Broadband Competence Offices Network: Questions and Answers

Find answers to common questions on the European Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) Network that connects national and regional authorities supporting broadband deployment across the EU.

Germany: Deploying 5G infrastructure in the North Sea

1. What is a Broadband Competence Office (BCO)?

A Broadband Competence Office (BCO) is a public/publicly-appointed entity that should be able to inform citizens and businesses about broadband developments/deployments in the country/region. BCOs also provide technical support (regulatory, investment models, procurement, technology, etc) to local and regional authorities about means to support the deployment of broadband networks, including ways to invest effectively in broadband projects with the support of European regional and agricultural funds (ERDF and EAFRD), in combination with financial instruments where possible, and including information on State aid rules and procedures.

2. What are the functions of BCOs?

The functions of BCOs include:

- Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of broadband investments
- Underpinning the implementation of the Digital Single Market by accelerating public investment in broadband, including through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- Providing advice and assistance to citizens and businesses about broadband deployment (mapping coverage, quality of service and penetration, future investment plans, etc.)
- Supporting the expertise/administrative capacity of public authorities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of broadband projects
- Helping in the coordination with relevant EU entities: EIAH, Jaspers, DG REGIO, DG AGRI, DG COMP, DG CNECT
- Promoting the use of financial instruments
- Supporting the aggregation of demand for high-speed broadband

3. Who can be supported by a BCO?

- Ministries and authorities in charge of the planning and implementation of Next Generation Access Network strategies
- Municipalities and public bodies (local, regional and national) responsible for the funding and the deployment of broadband
- Project promoters, telecom operators, utilities, user groups and any other entity seeking guidance on the planning and execution of broadband projects using a variety of business and investment models and financing structures
- Citizens, enterprises and other bodies that wish to be informed about broadband developments, national or regional plans for broadband connectivity, and EU support available in their area

4. Where can I find information on broadband in individual Member States?

Explore the "Broadband in Member States" pages, or contact a national BCO using the BCO Network Directory.

5. How are BCOs established?

BCOs are established on a voluntary basis. Member States decide whether and how they wish to establish their BCOs. BCOs may be established at national and regional level, or in a hybrid structure, for example, covering a cluster of regions.

National BCOs have been designated in 27 EU Member States, and the Network continues to grow at regional level.

Contact the BCO Network Support Facility to enquire about becoming an officially designated BCO.

6. How can a BCO join the BCO Network?

Contact the BCO Network Support Facility to enquire about joining the BCO Network.

7. What training and support is available for BCOs?

Training and support is available to BCOs via the BCO Network.

The BCO Network is animated by a Brussels-based Support Facility in charge of providing information and organising training sessions and events for the members of the Network.

These activities include:

- exchanging good practices in running a BCO and in broadband projects
- sharing knowledge and experience between BCOs operating in similar conditions across regions and countries
- organising thematic groups and training events focusing on the key themes and challenges of broadband development, such as State aid, technology neutrality, blended finance, mapping, etc.

Members of the BCO Network engage in discussions and access training materials and news about upcoming events through the BCO Network forum.

8. How can a BCO access the BCO Network forum?

BCOs who are already members can log in to the BCO Network forum using their EU Login details.

BCOs who are not yet members of the forum can contact the BCO Network Support Facility for support in gaining access.

9.Where can I learn about good practices in broadband

projects?

Explore:

- the database of good practices in broadband projects
- the European Broadband Awards archive
- the BCO Network video interview series on good practices in broadband projects
- the Broadband Europe portal and newsletter

10. How can I propose a project to be included as a good practice in the database?

Contact Broadband Europe to enquire about proposing a project to be included in the database of good practices in broadband projects.

11. Where can I find contacts in rural development?

Explore the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD).

12. Who can I contact if I still have questions?

Contact the BCO Network Support Facility.

13. Where can I find information on specific BCOs in the Network?

Consult the BCO Network Directory

Related Content

Big Picture

Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) Network

The European Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) Network is a European Commission initiative that supports EU countries in reaching the Gigabit society objectives and rolling out broadband.

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