

【欧州】 【自動車】

Road - Environmentally friendly vehicles including infrastructure: European Commission announces to invest €352 million in selected and approved low and zero emission transport projects under the CEF's Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility (AFIF)

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【概要 : Summary】

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for Transport is a financing instrument that supports the improvement and strengthening of the transport infrastructure projects within the Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T). It is also the key EU funding instrument for projects that support the decarbonisation of the transport sector to deliver on the 2050 European Green Deal's target of reaching climate neutrality.

The Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility (AFIF) is a new funding instrument to support the improvement of the European alternative fuels' infrastructure within the TEN-T network and thereby to contribute to the target of decarbonising the transport sector and to reach the European Green Deal objectives.

The AFIF initiative was launched by the CEF's multiannual work programme on 16 September 2021, with a total budget of EUR 1.5 billion. AFIF projects include publicly accessible fast-charging points and charging stations as well as hydrogen refuelling infrastructure on the TEN-T road network. Eligible projects under AFIF

will be granted financial aid only if the project also receives funding from promotional banks such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) or other credit institutions. The AFIF projects are crucial for the adoption and swift expansion of alternative fuel infrastructures. The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) assists the European Commission in the evaluation and selection of projects. AFIF's low and zero emission transport projects will be implemented through a specific rolling call for proposals launched in 2021 with five cut-off dates for the submission of proposals. The selection of projects that will be granted funding under the AFIF will take place until the end of 2023.

Following the EU Member States' approval of the selected projects on 8 September 2023, the European Commission announced the selected projects under the fourth cut-off date on 11 September 2023 and is now expected to adopt a formal financing decision. CINEA has started the preparation of the grant agreements with the successful projects' coordinators.

【記事 : Article】

1. CEF financing instrument for TEN-T infrastructure

The transport sector is still vastly reliant on fossil fuels and is responsible for about 25% of the EU's total GHG emissions (EEA 2023). It is the European Commission's top priority to make transport modes more sustainable and to accelerate the uptake of low and zero emission vehicles, vessels, and aeroplanes and of renewable and low carbon fuels in all transport sub sectors. Accordingly, the European Green Deal, presented by the European Commission in December 2019, also includes the target to reduce the transport sector's GHG emissions by 90% by 2050 (COM (2019) 640 final).

Besides the increased deployment and use of renewable and low carbon fuels the core and comprehensive Trans-European Networks for Transport (TEN-T) needs to be deployed and includes the set-up of the recharging and refuelling infrastructure network to enable the widespread uptake of low and zero emission vehicles in road transport. Under the TEN-T policy, the completion of the Core Network, with its nine multimodal Core Network Corridors should be achieved by 2030 and the completion of the Comprehensive Network to facilitate accessibility to all European regions should be achieved by 2050 (European Commission n.d.).

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for Transport is part of the general financing instrument Connecting Europe Facility CEF, which also includes CEF Energy and CEF Digital (European Commission n.d.). The CEF for Transport focuses on the funding of cross-border projects and projects aiming at removing bottlenecks or bridging missing links in various sections of the Core Network and on the Comprehensive Network (link), and also offers financial support to projects for decarbonising transport (CINEA n.d.). Since 2014, CEF has supported over 1,200 projects for a total amount of almost EUR 29 billion in the transport sector

and under the programme for the period 2021-2027, EUR 25.8 billion are available for grants to co-fund TEN-T projects in the EU Member States (European Commission n.d.).

Regarding the management of the projects, the CEF-Programme is managed centrally by the European Commission, which sets the political priorities and is responsible for the selection of projects through competitive calls for proposals (European Commission 2023). The Commission is assisted by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) for the evaluation and selection of projects and for the overall technical and financial monitoring of project implementation (European Commission 2023). CINEA also concludes grant agreements with beneficiaries, evaluates reports and processes interim payment claims and final reports (BMDV 2023).

2. The AFIF infrastructure funding instrument for alternative fuels infrastructure

The CEF's Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility (AFIF) is an ongoing financing instrument to support innovation and improvements in the European alternative fuels' infrastructure to reach the Green Deal objectives (CINEA n.d.). AFIF was established by the CEF multiannual work programme and launched on 16 September 2021, with a total budget of EUR 1.5 billion (European Commission 2023). The AFIF will provide funding for incentives, together with other funding programme instruments (such as Recovery and Resilience Facility, Cohesion Policy Funds, InvestEU, and Horizon Europe, among others (CINEA n.d.).

