

Connecting Europe Facility Energy 2021 - Virtual Info Day on the Call for proposals addressing Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) 14.9.2021

Questions from the Q&A sessions

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1) Work Programme, Projects of Common Interest

Q: It seems that the list of PCIs for CEF2-Energy does not include any hydrogen-related actions. Is the CEF2-Transport catch-all for all hydrogen Studies/Works?

A: This call is for PCIs in [the 4th list of PCIs](#), and there are no hydrogen-related PCIs on that list. For the time being, there are opportunities for funding of hydrogen-related projects under CEF-Transport and the Innovation Fund.

Q: How do projects qualify to become a PCI?

A: You can find more information about the PCI selection process here: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/projects-common-interest_en?redir=1

Q: Do actions supporting cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy need to contribute to PCIs or can they potentially be set up outside the PCI scope?

A: Cross-border renewable projects are different from PCIs; a call for funding for preparatory studies to support cross-border renewable projects is envisaged to be opened on 22/09/2021. There will be an Info Day on the CEF 2 Energy - cross-border renewable energy projects on 28/09/2021.

Q: Will the 5th PCI list be published at the end of October as was previously communicated - or has this timeline been changed as well?

A: As mentioned in the [DG ENER presentation, the 5th](#) PCI list is expected to be adopted by the end of 2021 with expected publication and entry into force in early 2022.

Q: Is climate proofing part of this call for proposals also or it will be only for the next call?

A: Climate proofing is already required in the current call for proposals. It will also be part of subsequent calls as mentioned in the multiannual Work Programme. See slide 15 in the [DG ENER presentation](#).

Q: How should newly built and flexible gas transmission pipelines adapt to new realities and be eligible for the next PCI list: minimum blending percentage with hydrogen or other criteria?

A: The current call concerns the [4th PCI list](#). As mentioned in the [DG ENER presentation](#), the 5th PCI list is expected to be adopted by end of 2021 with expected entry into force in early 2022. However, the 5th PCI list will still be based on the current TEN-E Regulation, which does not cover hydrogen assets.

Q: How many calls for proposals are expected to be launched in 2022?

A: One call is tentatively planned for 2022, according to the CEF-Energy Work Programme 2021-2023.

2) Proposal

Q: Usually the deadline is 2-3 months after the call has been opened, why has 19 October been chosen this time?

A: For CEF Energy, 6 weeks is the minimum call duration and has been in the past a typical time for the call to be open.

Q: Is it possible to submit a single application for two PCIs, if these projects are technically correlated?

A: Yes, this is possible if the proposed project contributes to both PCIs. However, two separate applications are also possible if work packages and tasks are organized separately for each PCI.

Q: Are there any state aid rules to be considered under the current CEF PCI call?

A: Yes, state aid rules apply. In the [Application form Part B](#), Section 2.2, you are requested to provide information on state aid.

Q: Which is the start date of the period in which the actual costs should be incurred in order to be accepted as eligible?

A: For proposals selected for funding, the specific start date of the project will be set out in the Grant Agreement. The [call document](#) states that the earliest possible date for such project start date (for incurred costs to be eligible) is the proposal submission date.

Q: Should the Member State endorse a report on the progress of the action before submitting it to CINEA? Is the Member State involved in any way throughout the action implementation?

A: The coordinator has to send the reports on the progress of the action for information also to the Member States concerned or provide them with access to the project in the Portal, so that Member States can verify the reports themselves. Member States do not need to certify any longer the reports. The final amounts paid to the actions will be published. The Commission and CINEA will inform the CEF Committee about any changes to the grant amounts during the lifetime of the actions.

Q: Is the applicant allowed to add Work Packages (WPs) in the application template provided?

A: Yes. However, please make sure that the additional WPs are necessary for the implementation of the action.

Q: How do you recommend structuring the Work Packages (WPs)? Is it possible to structure WPs according to the investments related to projects partners, or should it be structured according to the investment category?

A: This is under the discretion of the applicant. In the WP description, it should be clear what applicants plan to do under each WP, e.g. construction of a line, completion of a study, tender, etc. Please also consider future reporting and what would be the logic structure of WPs from the reporting point of view, throughout the lifecycle of the project. See also guidance in [Application form Part B 6.2 Work packages and activities](#). Also make sure that the presentation of the submitted budget by work package matches the presentation of the budget by cost category.

Q: In Application form B two terms are used - Activity and Task. Is there a difference between them when used in Section 6.2 Work packages and activities?

A: Work Packages (WP) are synonymous with activities in this context. A WP could be for example “project management”. Tasks are the subdivision of work packages into more specific parts of the work to be carried out. Please see definitions in the application form B and the presentation [“How to prepare a successful proposal”](#)

Q: How long should the 'Description' be in the WP tables per each Task?

A: This is at the discretion of the applicant. Please consider the guidance provided in the [application form B, 6.2 Work packages and activities](#). However, note that the Part B has a page limit of 120 pages in total.

Q: The project envisages construction (works) and its supervision (service). Shall the two related activities be included in one Work Package or we shall put them in separate WPs?

