



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS UNDER THE CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY IN THE FIELD OF TRANS-EUROPEAN TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORKS

The promotion of internet connectivity in local communities: WiFi4EU (WiFi4EU-2020-1)

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The general context for this call for applications is defined in sections 2.3.2 and 4 of the amended Work Programme 2019-2020 for financial assistance under Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) – Telecommunications Sector (WP 2019-2020)¹ as published in the WiFi4EU page on the INEA website.² The background and rationale for this call for applications are defined in section 4.1.1 of the WP 2019-2020.

For the purposes of this call, a simplified grant in the form of lump sum (a "voucher") will be granted.

2. PRIORITIES & OBJECTIVES

2.1 Priority outcomes

The priority outcomes of this call for applications are defined in section 4.1.2.3 of the WP 2019-2020.

The WiFi4EU initiative³ is a support scheme to provide high-quality Internet access to local residents and visitors in the centres of local public life.

Such local wireless connectivity that is free of charge and without discriminatory conditions is expected to contribute to bridging the digital divide, especially in communities that lag behind in terms of digital literacy, including in rural areas and remote locations.

¹ Commission Implementing Decision C(2020) 1078 final

² <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>

³ <https://www.wifi4eu.eu/#/home>

It should further improve access to online services that increase quality of life in local communities by facilitating access to services, for example e-Health and e-Government, allow the creation of new digital inclusion offers, e.g. computer and internet use courses, and promote the development of local small and medium-sized enterprises innovating in digital products and services.

2.2 RESULTS EXPECTED FROM THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The benefits and expected outcomes of this call for applications are defined in section 4.1.2.3 of the WP 2019-2020. An indicative number of 947 vouchers is expected to be awarded under this call.

3. TIMETABLE

Opening of call for applications	3 June 2020 (13:00:00 CEST)
Closing of call for applications	4 June 2020 (17:00:00 CEST)
Evaluation of applications	June 2020 (indicative)
Consultation of the CEF Committee	June-July 2020 (indicative)
Adoption of the Selection Decision	July 2020 (indicative)
Preparation and signature of Grant Agreements	Starting from July 2020 (indicative)

4. BUDGET

The indicative amount to be allocated on the basis of this call for applications for the WiFi4EU initiative is €14,205,000. The amount of each voucher to be allocated is €15,000 in the form of a lump sum.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

There are four admissibility requirements as follows:

1. Applications shall be submitted electronically via the WiFi4EU Portal.⁴
2. Applications must be submitted using an **EU Login account⁵ linked to the registration of the municipality.⁶**

⁴ <https://wifi4eu.ec.europa.eu/#/home>

⁵ For more information on how to obtain an EU Login, see <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas>

⁶ It is recommended that the EU Login account used to register the municipality is created with the nominative email address of the mayor/head of municipality/legal representative, i.e. the person who has the competence to sign the Grant Agreement. Please consult the list of Frequently Asked Questions (<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/wifi4eu-free-wi-fi-europeans>) for more information about who/how to register

3. Applications must be **complete**, i.e. include the following two supporting documents – which should be readable – uploaded to the WiFi4EU Portal:

1. The legal representative's (i.e. mayor/head of municipality) "*proof of agreement to apply*" form that must include the scanned image of this person's legal ID/passport⁷ – ("Document 1" as referred to in the WiFi4EU Portal)
2. A copy of an *act of the nomination of the legal representative* – ("Document 2" as referred to in the WiFi4EU Portal)

4. Applications must be **submitted after the call opening and before the call deadline** indicated in section 3 above.

Applications submitted without the two supporting documents as indicated in point 3 above will not be admissible.

Applications or part(s) of applications submitted by e-mail or hard copy will not be admissible.

Each beneficiary can only benefit from one voucher during the entire duration of the initiative, i.e. applications from municipalities that were awarded a voucher in a previous WiFi4EU call will not be admissible.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1 Eligible applicants

In accordance with the WP 2019-2020, applications may only be submitted by a municipality or an association formed by municipalities on behalf of its members established in either an EU Member State, Iceland or Norway.⁸ Applicants must be included in the list⁹ of eligible municipalities and associations of municipalities as established on the date of the launch of the call.¹⁰

NB: Associations of municipalities may apply on behalf of their members, i.e. one or several municipalities. However, associations of municipalities cannot be beneficiaries of vouchers. Only individual municipalities may benefit from a voucher.

