

CEF TELECOM – 2020-1 CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

eID & eSignature – 11 June 2020 version

All information in blue has been added or updated since the previous version.

Commonly used abbreviations in this FAQ

eIDAS	electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services
DSI	Digital Service Infrastructure
DSS	Digital Signature Service
iOS	iPhone Operating System (Apple)

1. What is the main difference between this call and previous eID calls?

The main difference between this year's call and previous eID calls is that a new objective on the upgrade of the eIDAS node has been added (funded with the lump sum contributions). Please also note that all proposals addressing eID (objectives 1, 2 and 3) need to submit the endorsement letter from the eIDAS Cooperation Network to be eligible for funding (failure to submit this endorsement letter will result in the ineligibility of the proposal).

2. Why is it necessary to form a consortium of three entities to integrate eID in our own service?

A consortium requirement is intended to increase the impact of the eID DSI by involving more entities in the take up of eID solutions. The consortium requirement can be done e.g. by involving other public/private entities that will be also connecting different services to the eIDAS node, or entities from other Member States which with you can carry out cross-border interoperability tests. Please note that under the eIDAS Regulation¹ public sector bodies offering online services to citizens that require authentication are obliged to accept EU eIDs, so it would not be difficult to find other entities interested in connecting their services to the eIDAS node in their Member State to meet this obligation.

3. Is there an indicative budget for individual eID and/or eSignature actions?

There is no indicative budget foreseen for individual actions under objectives 1, 2 and 4, as the requested budget of the actions depends on the scope of each proposal and the activities proposed. For actions under objective 3, the budget is determined by the applicable lump sum contribution. As indicated in section 4 of the call text, there is a €2.5 million earmarked for eID actions for objectives 1, 2 and 3 and an indicative €0.5 million has been set aside for eSignature services (objective 4).

¹ Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC, see:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2014.257.01.0073.01.ENG

4. The call text states that the consortium must consist of at least 3 applicants from one or more Member States (objective 1 and 2). Does this mean that a multi-country consortium is eligible for this call?

Possibly, if the multi-Member State consortium fulfils the minimum requirements as noted in section 6 of the call text. The minimum requirements are twofold:

- 1) at least 3 organisations in total, from one or more Member States
- 2) eIDAS Cooperation Network endorsement letter is provided. The endorsement should be provided for each Member State whose eIDAS node is needed for the connection.

5. Does eID have its own Core Service Platform?

eID has its own Core Service Platform, which provides services supporting implementation of the eIDAS nodes in Member States. More information on this and the CEF eID building blocks can be found on CEF Digital portal: <https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/eID>.

6. What is the licensing model of the work resulting from a CEF financed project? Can a commercial partner further resell a product that includes the CEF Building Blocks?

There is no specific licensing model that is imposed by the call. However, it would be advantageous for the applicant to clearly explain in the proposal the approach for further take up of the solution developed as part of the proposed Action, and what could be further commercialised (section on Impact and sustainability).

Please note that in line with Article II.25.3 of the grant agreement, in case profit is made during the Action's duration, it would need to be declared to the Agency at the time of payment and could result in a reduction of the eligible costs of the Action. Once the Action has ended and the payment of the balance finalised, no restrictions apply on the selling of an Action's results.

For further explanation please see answer 14.1 of the CEF Telecom General FAQs document, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/2019-cef-telecom-frequently-asked-questions>.

7. Is the development of a commercial product under the scope of this call? If so, what conditions would have to be met?

The development of a commercial product cannot be a goal of the proposed Action itself, although it may be a by-product of another goal directly linked to the objectives, as indicated in section 2.1 of the call text. An example would be if the proposed Action concerns the integration of eIDAS in an existing e-service/platform/system, and these services/platforms/systems are based on a commercial product, which requires updating. Any type of product development should be explained in the proposal, and any plans to "resell" this product should be documented in question 3 of application form part D dealing with sustainability issues. Please note that according to Article II.25.3.1 of the model grant agreement, the grant may not produce a profit for the beneficiaries – please refer also to CEF Telecom General FAQ 14.1.

8. Are there any requirements that the projects will have to comply with to verify the capability of the connected service upon the completion of the project (objective 1 and 2)?

Yes. All projects will need to prove and demonstrate the following by the end of the Action:

- that the e-services/systems/online platforms covered by the proposed Action are integrated with an eIDAS node in a production environment, and;

- that cross-border authentication using nationally issued eIDs from at least EU Member States/EEA countries, that have notified their eID schemes under eIDAS Regulation, is available in a production environment² for those e-services/systems/online platforms.

In addition, all funded Actions will be subject to validation by the eID core service platform. This validation will be made during a remote meeting with the beneficiaries of the Action, during which the possibilities of the cross-border authentication with the use of eIDAS notified eID schemes will be checked (as well as assertion of information on attributes, mandates and authorities, if applicable) as part of the business process. For that purpose, the proposed Actions will be expected to provide information on the URLs of the production environment, accessible through the Internet, where the services under the scope of the call can be reached in order to verify their cross-border authentication capabilities.