A: This is up to the applicant. Please consider who is carrying out the different WPs, for example, if it is the same contractor or a different one, of there are one or several procurements, etc.

Q: How detailed should a task of a WP be? How many tasks should there be for one WP?

A: This is up to the applicant. Please see the presentation on [“Successful proposal”](#) for reference.

Q: Regarding works call – technically does the submission system allow you to apply with funding rate lower than 50% or 75%?

A: The system allows you technically only to choose a funding rate of either 50% or 75%, which are hardcoded in the system according to the call text provisions’ and cannot be changed. The system will then automatically calculate the maximum EU contribution possible based on the total estimated costs and the chosen funding rate.

However, in a second step each applicant has to manually encode in the actually requested co-funding amount into “Requested EU contribution to eligible costs/EUR”. This can be lower than the maximum amount calculated by the submission system. For example if with 1000EUR total costs and a 50% selected funding rate, after encoding your costs, the system calculates you a “Maximum EU contribution to eligible costs/EUR” of 500EUR, you can still fill in 400EUR into “Requested EU contribution to eligible costs/EUR”, corresponding to an actual 40% funding rate. Remember though that any funding rate above the standard 50% has to be duly justified according to the Call conditions. For reference, see [the presentation on budgets](#).

A: Could you provide us some cost examples that can be included in the "D3 of Synergetic elements"?

A: [The CEF Regulation](#) (EU) 2021/1153 of 7 July 2021 establishes in its Article 10.2 that actions eligible in accordance with its Article 9 may include synergetic elements relating to any of the other sectors (...) provided that they comply with all of the following requirements: (a) the cost of the synergetic elements does not exceed 20 % of the total eligible costs of the action; (b) the synergetic elements relate to the transport, energy or digital sector; and (c) the synergetic elements enable the socioeconomic, climate or environmental benefits of the action to be significantly improved. Such synergetic elements should be described in Section 1.4 of [application form B](#) and the cost thereof should be indicated as part of the budget table per budget categories. No specific examples are provided in the CEF Regulation, but they could relate to assets allowing synergies between the energy sector and the transport sector (as co-funded under the [CEF-Synergy](#) call for proposals held in 2016) or with the digital sector.

Q: Can an "Affiliated entity" be a coordinator of the project (ref. Grant Agreement)?

A: No. An Affiliated entity will implement some tasks in your project. Project management tasks cannot be delegated to an affiliated entity. Note that an affiliated entity is also subject to operational and financial capacity requirements. Consider also whether the affiliated entity might be better suited as a beneficiary.

Q: Which questions could be considered related to climate proofing that can be omitted in case there is already an Environmental Impact Assessment?

A: Applications for works subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) shall include information on the climate proofing of the project, taking into account the Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021-2027 ([OJ C 373](#)). Such information may be provided in the form of a summary of the main findings and conclusions, notably as regards mitigation and adaptation measures.

In cases, where the EIA has not been completed yet, the application shall confirm that climate proofing will be considered as part of the EIA.

Applications relating to a project for which an EIA was completed before 31 December 2021 are not subject to this requirement. However, the Environmental compliance form should in any case be uploaded and information should be provided in [application form Part B](#), under Impact Section 4.

Q: What level of details is required in Part B- par 2.2 tables on 'Authorisations, approvals and permits' and 'building permits'?

A: Please list and briefly describe the authorisations and permits, which will be necessary for the implementation of the project. If dates for obtaining them are not known yet, please include whatever information is available at the time of the proposal, even if it would be an estimate.

Q: In Application form Part A there is a question of proposals in past 2 years. As in previous call the TENtec number had 8 digits, what is the reference with 6 or 9 digits?

A: The system requirement is 6 or 9 digits based on the research programme. You may insert the 8 digit TENtec number preceded by 0. Please indicate as well any other related projects funded under another CEF call and part of the same global project in [Part B](#), Section 8 "Twinned projects".

Q: When there are two TSO's jointly proposing a project, is one chosen to be a "Coordinator" and another TSO is registered as "Partner"?

A: Yes, that is correct. Please note that the role of Partner in the application in eGrants should not be confused with the figure of Associated partner in the Grant Agreement, as described in the presentation on [CEF 2 legal provisions](#).

Q: Structuring of the reporting periods – are there instructions how to organize them? Previously they were elaborated on a later phase when the GA was prepared.

A: Actions are structured in reporting periods, which are independent from calendar years. The default reporting period for actions funded under this call is 24 months, the first one starting on the start date of the action. In the budget table per Work Package, applicants need to provide information on the budget per reporting period for each Work Package. The reporting periods for each action will be further defined and confirmed during Grant preparation.

Q: Should the Section 3.2. “Consortium set-up” be filled-in if no consortium cooperation is planned?

A: That section should include information on cooperation between promoters and the organization of the project, so even if there is no formal consortium established, please provide information on the project participants. There is no obligation to have a consortium in this Call.

Q: Can you confirm that section 2.3 “Financial maturity” of Part B is only applicable for works proposals and not applicable for studies?

A: the section is applicable for both, but the information to be provided is different. For studies, please provide information on the overall financial situation and maturity of the project. For works, applicants need to provide additional information regarding the type of project finance, financial ratios (internal rate of return, financial net present value) and financial model.