⁷ This form is available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>

⁸ In accordance with section 5.3.1 of the WP 2019-2020, European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA) may participate in the call for applications, even when not explicitly mentioned in the Work Programme text, with the same rights, obligations and requirements as EU Member States.

⁹ See: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/list-eligible-entities-wifi4eus-fourth-call>

¹⁰ Article 9(1a) of the CEF Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010 Text with EEA relevance (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1316>) indicates that in order to avoid an undue administrative burden and to eliminate the need for agreement on each applicant, in advance of the call, the Member State concerned has agreed to the categories of beneficiaries (municipalities or associations formed by municipalities) set out in section 5.4 of the WP 2019-2020, or has notified the Commission otherwise.



For British applicants:

Following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement¹¹ on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK residents and entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call.

For Cypriot applicants:

For municipalities located in the buffer zone, delineated by the Green Line and/or crossed by it, the Access Points (Wi-Fi equipment) shall be installed either within the buffer zone and/or, if applicable, within the area controlled by the Cypriot government.

6.2 Eligible actions

The WiFi4EU initiative aims at providing support for actions which:

- (1) are implemented by municipalities which must plan and supervise the installation of indoor or outdoor local wireless access points in public spaces, and which must commit to:
 - a) keep the WiFi4EU network(s) fully functional for a period of three years starting from the date of the confirmatory notification by the Agency described in Article 4.2 of the Grant Agreement;
 - b) reconfigure the WiFi4EU network(s) in order to connect them to the secured authentication and monitoring solution in full compliance with the requirements set out in section 6.2.1 below. The secured authentication and monitoring solution is expected to be deployed in 2020.
- (2) build on high-speed broadband connectivity enabling delivery of a high-quality internet experience to users that:
 - a) is free of charge and without discriminatory conditions, easy to access, and uses the latest and best equipment available, capable of delivering high-speed connectivity to its users;
 - b) supports access to innovative digital services, such as those offered via digital service infrastructures;
 - c) for the purpose of accessibility, provides access to services at least in the relevant languages of the Member State concerned and, to the extent possible, in other EU official languages;
 - d) is provided in centres of local public life, including outdoor spaces accessible to the general public in the public life of local communities.

¹¹ Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2019%3A0661%3ATOC#>

- (3) use the common visual identity provided by the Commission (*see section 11 below*);
- (4) commit to procure (or equivalent procedure) the necessary equipment and related installation services, where required in accordance with applicable law and to install the Wi-Fi access points in the areas where no similar offers of free Wi-Fi connectivity already exist.

The WiFi4EU voucher shall be used to finance any one of the following actions:

- a) The installation of an entirely new public Wi-Fi network;
- b) The upgrade of an existing public Wi-Fi network;
- c) The extension of the coverage of an existing public Wi-Fi network.

6.2.1 Requirements for the configuration and connection of WiFi4EU network(s) to the EC monitoring solution

Subject to the fourth paragraph below, the beneficiary shall ensure that the access points funded with a WiFi4EU voucher only broadcast the WiFi4EU SSID and that the obligations as stipulated in section 6.2.4 fully apply.

The beneficiary shall ensure that the WiFi4EU network with WiFi4EU SSID is an open network in the sense that it does not require any kind of authentication information (such as the use of a password) to connect to it. Once the user connects to it, the beneficiary shall ensure that the WiFi4EU network with WiFi4EU SSID shows an https captive portal prior to authorising the user to connect to Internet.

Unless required by national legislation in compliance with Union law, the connection to the Internet through the WiFi4EU SSID shall not require any registration or authentication in the captive portal and shall be completed through a "one-click to connect" button in the captive portal.

The beneficiary may broadcast an additional SSID for appropriately secured connections referred to in section 6.2.1.2 from the start of Phase I and under its responsibility. The beneficiary may also broadcast an additional SSID provided it is limited to internal use of the beneficiary and does not unduly affect the quality of service offered to the public. In both these cases, the beneficiary shall appropriately differentiate such SSIDs from the WiFi4EU open SSID and ensure that the obligations as stipulated in sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 fully apply.

