



Support for digital connectivity

The EU's strategy for digital connectivity

To promote digital connectivity, the European Commission established the strategy on Connectivity for a European Gigabit Society by 2025 as well as the vision set by the Digital Decade for Europe's digital transformation by 2030 to connect European citizens and businesses with very high-capacity networks, which will enable innovative products, services and applications to all citizens and business across the EU.

This Gigabit Society vision for 2025 relies on three main strategic objectives:

- Gigabit connectivity for all of the main socio-economic drivers;
- Uninterrupted 5G coverage for all urban areas and major terrestrial transport paths;
- Access to connectivity offering at least 100 Mbps for all European households.

The ambition of the [Digital Decade](#)

(https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en) is that by 2030:

- All European households are covered by a Gigabit network;
- All populated areas are covered by 5G.

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The annual [State of the Digital Decade report](#)

(<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/factpages/state-digital-decade-2024-report>) is monitoring the progress of the EU towards the objectives and targets for 2030 set by the [Digital Decade Policy Programme](#)

(https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en), and makes recommendations to Member States to accelerate progress. In general, the Commission recommends to all Member States to take action in connectivity infrastructure, cybersecurity, sustainability, and cloud-edge solutions.

The [Gigabit Infrastructure Act \(GIA\)](#) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/gigabit-infrastructure-act>) facilitates the rollout of very high-capacity networks. The Act updates the rules to ensure faster, cheaper, and simpler rollout of Gigabit networks installation, addressing the main hurdles like expensive and complex procedures for network deployment. The Gigabit Infrastructure act entered into force on 11 May 2024. It will be fully applicable in November 2025.

The European Council approved [conclusions on the Commission's White Paper titled 'How to master EU's digital infrastructure needs?'](#) (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2024/12/06/>). Ministers conveyed a comprehensive set of messages on fostering innovation, ensuring security and resilience, promoting fair competition, and driving investments in digital infrastructures with a view to advancing the EU's competitiveness and digital transformation goals. The White Paper identifies challenges and discusses possible scenarios for public policy actions that aim to incentivise building the digital networks of the future, master the transition to new technologies and business models, meet future connectivity needs of all end-users, underpin competitiveness of our economy and ensure secure and resilient infrastructures and the Union's economic security.

[Submarine cables](#) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/backbone-connectivity>) are fundamental to connect Europe with its islands and Outermost Regions and the rest of the world. The cables provide backbone connectivity for transporting big volumes of information across extended geographical areas and ensure that our internet traffic remains strong and consistent despite growing data flows. The [Recommendation on the security and resilience of submarine cable infrastructures](#) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/recommendation-security-and-resilience-submarine-cable-infrastructures>) presents a set of actions at national and EU level improving security and resilience through a better coordination across the EU, both in terms of governance and funding.

EU businesses, national, regional and local authorities and project managers working on digital connectivity play a key role in reaching the EU's Connectivity objectives. The EU supports network deployment by offering guidance, facilitating sharing of best practices and informing citizens of network availability in their area. Project managers can find more information on the website, as well as refer to the [Broadband Competence Offices \(BCOs\) network](#)

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/bco-network>), which brings together experts to discuss and share technical support for deployment of digital connectivity infrastructure. Rural and remote areas are a particular challenge for attracting investment in digital connectivity networks.

The [Broadband Investment Handbook](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/broadband-investment-handbook) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/broadband-investment-handbook>) assists public authorities in planning, implementing, and monitoring digital connectivity projects within their territories. It addresses the deployment of access and backhaul segments of fixed networks and the adoption of services.

The [Broadband Handbook](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/broadband-handbook-facing-challenges-broadband-deployment-rural-and-remote-areas) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/broadband-handbook-facing-challenges-broadband-deployment-rural-and-remote-areas>) for rural and remote areas helps policy makers and project managers to rollout high-speed networks in challenging areas.

The [updated study on National Broadband Plans in the EU27](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/updated-study-national-broadband-plans-eu27) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/updated-study-national-broadband-plans-eu27>) provides an overview of the connectivity measures in the Member States defined by the National Broadband Plans and a feasibility assessment of meeting the Digital Agenda for Europe 2020 and Gigabit Society 2025 targets.

Connecting Europe Broadband Fund and CEF Digital

A programme dedicated to connectivity is the [Connecting Europe Facility \(CEF\)](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/connecting-europe-facility) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/connecting-europe-facility>), which supports digital connectivity deployment via two financial instruments: Connecting Europe Broadband Fund (CEBF, equity) and the CEF debt instrument. The [Connecting Europe Broadband Fund](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/connecting-europe-broadband-fund) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/connecting-europe-broadband-fund>) provides equity and quasi-equity to smaller-scale, higher-risk projects, which do not have sufficient access to financing, in (under-served) suburban and rural areas. The CEBF is an equity fund of EUR 420 million, and the CEF Debt Instrument makes available approximately EUR 17 million in loans. The digital part of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF Digital) supports and catalyses both public and private investments in digital connectivity infrastructures between 2021 and 2027.

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