 per project.

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 projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents applicants 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 consider 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 does not exceed EUR 60 000.

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

If the financial capacity of the applicant is considered not satisfactory, may be required:

- 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 (see Section 9 – Award criteria), 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 operational 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 CANNOT participate¹⁶:

- 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 misconduct¹⁷ (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)

¹⁶ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹⁷ 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.

- 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).
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted¹⁸ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that¹⁹:

- 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).

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 against the operational capacity (see section 7) and award criteria (see section 9). The award criteria are evaluated in 3 phases: individual evaluation, consensus phase and panel review and proposals are then ranked according to their scores.

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

1. Score obtained under the 'Priority and urgency' criterion
2. Score obtained under the 'Maturity' criterion

¹⁸ 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

¹⁹ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

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 in accordance with Article 9 of the CEF Regulation.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. Various legal checks will have to be performed before awarding a grant: *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. Full compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If applicants believes that the evaluation procedure was flawed, they 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. Projects that cover a larger area or a bigger density of cables, while assuring the shortest possible time-to-repair would be prioritised. (5 points)
- **Maturity:** assessing the maturity of the action in the project development. The criterion will measure, among others, i) the readiness and 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 of the necessary authorisations to deploy and operate the modules, and iii) information on the financial availability needed to complement the CEF investment. (5 points)
- **Quality:** evaluating the soundness of the implementation plan proposed, both from the technical and financial point of view, the architecture and design approach, the organisational structures put in place (or foreseen) for the implementation, the risk analysis, the control procedures and quality management and the communication strategy 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, where applicable, the impact of the proposal on competition, the safety, security, cybersecurity of electronic communication networks, interoperability and accessibility aspects of the proposal, innovation and digitalisation, its crossborder dimension, and contribution to network integration, resilience and territorial accessibility. 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 financial viability and high upfront costs; or ii) increasing the capacity to mobilise differentiated investments sources; 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 a proposal passes the evaluation, the project will be invited for grant preparation, where it will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

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

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

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — 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 (requested grant amount): see section 6 above.

The grant will be a 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 the project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat rates, you can change the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

For the topic CEF-DIG-2026-CABLE-REPAIR-CAPACITIES-WORKS- Submarine Cable Repair Capacities – Works, the maximum co-funding rate is 50% of the total eligible cost.

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

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

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.2 Studies
 - D.3 Synergetic elements
 - D.4 Works in outermost regions
- 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 cost²⁰: 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 cost²¹: no (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: full cost
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - studies: no
 - synergetic elements: no
 - works in outermost regions: no
 - 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

²⁰ 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).

²¹ 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).

 Please be aware that in case of significant changes to the circumstances that have an impact on the project budget, you may be asked to request an amendment to reduce the maximum grant amount. If you do not comply with this request, we may have to terminate the grant and reduce it from our side (see *art 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 *art 28 and 32*).

Reporting and payment arrangements

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

After grant signature, you will normally receive a prefinancing to start working on the project. The amount will be established based on the grant type or estimated project duration at the time of grant signature and will be 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 may be one or more interim payments (with detailed cost reporting).

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

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if you or 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 normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

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

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

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

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

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

Certificates

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

Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

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

Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

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

- rights of use on results: yes

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

- communication and dissemination plan: no
- additional communication and dissemination activities: yes
- special logos: no

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

- Member State information: yes
- specific rules for digital infrastructure projects: 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 [Calls for proposals](#) 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
- Annexes (see section 5). Upload them as PDF files (single or multiple depending on the slots; the budget table and business plan financial spreadsheet can be uploaded as Excel files).

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 may 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 questions²² no later than 10 days before the submission deadline. Questions received after 15 November 2026 may not be answered.

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

²² 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 linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- 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. Projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this 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](#).