For access points not funded by the WiFi4EU voucher, the beneficiary may also broadcast the WiFi4EU SSID (as the only SSID or in parallel to their existing local SSID). The beneficiary shall ensure that at least for end-users connecting to the WiFi4EU SSID, the obligations as stipulated here and in sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 fully apply.

The connection to the EC monitoring solution shall be implemented following a two phase approach.

6.2.1.1 Phase I

The registration, authentication, authorisation and accounting of users is the responsibility of each beneficiary in compliance with EU and national law.

The beneficiary shall ensure compliance with the following requirements for the captive portal in the WiFi4EU SSID:

- The WiFi4EU network with WiFi4EU SSID shall use an https captive portal for the interface with the users.
- The captive portal shall establish a period for automatic recognition of previously connected users, so that the captive portal is not shown again at reconnection. This period shall be automatically reset every day at 00:00 or at least be set up for a maximum of 12 hours.
- The domain name associated with the https captive portal shall be classic (non-IDN), consisting of characters a to z, digits 0 through 9, hyphen (-).
- Visual identity: the captive portal shall include the WiFi4EU visual identity.¹²
- The captive portal shall embed a tracking snippet for the Agency to be able to remotely monitor the WiFi4EU network.

The snippet installation guideline is available at the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>. The snippet will not collect any personal data. It will serve to count the number of users connecting to the WiFi4EU network, load the visual identity of WiFi4EU and check that it is displayed properly.

The captive portal shall include a disclaimer clearly informing the users of the fact that WiFi4EU is a public open network. The disclaimer should also include the precautionary recommendations that are usually provided when accessing the Internet via such networks.

The beneficiary is entitled to set up distinct WiFi4EU networks funded by the same voucher, each of them with a different domain name and a different captive portal. The obligation pursuant to Article 9 of the Grant Agreement to maintain the WiFi4EU network active for a period of 3 years after the verification by the Agency applies to all such WiFi4EU networks funded by the same voucher.

Phase I is applicable until the beneficiary receives a notification that Phase II has been activated. Once notified, the beneficiary will have the obligation pursuant to Article 9 of the Grant Agreement, to adjust the configuration of the network in accordance with the requirements set out under section 6.2.1 as further detailed in the notification, within the timeframe that will be indicated therein.

6.2.1.2 Phase II

At a later stage, a secured authentication and monitoring system will be set up at EU level and will have the possibility of evolving into a federated architecture.

Pursuant to Article 9 of the Grant Agreement, once the secured authentication and monitoring solution is operational, the beneficiary shall reconfigure its WiFi4EU network(s) in order to connect them to this system. This reconfiguration will include maintaining the open WiFi4EU SSID using the captive portal, adding a

¹² Available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>

WiFi4EU SSID for appropriately secured connections (either by changing its existing local based secured system for the common one or simply by adding the common one as a third SSID) and ensuring that the solution can monitor the WiFi4EU networks at the access point level.

The registration and authentication of users for the open WiFi4EU SSID and for the local based SSID for secured connections where it exists, as well as the authorisation and accounting of users for all SSIDs remains the responsibility of each beneficiary in compliance with EU and national law.

6.2.2 *Technical requirements for the Wi-Fi equipment of the WiFi4EU network(s):*

The beneficiary shall install a number of Access Points reflecting the value of the voucher in their market. In any event, it shall install at a minimum the following number, depending on the combination of indoor and outdoor Access Points:

Minimum number of outdoor Access Points	Minimum number of indoor Access Points
10	0
9	2
8	3
7	5
6	6
5	8
4	9
3	11
2	12
1	14
0	15

The beneficiary shall ensure that each Access Point:

- Supports concurrent dual-band (2,4Ghz – 5Ghz) use
- Has a support cycle superior to 5 years
- Has a mean time between failure (MTBF) of at least 5 years
- Has a dedicated and centralised single point of management for all APs of each WiFi4EU network
- Supports IEEE 802.1x
- Complies with IEEE 802.11ac Wave I
- Supports IEEE 802.11r
- Supports IEEE 802.11k
- Supports IEEE 802.11v
- Is able to handle at least 50 concurrent users without performance degradation
- Has at least 2x2 multiple-input-multiple-output (MIMO)
- Complies with Hotspot 2.0 (Passpoint Wi-Fi Alliance certification program).