The AFIF's goal is to achieve a decarbonisation of transport along the TEN-T network and to support the deployment of alternative fuel supply infrastructure, contributing to decarbonising transport along the TEN-T network (CINEA 2023a, CINEA n.d.). The establishment of

AFIFs is crucial for the adoption and expansion of use of alternative fuel vehicles as these facilities help overcome barriers to using alternative fuels. Under the AFIF initiative, financial aid is only granted if the project also receives funding from promotional banks such as the EIB or other credit institutions. The financing must cover at least one third of the total costs and the funding commitment must be proven to CINEA (BMDV 2023). The AFIF has the aim to fund projects by combining CEF grants with financial support from financial institutions to achieve a higher impact of the investment (CINEA 2023a, CINEA n.d.).

Eligible projects must fulfil various conditions and applicants have to guarantee a part of the financing with a minimum of 10% with an ‘Implementing partner’ (IP) like the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other national promotional banks or ‘non-implementing partners’ (non-IP) like other public or private financial institutions, (CINEA 2023a).

The growth of AFIFs is seen as a vital step toward supporting the alternative fuels infrastructure deployment which will help to reduce GHG emissions, improve air quality, and achieve energy security by diversifying the sources of transportation and energy fuels. Additionally, AFIFs contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the transportation sector and support the transition toward more sustainable and eco-friendly transport options. The AFIF was launched in 2021 with five cut-off dates for the submission of proposals for projects on alternative fuel infrastructure, including electricity fast-charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure on the TEN-T road network until end of 2023 (European Commission 2023, DG Mobility 2023b, BMDV 2023).

On 15 March 2023, the European Commission announced 26 projects from 12 Member States selected for funding to install alternative fuels infrastructure along the TEN-T. The

objective is to help delivering a transport network, which is environmentally sustainable. In line with the European Green Deal, the projects have been selected among those submitted under calls for proposals of the CEF programme. The deadline for the submission of proposals under the third cut-off date was 10 November 2022 and the evaluation took place between December 2022 and January 2023. Information on the evaluation results were given on 15 March 2023 (CINEA 2023a). Between them, the proposals will receive EU grants totalling to about € 189 million from the AFIF (DG Mobility 2023). The projects under the third cut-off date range from the installation of electric recharging stations along the European TEN-T road network to the deployment of hydrogen refuelling stations for cars, trucks and buses and the electrification of ground handling services in airports. The investment of € 189 million will translate into approximately 2.000 charging points, plus some 63 hydrogen refuelling stations. Four projects will support the electrification of ground-handling services at airports, for example by electrifying ground-support equipment and installing recharging infrastructure for service vehicles, according to European Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean (DG Mobility 2023a, CINEA 2023b). Until now, four calls for proposals have been launched with one final cut-off date, the fifth and last cut-off date being on 7 November 2023 (DG Mobility 2023a). This may be the last opportunity to secure funding through the program, since there are no details released on future AFIF calls (European Commission 2023).

3. Fourth cut-off date under AFIF funding for low and zero emission projects in transport

On 11 September 2023, the European Commission announced 26 projects from 12 Member States under the fourth cut-off date of the AFIF call for proposals that had closed on 13 April 2023 (CINEA

2023c). The 26 projects selected for AFIF funding will receive € 352 million in EU grants for the installation of alternative fuels infrastructure along TEN-T network, needed for the widespread use of low and zero emission vehicles (European Commission 2023). This support is coupled with a loan or investment facility from other financial institutions. Under the first three cut-offs, almost € 568 million has been granted (CINEA 2023c). Based on the decision of 11 September 2023, the alternative fuels infrastructure projects include 6 projects in The Netherlands, 4 projects in France, 4 projects in Italy, 3 projects in Poland, 2 projects in Spain, and one project each in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania and in Portugal (CINEA 2023d).