This process will be reflected accordingly in the grant agreement signed by INEA with the selected beneficiaries.

9. What kind of e-services are being developed thanks to this - and the previous calls - for the implementation of eID in Europe?

The types of e-services being developed so far in Member States include public as well private sector services. Please check INEA's website for the information on the projects funded so far: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/projects-by-dsi/eidentification-and-esignature>.

10. Should a proposed Action include cross-border testing of the service connection to the node?

Yes. Cross-border testing should be included in the proposal in order to demonstrate that the implementation of eID actually works, according to the section 2.1 of the call text. In that sense, participants in the proposed Action are advised to involve users with other EU/EEA eIDs in the testing (preferably notified eID schemes), as a means to authenticate in the e-services/systems/online platforms in the scope of the action. Please note that the call for proposals explicitly states that by the end of the action, the e-services/systems/online platforms will need to prove and demonstrate that the integration with an eIDAS node and cross-border authentication using eIDAS notified eID schemes is available in a production environment for those e-services/systems/online platforms.

11. Are the costs of eService adjustment considered to be eligible (e.g. eService changes related to the acceptance of new SAML format/additional attributes in communication with the national identification and authentication system)? If we are preparing our eService to accept foreign credentials (eIDs), are the translation costs of the eService website considered to be eligible as well?

The costs of any technical changes or adjustments which are necessary to enable eServices to be connected to and operate with the eID and online platform are considered to be eligible.

However, the translation costs of the e-service website would not be considered as an eligible cost under this call.

12. Is the customisation and integration of identity provider eligible under this call?

Objectives 1 and 2: Customisation and integration of identity provider systems is not eligible under this call for proposals submitted under objectives 1 and 2. However, the integration of providers of information on attributes, mandates and authorities (under objective 2 - from the call

² I.e. an operational environment where users can perform actual business transactions

text) is eligible, provided that this information is made available and associated to a cross-border identification using existing identity provider systems.

Objective 3: The upgraded version of the eIDAS node will need to be integrated with the identity provider(s), including at least those corresponding to the eIDAS notified eID schemes in that country.

13. I would like further information about how to frame a proposal so that the requirements are both met and align with the context of cross border eID interoperability to deliver services. Where can I find more information on the policy and operational aspects of cross border eID?

The eID section of the European Commission's CEF Digital website (<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/eID>) provides a variety of technical and policy-related background as reference. Any specific questions on the policy and operational aspects can be addressed to the CEF Telecom calls helpdesk (inea-cef-telecom-calls AT ec.europa.eu), which will ensure proper follow-up.

14. For our proposed Action addressing eID, if our consortium has a public entity partner that manages the node, can our consortium coordinator be a private entity?

Yes. There is no requirement that the coordinator has to be a public entity, so you are free to choose which partner in your consortium – public or private – is best suited to serve as the coordinator. Please ensure that you explain the role of each partner in the consortium, notably in Q2.5 of application form part D.

15. Is there a list available indicating the Member States which have already set up their eIDAS nodes and their state of play?

Yes. Please refer to the CEF Digital portal for updated information about the situation of the eIDAS node in a particular Member State, as well as the points of contact:

<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/Country+overview>

16. Can we submit a proposal that only addresses one of the objectives?

As explained in section 2.1 of the call text, proposals can address one, two or three of the four call objectives. Proposals addressing objectives 1, 3 and 4 can be standalone proposals. However, proposals addressing attributes enablement (objective 2) will need to address also DSI integration (objective 1), since the information on attributes, mandates and authorities needs to be made available to an e-service/system/online platform in another country, which has to be integrated in an eIDAS node.

17. We are an authentication technology provider working on the development of an efficient and secure eID ecosystem of identity providers and eServices. Can this call help us build an eID infrastructure that enables electronic identities for the cross-border use?

The call could support the upgrading of the eID infrastructure on the eServices side provided that these eServices are making use of the eIDAS nodes, but not on the identity providers' side. The call supports the integration of eServices with the eIDAS nodes so that they can authenticate users from other countries (Objective 1). However, it does not support the integration of identity providers for objectives 1 and 2. Integration with the identity providers is only covered for the proposals working on the upgrading of the existing eIDAS nodes, and only for those identity providers already integrated before the upgrade.

18. Would the development of an eSignature solution that enables integration of DSS in other systems be eligible under this call?

Yes. This development would be eligible under this call.

19. For eSignature, can you please clarify whether the DSS components are compatible with Android and iOS? If not, is there any flexibility with respect to the use of the DSS components?

The DSS library is written in the Java programming language. This means that direct use of the DSS library in iOS is not possible. Use of the DSS library in Android is possible, but problematic, due to the use of Bouncy Castle in DSS, which causes problems in use on Android. More information on DSS can be found on the CEF Digital web portal: <https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/CEF+Digital+Home>.

A possible use of DSS for mobile applications would be to integrate DSS in a web service, which can be accessed through, for example, SOAP or REST.

