



# Research Briefing Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) – a quick guide

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Research Service

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## Research Briefing

# **Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) – a quick guide**

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The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) regulation places a duty on the Member States of the EU to improve their transport infrastructure, in order to eventually bring all States to a shared EU standard. This guide provides an overview of the regulation and its rationale. It also highlights the infrastructure in Wales that will need to be upgraded by 2030, to bring it in line with the new regulation. It explains what parts of the infrastructure network are affected, and how the necessary improvements may be delivered.

While delivery of the TEN-T improvements is the responsibility of Member States, the EU has passed a Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) regulation. The CEF funding stream provides the primary EU financial contribution to the implementation of the core TEN-T network, and is explained in this guide. Other potential sources of funding for TEN-T projects are also covered here.

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# 1. Background of TEN-T

The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) aims to develop an integrated multimodal transport network allowing people and goods to move quickly and easily across the EU. This is intended to support the development of the internal market and reinforce economic and social cohesion.

It is also intended to prepare the EU transport system for predicted increases in freight and passenger traffic, across all modes of transport, over the coming decades. By 2030, the development of the TEN-T network is expected to generate a GDP increase of 1.8% and 10 million additional jobs across the EU.

Integrating the transport systems of the EU Member States has been a long term goal of the EU, with initial attempts at co-ordination dating back to the Treaty of Rome. **It was not until the 1990's that more concerted efforts were made to** encourage Member States to work towards a more integrated system.

Prior to the 2013 TEN-T Regulation, there were previous versions of the policy, based on guidelines published between 1996 and 2010. These guidelines were not legally binding, but did determine Member States' eligibility for EU transport project funding during the spending cycles from 1995 – 2013.

The last round of TEN-T funding ran from 2007-2013 and was based on project proposals from the Member States. EU funding support amounted to €8 billion during this period. Funding was allocated to a range of projects, across rail, road, air and the “**motorway of the sea**” priorities, on a multi-annual and annual basis. A full list of the **funded projects is available online**.

In 2009 the EU published a green paper entitled “**Towards a better integrated trans-European transport network at the service of the common transport policy**”. This led to a second consultation document, “**Consultation on the Future Trans-European Network**” which in turn led to the current TEN-T **Regulation ((EU) No 1315/2013)**. This Regulation made the TEN-T priorities and standards legally binding on Member States.

## 2. Introduction to the Trans-European Transport Network

The TEN-T guidelines outline the transport network to be developed, define technical requirements and establish priority areas for action. The TEN-T overall priorities are:

- filling in missing links, in particular across cross-border sections;
- reducing the difference in the quality of transport infrastructure between EU Member States. It is hoped that this will ensuring adequate **interoperability** between EU Member State's rail networks;
- improving connections between different modes of transport; and
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

The TEN-T regulation is structured around two layers, the core and comprehensive networks. The regulation describes these two layers as “the highest level of infrastructure planning within the Union” comprising the most important transport infrastructure. Both layers incorporate all transport modes (freight, passenger rail and road routes, internal waterways, motorways of the sea, sea ports and airports). The layers also consist of transport infrastructure (such as adequate rest stops and refuelling stations), **telematic applications** and other accompanying measures.



The comprehensive network is the larger basic layer, intended to ensure adequate accessibility and connectivity of all regions in the EU. The core network consists of the most strategically important links and centres of the network, which are largely organised into nine administrative corridors (see below). The improvements to the core network must be completed by 2030, while Member States have until 2050 to bring their comprehensive networks up to standard.

There are also two horizontal priorities, the **European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS)** (which aims to establish a single rail signalling system across the EU) and **Motorways of the Sea (MoS)** (which aims to increase the use of sea transport in the logistics chain).

It has been estimated that €700bn will need to be spent on TEN-T transport projects across the EU from 2014-2020. Responsibility for delivery of the network, and the majority of the investment costs, will fall largely to Member States, though there are some EU funding programmes that are designed to support Member States to raise the required capital.

### 3. Delivering the TEN-T

To facilitate targeted funding and investment and to encourage cross border cooperation and planning, the core networks have been organised into **nine core network corridors**. Improvement and development work identified as part of these corridors have a deadline for completion by 2030. The UK is a part of the **North Sea - Mediterranean corridor**. While Scotland, Northern Ireland and England are included, it does not extend into Wales.