6.2.3 *Quality of service requirements*

In order to ensure that the WiFi4EU funded network is capable of providing a high quality user experience, the beneficiary shall subscribe to an offer equivalent to the highest speed available mass-market Internet connection in the area and in any event to one offering at least 30 Mbps download. The beneficiary shall also ensure that this backhaul speed is at least equivalent to that – if any – which is used by the beneficiary for its internal connectivity needs.

6.2.4 *Obligations on charges, advertising and use of data*

1. The beneficiary shall ensure that end-user access to the WiFi4EU network shall be free of charge, i.e. provided without corresponding remuneration whether by direct payment or by other types of consideration, notably free of commercial advertising, nor re-using personal data for commercial purposes.
2. The beneficiary shall ensure that end-user access by electronic communications network operators shall also be provided without discrimination, i.e. without prejudice to restrictions required under Union law, or under national law that complies with Union law, subject to the need to ensure a smooth functioning of the network and, in particular, the need to ensure a fair allocation of capacity between users at peak times.
3. Processing for statistical and analytical purposes may be regularly done in order to promote, monitor, or improve the functioning of the networks. For this purpose, any storage or processing of personal data shall be duly anonymised in accordance with the relevant Service Specific Privacy Statement(s).

6.3 **Exclusion criteria**

An applicant will be excluded from participating in the call for applications if it is in any of the situations set out in Article 136 of the Financial Regulation.¹³ For that purpose, the applicant will be asked to sign a declaration on honour through the WiFi4EU Portal. The Portal will also include a link to the list of exclusion situations set out in Article 136 FR.

7. SELECTION PROCESS¹⁴

Vouchers will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis, using the electronic timestamp of the successful submission of the application as recorded in the WiFi4EU Portal. The timestamp is determined upon receipt of the submission by the central server based on the central server clock in Central European (Summer) Time (CE(S)T) (Brussels time).

In addition, in order to ensure a balanced geographical distribution of the financing, a minimum of 15 vouchers per Member State and EEA country (Iceland and Norway) will be allocated in this call for applications, provided sufficient applications are received from these countries.

¹³ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046>

¹⁴ See Annex 3 of the WP 2019-2020

Note that the vouchers are allocated within the budget (e.g. a country might not get more vouchers than what the budget may offer).

A reserve list with a limited number of eligible applications per participating country may be established and included in the Commission Selection Decision. Should budget become available after the Selection Decision is published, applications may be selected from the reserve list. For this purpose, the above-mentioned criteria will be applied to select applications from the reserve list. The reserve list will only be valid for this call and applicants selected from the reserve list will be informed on a case by case basis.

8. COMPLIANCE WITH EU LAW

In accordance with Article 23 of the CEF Regulation, only actions in conformity with EU law shall be financed.

9. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

9.1 Form of the grant

The grant shall take the form of a single lump sum of 15,000 EUR. The single lump sum will be paid provided the entire action was properly implemented.

9.2 Payment arrangements

According to the terms of the Grant Agreement, the payment of the voucher will be made to the Wi-Fi installation company once the installation has been confirmed as operational in accordance with the Grant Agreement. The payment will be made as soon as possible within a maximum of 60 days to the bank account provided in the WiFi4EU Portal by the Wi-Fi installation company. Please note that a valid and readable bank statement or equivalent document must be uploaded to the WiFi4EU Portal by the Wi-Fi installation company.

Failure by the beneficiary to:

- a) comply with the obligation to keep the Wi-Fi installation active for a period of three years;
- b) reconfigure its WiFi4EU network(s) in order to connect it to the secured authentication and monitoring solution in full compliance with the requirements set out in section 6.2.1.

may lead to the recovery of the voucher from the beneficiary.

The Agency will not intervene in the contracting relations of the beneficiary with the Wi-Fi installation company.

