

# The award criteria: lessons learnt for applicants

# 3. Evaluation - Award criteria



## Priority & Urgency

- ❑ **Contribution to the TEN-T network:** (i) core/extended or comprehensive, (ii) on a CB link, (iii) contribution to the corridor work plans and (iv) any network effect by developing or modernising the network.
- ❑ **Relevance:** if the proposal addresses the Work Programme 2021-2027, Call, and/or Topic objectives
- ❑ **EU added-value:** the proposal addresses (i) EU objectives (Green Deal, Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy) and (ii) if the project improves significantly the transport connections between the Member States in efficiency, sustainability, competitiveness or cohesion – in addition to the benefits at national/regional/local level.
- ❑ **Synergies** with other CEF sectors (Energy, Digital), EU programmes (e.g. RRF, Horizon Europe)  
**Synergetic elements** may apply for work proposals only if they:
  - relate to another CEF sector,
  - do not exceed 20% of the total eligible costs, and
  - significantly improve the socioeconomic, climate and environmental benefits of the project

## Priority & Urgency

- Taking into account the EU policy urgencies created by:
  - the situation created by **the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine**,
  - the Commission communication on **Solidarity Lanes** of 12 May 2022
  - the EU mission on the “**100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities**” launched on 28 April 2022
  - The action plan on military mobility 2.0 of 10 November 2022.

## Maturity

- ❑ **Readiness/ability of the project to start** by the proposed start date **and to complete** by the proposed end date (technical maturity – under responsibility of the applicants),
- ❑ **Status of the necessary contracting procedures and permits** (procedural maturity – beyond the remit of the applicant),
- ❑ **Financial availability needed to complement the CEF investment** (financial maturity – funds needed for completing the project), and
- ❑ **Correspondence** between the **technical planning and financial profile**.
- ❑ **Works/mixed proposals** must have completed two **key steps of the environmental impact assessment by the date of application**:
  - (i) an EIA report prepared by the project promoter and
  - (ii) consultations carried out under the EIA Directive,

The development consent procedure may be followed and completed after the submission of the CEF application.

## Maturity

### **Project duration:**

- For works and mixed proposals: 4-5 years
- For studies proposals: 2-3 years, as from the start of the project

**Starting date:** Not earlier than the proposal submission date

**End date:** 31 December 2029

*Tasks not respecting these conditions i.e. that go beyond the recommended duration or that start before submission date are not considered.*

## Quality

- The **quality of the application** : Part A, Part B and the mandatory annexes submitted, including the environmental documents (ECF).
- The **quality of the proposed project – based on:**
  - The **implementation plan proposed**, from technical (Work Packages well structured) and financial (cost effective) point of view,
  - Design approach, the **organisational structures** (project management) put in place (or foreseen) for the implementation,
  - Risk analysis/management**, the **control and quality procedures**,
  - Communication** strategy to provide visibility to **CEF funding**,
  - Sustainability** and **maintenance** strategy for the completed project (for works)

## Operational and Financial Capacity

- The **operational and financial capacity check of the applicants**: Competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams mainly for new private entities to CEF – based on the list of previous projects and the activity report of the last year.
- In accordance with section 7 of the call document, only applicants with stable and sufficient resources may be awarded funding. See also: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf)
- Entities without a financial history may apply under these calls but will be considered having a weak financial capacity. In these cases, the agency may decide to take risk mitigation measures to protect the EU budget. Such measures may include the provisioning of a bank guarantee.



## Impact

- ❑ **Demand/traffic forecast study** – is the works project based on similar study ?
- ❑ **Socio-economic impact of the project**
  - Describe the socio-economic impact of the project – leading (or not) to a project being economically viable
- ❑ Other impacts on **congestion, modal split, safety and security, service quality, and noise emissions**
- ❑ For studies proposals, under the section Decision-making tool: contribution of the study to preparing the overall project implementation, for instance, further steps in the project development
- ❑ Effects on the **interoperability** of the transport systems/modes and territorial **accessibility** in the TEN-T network (i.e. the cross-border dimension), **innovation** and **digitalisation, competition, regional and local development** and **land use**, and **outermost regions** when applicable.

## Impact

### □ Environmental and climate impact of the project:

- its contribution to the climate change targets,
- how climate change has been taken or will be taken into consideration when designing the project and its components.
- impact on air pollutants, and (possible) greenhouse gas emission reductions,
- **mitigation measures** summarised from **the climate proofing analysis for the applicable\* works applications** – including:
  - how the cost of greenhouse gas emissions have been integrated in the **economic evaluation of the project**
  - how the **energy efficiency first principle** is applied
  - how the project will contribute to the **emission targets for 2050** e.g. 90% reduction of transport emissions

### □ Climate resilience

- findings of the vulnerability assessment to identify the climate hazards to which the project is more sensitive (because of the its type or location).
- **adaptation measures** summarised from **the climate proofing analysis for the applicable\* works applications**

*\*Climate proofing of infrastructure is required for works projects subject to an EIA and for which key steps of the EIA have been completed after 18 January 2023 (ref. [FAQ 30160](#))*

# Impact

## ☐ Tips for climate proofing

### Information requested:

- ✓ how climate change has been taken into account when designing the project;
  - ✓ how the project is consistent with the mitigation and adaptation pillars of climate proofing
  - ✓ how the cost of GHG emissions have been integrated in the economic evaluation of the project
  - ✓ how the energy efficiency first principle is applied
  - ✓ how the project will contribute to the transport emission target for 2050 i.e 90% reduction
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- Parts of the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** and the **Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)** conducted for the project relating to climate mitigation and adaptation can be used for the purpose of the providing information in the application.
  - **Optional:** Applicants **are encouraged to** include **information, e.g.** a **summary of the climate proofing process and conclusions** under “*Other Annexes*” available in the submission system.