Table 1: AFIF funding under the calls 1-4, and recommended funding

Call	Cut-off date	Number of selected projects	Recommended funding (in €)
AFIF cut-off 1	19 January 2022	15	86,498,692
AFIF cut-off 2	7 June 2022	24	292,532,177
AFIF cut-off 3	10 Nov. 2022	26	188,829,989
AFIF cut-off 4	13 April 2023	26	352,060,575
Total		91	919,921,433

(European Commission 2023)

Most of these selected projects are recharging points but there also some projects for building hydrogen refuelling stations for heavy duty vehicles (CINEA 2023d). According to the European Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean, the investment of € 352 million will translate into approximately 1,624 charging stations with

12,000 charging points, 18 hydrogen refuelling stations, and the electrification of ports and airports, including the port of Rotterdam and 37 Spanish airports (DG Mobility 2023b). Out of the CINEA list of selected projects, two examples are given, one for recharging infrastructure and one for hydrogen infrastructure projects. One example of a selected project for the recharging infrastructure is the PALLANTIA project in Spain, coordinated by GRUPO EASYCHARGER S.A. (CINEA 2023d). This selected project relates to the deployment of 125 charging stations with 1,002 publicly accessible fast-charging points of at least 150 kW each, located on the TEN-T network in Spain. Out of the eligible costs the CEF funding will cover € 22,540,000.00 (CINEA 2023d). All stations will use electricity of 100% certified renewable origin and will include photovoltaic panels (PVs) (CINEA 2023d). Furthermore, the project entitled Air Products' European HRS Network in the Netherlands with AIR PRODUCTS NEDERLAND BV as project coordinator is relating to the deployment of two hydrogen refuelling stations for heavy duty vehicles in the port of Rotterdam (supplied through pipeline) and Tarragona (supplied with liquid hydrogen) (CINEA 2023d). As of 2026, hydrogen will be produced from renewable sources in Saudi Arabia, converted into ammonia and retransformed in landing terminals in Rotterdam and Hamburg. The recommended eligible costs of the project are € 17,732,390.00 and the recommended CEF funding is € 5,319,717.00 (CINEA 2023d). The 26 selected projects under the fourth cut-off date of the AFIF call for proposals is the second AFIF funding round of 2023, after the March 2023 announcement. Following the EU Member States' approval of the 26 selected projects under the AFIF fourth cut-off, the European Commission will adopt a formal financing decisions in the coming weeks. Considering the projects that will receive funding under the fourth cut-off date, 1,624

charging stations will be supported, bringing the total number of recharging stations supported so far to 3,981 stations (European Commission 2023). These electric charging stations supported by AFIF feature a total of 22,233 recharging points, of which 21,065 have a power capacity of 150 kW and 1,168 a power capacity of 350kW. These recharging points will be deployed in a total of 25 Member States (European Commission 2023).

Furthermore, the hydrogen refuelling stations, which will be deployed in 12 Member States, include 25 electrolysers. In addition, AFIF will also support the electrification of ground operations at 48 airports in 7 Member States (European Commission 2023).

Regarding the fifth and final cut-off call, it will remain open with a last cut-off date until 7 November 2023 (DG Mobility 2023b).

4. Conclusion

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for Transport is a key EU funding instrument to financially support targeted transport infrastructure investment at European level under the TEN-T in the 27 EU Member States. The AFIF initiative, as part of CEF Transport, was launched in 2021 and aims to accelerate the deployment of alternative fuel supply infrastructure in transport with dedicated funding. The project proposals supported by the AFIF initiative address alternative fuels infrastructure deployment, including electricity fast-charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure on the TEN-T road network.

After the fourth cut-off date under AFIF funding for low and zero emission projects in the EU's transport sector, the European Commission allocates €352 million to promote some 26 low and zero emission transport projects.

This is the second AFIF funding round in 2023, following a previous round in March 2023. The 26 selected projects will further be financially

supported by other private or public institutions. It is expected that this funding will result in some additional 1,624 charging stations, bringing the total number of recharging stations supported under the AFIF cut-off dates 1-4 so far to 3,981 stations. These stations will offer 22,233 recharging points, primarily at 150 kW capacity. Additionally, AFIF will back hydrogen refuelling stations in 12 Member States, including 25 electrolysers, and it will further develop the electrification of ground operations at 48 airports in 7 EU Member States.

Finally, the fifth cut-off call will remain open until 7 November 2023.

Concluding, the number of AFIF projects is significant in their number and content and they are an indispensable prerequisite toward reaching the further deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure and for the decarbonisation of the transport sector.

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