



Connecting Europe: Trans-European Networks

[18-11-2013 - 18:25]

Background

"Connecting Europe Facility" (CEF) is the EU's new funding mechanism for infrastructure projects of common interest for trans-European transport, energy and telecoms networks with an overall budget of about € 29.3 billion for 2014-2020 (at constant 2011 prices). The CEF should accelerate the completion of trans-European networks and help to leverage funding from both the public and the private sector.

The CEF regulation informally agreed by EP and Council on 27 June lays down the conditions, methods and procedures for providing Union financial assistance to trans-European networks in order to support projects of common interest in the sectors of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures and to exploit potential synergies between those sectors.

Out of €23.17 billion earmarked for transport projects, €10 billion would be transferred from the Cohesion Fund to be used exclusively in member states eligible for Cohesion Fund money. The total budget for funding energy projects will be € 5.12 billion and MEPs insisted that these projects should be funded primarily by financial instruments. The total budget for the funding of telecommunication projects will amount to € 1 billion.

Parliament defended elements of the proposal, among other things regarding a broad and flexible use of financial instruments, and achieved the following improvements:

- Higher co-financing rates for interoperability (up to 40%) and Motorways of the Sea (up to 30%).
- A distinction of funding rates between land-based and onboard components for telematic applications: up to 50% of the eligible cost for land-based components and up to 20% for on-board components of SESAR (new generation European air traffic management system), of RIS (River Information Services), of VTMIS (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information Systems) and of ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) for the road sector, up to a combined ceiling of 5% of the budgetary resources. For ERTMS, also onboard components can be co-financed by up to 50%, for ITS in the road sector all components can only be co-financed by up to 20%.
- A stronger focus on the principle of sustainability for TEN-T infrastructure.
- Better involvement of the EP through a delegated act regarding the details of the funding priorities. The Commission is obliged to detail the funding priorities for the transport sector at the beginning of the financial period to be reflected in the subsequent work programmes by a delegated act.
- A stronger focus on synergies between the three sectors transport, energy and telecommunication.

Contact

Jaan SOONE

BXL: (+32) 2 28 32282

STR: (+33) 3 881 73473

PORT: (+32) 498 98 3329

EMAIL: tran-press@europarl.europa.eu

TWITTER: EP_Transport

Background

Funding for transport

The CEF will provide funding for key transport infrastructure projects to improve primarily cross-border sections, remove bottlenecks, bridge gaps and improve interoperability. Support will focus on projects with strong EU added value to develop and strengthen the core network, as well as horizontal priorities such as traffic management systems and motorways of the sea.

80-85% of CEF funding for transport should go to pre-identified projects listed in Annex I of the regulation. Budgetary resources for transport projects in Annex I should be allocated according to the following indicative breakdown, from which the Commission should not deviate by more than 5%:

- 80 % of funding: removing bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections;
- 5 % for ensuring sustainable and efficient transport systems in the long run, with a view to preparing for expected future transport flows as well as enabling the decarbonisation of all modes of transport through transition to innovative low-carbon and energy-efficient transport technologies, while optimising safety;
- 15 % for optimising the integration and interconnection of transport modes and enhancing interoperability of transport services, while ensuring the accessibility of transport infrastructures, and taking into account the ceiling for on-board components of SESAR system, RIS, VTMS and of ITS for the road sector.

Ceilings for EU financial assistance for works in the transport sector include:

- for railway networks, and road networks in the case of Member States with no or isolated railway networks: 20% of the eligible costs. This funding rate may be increased to a maximum of 30% for actions addressing bottlenecks and to 40% for actions concerning cross-border sections and actions enhancing rail interoperability;
- for works on inland waterways: 20% of the eligible costs, and the funding rate may be increased to a maximum of 40% for actions addressing bottlenecks and to a maximum of 40% for actions concerning cross-border sections;
- for inland transport, connections to and the development of multimodal logistics

for actions to reduce rail freight noise including by retrofitting existing rolling stock: 20% of the eligible costs up to a combined ceiling of 1% of the budgetary

- resources;
- for better accessibility to transport infrastructure for disabled persons: 30% of the eligible cost of adaptation works, not exceeding in any case 10% of the total eligible cost of works.

Higher maximum EU funding rates would apply with regard to grants for telematic applications systems and services. For example, 50% of eligible costs for the SESAR system, RIS and VTMS (land-based components) and ERTMS (land-based and on-board components).

A rate of 30% of eligible costs would apply for actions to support the development of Motorways of the Sea.

Background

Funding for energy

The CEF will also support projects of common interest to modernise and expand Europe's energy infrastructure and enhance security of supply by helping to ensure that no member state is isolated or dependent on a single energy source. Projects in the fields of electricity, gas and carbon dioxide will be eligible to receive EU financial assistance for studies and, under certain conditions, for works in the form of grants or innovative financial instruments. The amount of EU financial assistance shall not exceed 50% of the eligible cost of studies and/or works. The funding rates may be increased to a maximum of 75 % for actions which, based on the evidence, provide high degree of regional or Union-wide security of supply, strengthen the solidarity of the Union or comprise highly innovative solutions.

Background

Funding for telecommunications

Projects of common interest in the telecommunications sector would be eligible for EU financial support in the form of grants and procurement for core service platforms, generic services and cross-sector projects. Actions in the field of broadband deployment, including generating demand for broadband, should be eligible for EU financial support in the form of financial instruments. EU financial assistance should not exceed 75 % of the eligible costs for actions in the field of generic services and for horizontal actions including infrastructure mapping, twinning and technical assistance.

Background

TEN-T Guidelines

Guidelines for Trans-European Transport Networks set up a framework for the completion of a core network of transport links in the European Union.

The objectives of the trans-European network are to increase accessibility and connectivity to all regions, reduce infrastructure quality gaps, develop better connections between long-distance and regional and local passenger and freight traffic and ensure a more efficient network by removal of bottlenecks and bridging of missing links. Planning, development and operation of the network would have to be made in a resource efficient manner.

The guidelines identify the infrastructure of the TEN-T, specify the standards, such as for safety and security, for the infrastructure and provide for measures for their implementation. These guidelines envisage, in particular, the completion of the core network of transport network of all modes of transport and of the highest strategic importance for the trans-European transport network policy by 2030 (in Annex I) through the creation of new infrastructure as well as the substantial upgrading and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure. A larger comprehensive network with an indicative timeline for completion by 2050 would feed into the core network.

To enable better coordination in investments and to support the development of the core network designated European Coordinators would assist the Member States by drawing up a work plan together with member states, for the development of core network corridors, which cover the most important long distance flows in the core network. They would monitor the implementation of the work plans and make recommendations in regard to possibilities of funding and access to funding. The corridor mechanism is intended in particular to improve the cross-border links and the core network corridor list is given in the Annex I of the Connecting Europe Facility regulation.

The text reflects many changes Parliament pushed for, including:

- An improved socio-economic cost-benefit analysis, with a climate impact assessment and a clear definition of the European added value.
- Strengthening the involvement of local and regional authorities and of civil society in the planning and implementation phase of a project of common interest.
- Ensuring the right balance between environmental protection and the development of inland waterways with better safeguards for sensitive sites and habitats.
- A stronger focus on TEN-T priorities and EU added value through narrowing the eligibility criteria for projects of common interest.