

Digital Global Gateways - Shaping the next Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Digital call

Key stakeholders discussed recent and upcoming calls for investment in high-speed broadband infrastructure.



The European Broadband Competence Offices Network Support Facility

The European Broadband Competence Offices (BCO) Network's interactive online event on 28 June 2022 brought together key stakeholders to discuss the first Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Digital call for 'Backbone connectivity for Digital Global Gateways' and prepare for the next one. These calls support achieving the EU's Digital Decade connectivity targets by promoting investment in high-speed broadband infrastructure as a basis for European strategic autonomy.

The event gathered feedback from stakeholders involved in project submissions for the first CEF Digital call for 'Backbone connectivity for Digital Global Gateways', which closed in April 2022, and addressed key questions relating to preparing for the next call, which is expected to open in mid-October 2022.

The discussion highlighted the most important aspects of the call, in particular the scope, the eligible territories, and the financing thresholds for the different categories of projects. Emphasis was given on technological neutrality, meaning that the European Commission will look at which technology can best provide the required speed in each territory. For example, for very small islands there might be more efficient alternatives to installing submarine cables, such as microwave or satellite technology.

The Commission received 25 proposals under the first call: 11 for works and 14 for studies. Stakeholders were particularly interested in the evaluation process, the next steps, and the budget flexibility for the next call.

With regard to the evaluation process, the Commission explained that every proposal is first checked for eligibility according to the documents required to submit the application, including, for example, the ownership control declaration, security declarations, and letter of support from a Member State. External experts evaluate the project proposals and the Commission then validates the results of the evaluation. All projects are then informed about the final outcome. For the first call, this is expected to take place by mid-summer.

A second call will open in the autumn and will close in early 2023. Further details, once confirmed, will be available through the EU Funding and Tenders Portal.

The Commission noted that there is flexibility to move budget from under-subscribed topics to over-subscribed topics by up to 20% of the overall budget of the work programme.

In order to maximise the number of stakeholders successfully completing the application procedures, the main recommendation that emerged was that potential applicants may seek support and guidance from their national CEF Digital Contact Point with regard to the eligibility criteria, letters of support and security guarantee, among others.

Find out more

- Event recording
- Event presentations
- Connecting Europe Facility – Digital: Multiannual work programme for 2021-2025
- Europe’s Digital Decade
- EU digital policy and strategy: Shaping Europe’s Digital Future

This event was organised as part of the European Broadband Competence Offices (BCO) Network’s work to accelerate high-speed broadband deployment through EU and Member State support.

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