Q: In case of Works applications, which event triggers the start of the Action?

A: It is up to you to define the milestone or task that starts your project. Typically, the start of a works project is not the kick-off of the physical construction, as there are usually preceding phases, e.g. tendering of contractors, supply of material, etc., which could be part of the application.

Q: Compared to the total project budget, what is the percentage of the prepayment?

A: As stated in the Call text, the percentage range is 25-50%. This will be determined individually for each project according to the specific duration of the project. As a general principle, the pre-financing amount will be calculated as the amount of the maximum EU contribution, divided by the number of reporting periods and potentially diminished by a percentage.

Q: Do project partner' LSIGN/PLSIGN and FSIGN/PFSIGN need to sign the application before the submission?

A: No. these roles will not have been assigned yet at the time of the submission, they will be assigned only during Grant preparation. However, note that the coordinator has to declare to have the explicit consent of all applicants on their participation and on the content of this proposal in Part A

3) Proposal annexes

Q: Are the Environmental and TEN-E compliance Annex docs mandatory for studies without physical intervention?

A: The Environmental compliance file and the TEN-E compliance file should be submitted also for studies without physical intervention.

Q: How has the permit granting process improved in the new TEN-E Regulation Commission proposal compared to the TEN-E Regulation in force? Did the one-stop-shop existed already in the TEN-E Regulation in force?

A: The TEN-E Regulation currently in force applies, so for the current call for proposal there has been no change in this respect. The one-stop-shop for permit granting is already part of the current TEN-E Regulation.

Q: Do business plans prepared for CEF 2020 have to be updated according to the new business plan template in CEF 2021?

A: There is no business plan template as such provided. A financial spreadsheet template is provided, but it is optional (not mandatory) and it is the same as in previous calls. It is not obligatory to use our template, you can use another one. Applicants need to make sure the information is updated and reflects the latest status of your project.

Q: Having in mind the short deadline and only the issuing of the CBCA take about 3 months is it acceptable to submit the application without the CBCA?

A: No. If the proposal is for works where CBCA is mandatory, the proposal will not be considered without a valid CBCA.

Q: Can a project that was submitted last year and was declared ineligible, be submitted this year for the new call with the same CBCA decision issued in 2020?

A: Yes, the proposal may be submitted again this year.

Q: Could you clarify when the Environmental compliance file is mandatory and what level of detail should be provided for it?

A: The Environmental compliance file applies to all types of actions, studies and works. The difference is in the detail of information to be provided. The first box should be filled in for all proposals. For a study without physical intervention, that is the only section that needs to be filled out. For studies with physical interventions or works, applicants have to fill in the entire form with information from past, current and future, replying according to the present situation.

Q: How should I fill in the Declarations in the end of the Environmental compliance file, depending on whether I have Environmental Impact Assessment completed, ongoing or not even started?

A: In each case the declaration should be filled in, but the level of detail can be different. The declarations reflect the current state of play of your project. Applicants need to mention in the form if an EIA has already been carried out.

Q: How should the Environmental compliance file be filled in for multibeneficiary projects?

A: The Environmental compliance file should be filled in for each beneficiary and for each Member State where the project is implemented.

Q: With respect to the Member State agreement, will this need to be signed by all the Member States where the PCI is located for an application for studies?

A: The agreement should be provided by the concerned Member States, meaning the Member States where the action is taking place. In the case of works taking place in two Member States, the two of them have to provide agreement. If it is a study is taking place in one Member State only, then only the agreement of that Member State is required.

Q: In order to get the Agreement of the Member State signed, I need to contact the national representative in the CEF Energy Committee Member. Where can I find the list of CEF Energy Committee Members?

A: The list of CEF Energy Committee Members is available at https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/cef_energy_contact_points_for_inea.pdf

Q: Can CBA and Business Plan include additional information compared to what has been delivered for the CBCA decision?

A: If the CBA and business plan have changed or been updated since the investment request which was submitted for the CBCA Decision, then both versions, the old and the new updated ones, should be provided, if possible combined into a single file.

Q: Can the Audited Financial Accounts of an organisation be uploaded as the "Annual Activity Report"?

A: Applicants who need to prove their operational capacity should provide all the information that demonstrates the technical capability to successfully implement the action. This should include at least the annual activity report and proof of completion of previous projects, and may include as well audited accounts if they provide additional evidence, but in principle, they are not necessary.

Q: If we already obtained the two declarations requested in the Environmental compliance file in 2020 from the concerned authorities, do we need to obtain them again?

A: Yes, it is necessary to submit these again in relation to the current proposal.

Q: What if the environmental procedure is planned for the near future? Is that a barrier?

A: No. Applicants should explain the state of play of environmental procedures. Please consider the section 2.2 of the Application Form B.

4) Other

Q: How can we receive the links to the recordings, the upcoming updates to the FAQs, and so on?

A: Registered participants to this info-day will receive an email when the material is uploaded on the [event page](#). Also, make sure you follow CINEA social media, and check the FAQs in the [PCI Call Page](#) on the Participant portal.