9.3 Other financial considerations

9.3.1 Non-cumulative award

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget. Under no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.

9.3.2 Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed by the date of entry into force of the Grant Agreement.

10. GRANT AGREEMENT

The successful municipality will be invited by INEA to sign a Grant Agreement drawn up in euro and detailing the funding conditions. For reasons of efficient administrative process, municipalities are expected to sign the Grant Agreement within 7 days of this invitation. After one month, the absence of signature of the Grant Agreement may lead to the cancellation of its signing process and the offer may be presented to another municipality from the reserve list. The standard model Grant Agreement, which is available in all EU official languages, is not negotiable.¹⁵

It is strongly recommended that the legal representative (mayor/head of municipality) signs the Grant Agreement. In case the legal representative nevertheless wishes to appoint another person to sign the Grant Agreement (i.e. the so-called "Authorised person"), the following supplementary documents must be uploaded to the WiFi4EU Portal, at the latest prior to the Grant Agreement signature:

1. *Authorised person* form¹⁶ - "Document 3" as referred to in the WiFi4EU Portal;
2. *Legal ID/passport of the authorised person* - "Document 4" as referred to in the WiFi4EU Portal.

Please note that the Authorised person will not be able to sign the Grant Agreement unless he/she has created his/her own EU Login¹⁷ for this purpose.

11. PUBLICITY

Rules regarding the visual identity to respect for publicity actions by beneficiaries in regards to the WiFi4EU initiative can be found on the WiFi4EU page of the INEA website: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>

12. INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS & SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

12.1 Information for applicants

Practical information on this call for applications (i.e. model Grant Agreement, Work Programme 2019-2020) is available on the WiFi4EU page of the INEA website: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>.

¹⁵ The model Grant Agreement is available on the call webpage:

<https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>

¹⁶ This form is available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/wifi4eu>

¹⁷ For more information on how to obtain an EU Login, see <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas>

Applicants are recommended to consult this website, as well as INEA's Twitter feed (@inea_eu) regularly until the deadline for submission of applications.

All questions related to this call must be addressed to the call Helpdesk, accessible at the bottom of each page when browsing in the WiFi4EU Portal¹⁸. A response will be provided by the Helpdesk directly to the e-mail address from which the question was sent.

Answers based on recurring submitted questions may be published in the FAQ list available on the Digital Single Market website¹⁹ and also accessible via the call webpage.

12.2 Submission procedure

Applications can only be submitted electronically, provided that the required supporting documents are uploaded to the WiFi4EU Portal using the EU Login account used for the registration of the municipality in the Portal. Furthermore, applications must be submitted after the call opening date: **3 June 2020 at 13:00:00 CEST (Brussels time)** and before the call deadline: **4 June 2020 at 17:00:00 CEST (Brussels time)**. Applications in all official EU languages will be accepted.

The applicant may click the button to submit the application at any time. However, any attempt to submit before the formal opening of the call for applications as per the central server clock will be denied automatically. The applicant will be informed immediately and will be able to try again. The applicant will be informed once the application has been successfully submitted after the call opening.

See also section 6 above regarding the required provision of supporting documents.

Applicants will be informed individually about the results of the selection process in due time.

13. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

The reply to any call for applications involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name and address) via the WiFi4EU Portal. Such data will be processed pursuant to applicable legislation.

Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested will be processed solely for the purpose of allocation of the award of vouchers in accordance with calls for applications and in case of successful applications, for the purpose of grant management. Personal data included in the application (name, surname, e-mail address, data subject position in the organisation, IDs/passport) will be processed within the limits set forth by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725²⁰ and on a need to know basis.

The single data controller is DG CONNECT.

¹⁸ See <https://wifi4eu.ec.europa.eu/#/home>

¹⁹ See <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/wifi4eu-questions-and-answers?lang=en>

²⁰ See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1725>

Details concerning the processing of an applicant's personal data are available in the privacy statement available on the home page of the WiFi4EU Portal.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Article 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.²¹ For more information see the WiFi4EU Privacy Statement: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/news-redirect/624124>.

²¹ See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1533027354880&uri=CELEX:32018R1046>