In terms of flexibility with respect to the use of the DSS components, under objective 4 listed in section 2.1 of the call text, it indicates that "developed systems should be able to demonstrate their use of the eSignature DSI Building Block's DSS open-source library". (Note that SD-DSS has been renamed to DSS.) This would encompass both the direct use of DSS in a system and use of DSS as a reference implementation of the eIDAS Regulation and related standards.

20. Can any Member State request funding for the implementation of eSignature?

Yes, provided that what is proposed addresses the eSignature objective of the call.

21. Can Ukrainian civil organisations apply for the 2020 CEF eID call for proposals?

The rules for participation of entities established in third countries are provided in section 6.1 of the call text. The participation of entities from third countries must be well justified and they may not receive funding under the CEF Regulation, except where it is indispensable to achieve the objectives of a given project of common interest.

For eID, the objectives of the call are directly related to the existence of national eIDAS nodes (upgrade of the nodes, integration of public or private services/systems/online platforms with those nodes and provision of attributes through them), which can only be deployed in EU/EEA countries. For this reason, CEF eID cannot support the implementation of digital services in third countries, and the participation of applicants from third countries in eID actions can only happen if this participation is required for the implementation of digital services in EU/EEA countries.

22. We are considering to prepare a proposal for the upgrade of the eIDAS node (objective 3 of the call), upgrade that we intend to start as soon as the version 2.5 of the eIDAS node sample implementation provided by CEF is released. However, we are concerned that we might finish the implementation before the signature of the grant agreement as the indicative duration of the Action is 6 months (and we expect the Action to be finalised within 3-4 months). Will it be possible to sign the grant agreement even if the upgrade is already completed?

Please note that the Action can start at the earliest with the submission of the proposal. However, the Action should be still ongoing at the time of the grant agreement preparation and signature, as the Actions that are completed cannot be funded. Furthermore, the 6 months duration of the Action is only indicative.

Given the requirements for the objective 3 of the eIDAS call for proposals (upgrade of the eIDAS node), formally it is not possible to finalise completely the implementation of the Action before the signature of the grant agreement. This is because the call lists a number of verifications which need to be carried out to check the outputs of the Action and which are integral part of the Action. These verifications will be done only for the Actions that are selected for funding and after the signature of the grant agreement. Therefore, the proposed duration of the Action needs to take into account the timing of those verifications, such as the verification of the cross-border authentication in a production environment for at least one service provider. This verification/demonstration will be arranged with INEA and DG CONNECT after the signature of the grant.

Moreover, new releases of the eIDAS node sample implementation also compatible with version 1.2 of the eIDAS technical specifications are planned for the coming months after the release of version 2.5. Applicants might want to take into account also the planning for these releases when preparing their application, even if that entails a duration of more than 6 months for their Action.

23. Is it possible for the Member State to modify the template of the endorsement letter from the eIDAS Cooperation Network so that the connection of service providers to the test environment and not production environment is authorized (in particular for private service providers, which are not authorised in our Member State to connect to the production eIDAS node)?

As stated in the call for proposals under section 6.1, the template of the endorsement cannot be modified. The endorsement letter should be only provided to the service providers (either public or private) that can effectively connect their e-services to the eIDAS node in a production environment. This is to ensure that all services (regardless whether public or private) are available for end users in a production environment by the end of the Action, as the main policy goal for CEF eID is to give EU citizens the freedom to rely on the eID that they already use at national level to securely access digital services provided in other Member states (and, in that sense, testing or pre-production environments do not provide actual digital services to users).

24. We will be starting the work for the upgrade of the eIDAS node before the call's outcome (aiming to have it completed by the end of 2020). Is it still relevant to apply?

Please see reply to question 22.

25. We currently do not have an eIDAS node with identity providers and service providers in a production environment, but are working to develop it and should have it ready by the end of the year. In this context, are we eligible for funding under objective 3?

Yes, it is possible to apply even if the current version of the eIDAS node is not available in the production environment yet. However, please note that the eIDAS node will need to be available in the production environment by the end of the Action and once the upgrade is completed to comply with the latest version of the eIDAS eID Technical Specifications (version 1.2) as specified in the call for proposals.

26. Can the funding for the upgrade of the eIDAS node (objective 3) cover expenses of service providers to finance our teams?

The funding for the upgrade of the eIDAS node (objective 3) cannot cover the expenses of service providers. The lump sum contribution for objective 3 (upgrade of eIDAS node) covers only the eIDAS node operators to upgrade the eIDAS node.

However, please note that the service providers can apply separately under objective 1 (eID DSI Integration) to connect their services to the eIDAS node.

27. Is the beneficiary obliged to work with any particular node?

There are no specific rules under the eID call for proposals defining which node should be used for the connection. It is technically possible for a consortium to connect services offered in one Member State to a node operated in another Member State.

Please note that in order to be eligible (section 6.1 of the call) and to demonstrate the commitment of the eIDAS node operator to assist the proposed Action with the connection to the eIDAS node in a production environment, an endorsement letter from the relevant Member State representation of the eIDAS Cooperation Network must be provided with the proposal. The endorsement should be provided for each Member State whose eIDAS node is needed for the connection.