

The European Commission (EC) has launched a new call for proposals for key cross-border EU energy infrastructure projects included on the 4th list of Projects of Common Interest (PCIs), to be co-financed through grants worth 785 million euros from the EU budget. This is the first call for PCIs under the new Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) rules, the European support program for trans-European infrastructure.

When fixing the new CEF-Energy budget for the 2021-2027 period, worth 5.83 billion euros, the EU acknowledged the key enabling role that energy infrastructure plays in the European Green Deal and the transition to a climate neutral economy. The work program adopted in August, provides 2.4 billion euros of funding for key European energy infrastructure projects for the period 2021-23. The current CEF Energy call for PCIs will be open until 19 October 2021. Once the applications have been assessed, an award decision is likely to be adopted in early 2022.

To apply for funding under CEF-Energy projects must first be part of the most recent list of PCIs, which the EC adopts every two years. To be defined as a PCI, projects must have a significant benefit for at least two EU countries and must increase competitiveness, enhance the EU's energy security and contribute to sustainability. Financial assistance provided under CEF Energy aims to maximize its added value towards decarbonization.

Agreed in the framework of the new EU budget for 2021-2027, the new CEF system introduces a new window for cross-border renewable projects in the field of renewable energy, with an allocation of up to 15 % of the CEF budget subject to market uptake. A first call for such projects (in the form of prefeasibility studies) will be launched in the second half of September.