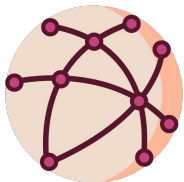




## From Ambition to Impact: Safeguarding the Cross-Border Focus of CEF 3

The architecture of the new MFF offers a very clear split between EU and national projects. The Connecting Europe Facility should focus on international projects exclusively, while the National and Regional Partnership Plans will cover the national TEN-T sections.

However with the core TEN-T's deployment costs outweighing by 10 times the proposed CEF 3's budget, resources will be limited. Three main questions need to be addressed:



### 1. How broad should an international connection be?

- Focusing EU grants on cross-border sections is beneficial, but without strong links to major cities they risk becoming isolated “white elephants”, unless they already serve a substantial urban area.
- Expanding the list of cross-border projects to include major cities along international corridors would increase benefits, but only where credible rail links exist. Links without a land connection and no feasible bridge or tunnel projects should not be accepted.

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### 2. How do we limit the impact of delays and cost overruns?

- The single project of Rail Baltica took approximately 20% of CEF Transport's funds for rail since 2021.
- Significant setbacks in major projects are common and can cause them to continue to absorb a large part of the CEF.
- Preventing late changes to the design of projects, such as the Lisbon-Porto high-speed line, and reducing maximum co-funding rates will be key to curb the impact of delays and cost overruns.



### 3. How do we properly balance civil and military mobility?

- In the current MFF, 44% of the EU's contribution from military mobility calls went into just 4 countries: Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.
- CEF Transport will have to ensure that a proper geographical balance is maintained so that dual use projects are implemented across the board.
- Frontloading military mobility funds and backloading CEF Transport funds will ensure a steady flow of funding.



# Policy recommendations



## Recommendation 1

Explicitly define the indicative list of cross-border projects as preferential to cement the CEF's focus on international links.



## Recommendation 2

Keep the **maximum co-funding rate at 75%** to free up funds for additional projects and **guarantee a steady outflow** during the entire MFF to provide predictability.



## Recommendation 3

Ensure that **only mature projects get selected for funding** to avoid costly delays that could jeopardise the core network's conclusion.

***CEF 3 is the most important tool to achieve a robust European network in the next decade that can meet our mounting climate and security challenges.***