## Catalytic effect

- **Catalytic effect** looks into how the CEF funding will facilitate or accelerate the project - in comparison to a situation without the CEF funding.

Three main elements that the CEF funding may influence the realisation of the project:

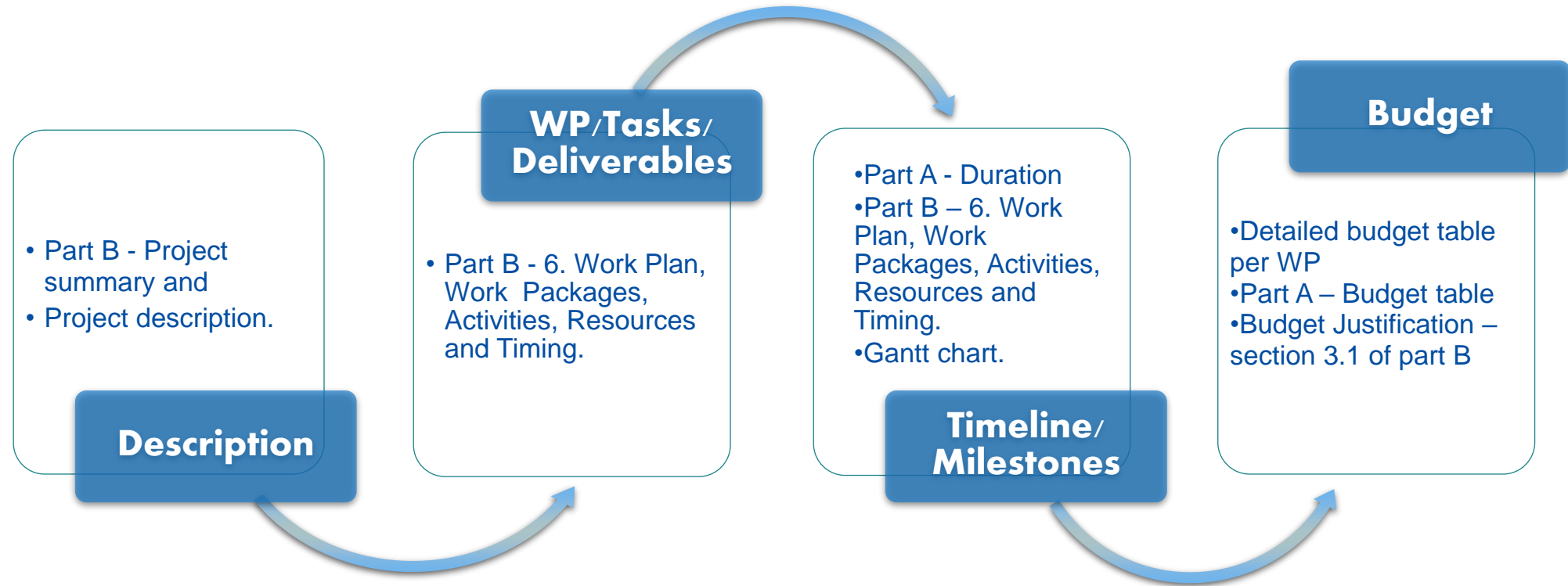
- 1. Overcoming a funding gap** (or negative Financial Net Present Value - FNPV) of the project – due to insufficient financial viability, high upfront costs or lack of market funding
- 2. Financial leverage on additional investments:** capacity of the CEF grant to trigger differentiated public or private investments, and accelerating the overall investment plan
- 3. Enabling effect of the CEF grant on the commitment/acceptance of stakeholders towards the project** – due to, among other reasons, improved quality of the project implementation by enhancing the technical parameters.

# Lessons learnt from the evaluation of proposals under previous calls

## ❑ Low quality of the description of proposals:

- ❑ Project Management tasks includes reporting to CINEA, communication & dissemination, consortium meetings < 10% of the total budget.
- ❑ Work packages detailed unclearly – with insufficient number of milestones and unclear deliverables
- ❑ Work packages covering several distinct tasks – with no costs broken down (per task)
- ❑ Limited risk analysis with incomplete mitigation measures
- ❑ Communication tasks described too vaguely

# Lessons learnt from the evaluation of proposals under previous calls



- Be clear and concise.
- Coherence and consistency across documents (part A, part B, Gantt chart, budget tables)
- Address scoring criteria accordingly