The corridors are designed to cover the most important long-distance flows across the EU. The corridors have a strong focus on interoperability and on interconnections between different transport modes, in order to improve cross-border links.

The European Commission has appointed a **European coordinator** for each corridor and horizontal priority, from a country not directly affected by the corridor concerned. Coordinators lead on corridor related activities and report annually on the progress achieved to the European Parliament, Council, Commission and the Member States concerned. The coordinator for the North Sea to Mediterranean corridor is **Péter Balázs**.

Wales is not included in the North-Sea to the Mediterranean corridor, although it was included in a proposed Dublin-London-Paris-Brussels corridor which was not included in the final text of the Regulation. At a Fourth Assembly **Enterprise and Business committee meeting in November 2013**, the head of unit for TEN-T in the European Commission indicated that this corridor may have been dropped as a response to UK Government pressure to reduce the extent of TEN-T corridors in the UK. At the same meeting, the official also emphasised that the omission of Wales from the corridor network would not mean that the Welsh Government could not access CEF funding for TEN-T related projects in Wales.

At the request of the European Commission, **individual corridor studies** have been produced. These studies analysed the features and actions needed to bring each State up to the required standards. Based on these studies and in cooperation with corridor fora comprised of representatives of the Member States, infrastructure managers, authorities and regions, each coordinator prepared a **corridor work plan**.

Each work plan addresses specific challenges, sets development objectives, includes a market analysis forecasting transport trends and outlines a preliminary list of projects. Work plans have also been prepared for the two horizontal priorities. These plans were approved by the Member States

concerned in June 2015, and are the basis for action until 2030. The plans will be revised on an on-going basis, in partnership with corridor fora, to reflect changes in circumstances.

## 4. Current projects planned under the TEN-T programme

**The 2014 study**, produced for the North Sea-Mediterranean corridor, identified the following projects to be funded prior to 2020, as part of the TEN-T Corridor programme in the UK:

- €1580m: Northern Rail Hub;
- €850m: Felixstowe-Nuneaton rail upgrades;
- €631m: Central Scotland M8, M73, M74 motorway improvements;
- €346m: Edinburgh-Glasgow electrification of railway;
- €276m: Power supply upgrade on the West Coast Main Line, North Wembley to Great Strickland;
- €265m: Stafford rail capacity increase; and
- €265m: Newry, A1 southern relief road.

No projects in Wales were identified in the study. However, Wales was identified as a “peripheral region” in the study, alongside parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland. It was noted that ‘the importance of linking the peripheral regions via the comprehensive and core network to the centre should be considered’, when developing projects related to the North Sea-Mediterranean corridor.

## 5. Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and financing the TEN-T

The **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)** was established by **Regulation 1316/2013 (PDF 1.5MB)**. The CEF regulation aims to stimulate the investment needed to reach the **TEN project goals**, which includes the development of energy and digital telecommunication, as well as transport, infrastructure. It originally had a budget of €33.2bn, but this was later reduced to €30.4bn. The reduction was a result of money being moved from the CEF to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) (see below).

€24.05bn of the CEF was set aside for transport projects with the rest set aside for projects focused on energy and telecommunication goals. Of the available €24.05bn, €12.7bn was set aside for any Member State to bid for under a ‘general call’ for funding. A further €11.3bn was reserved for applications from Member States in receipt of **cohesion funding** (which does not include Wales or any other part of the UK). All funding is to be spent in the 2014-2020 spending cycle.

In the main CEF financial support takes two forms:

- non-reimbursable grants from the EU budget; and
- contributions towards innovative financial instruments, developed by financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank. The most common instruments used are the; **Marguerite Fund**, the **Loan Guarantee for TEN Transport (LGTT)** and the **Project Bond Initiative**.

To date €19.53bn has been allocated from the transport budget of the CEF (€11.93 billion in 2014 and €7.6 billion in 2015). **The UK received €107, 948,633** in funding from the 2014 call, including up

to €4,057,178 for the study of the **feasibility of the electrification of the Swansea – Cardiff railway**. A list of transport projects in the UK that have **received funding from the CEF is available online**.

The deadline for applications to the **2015 call for funding for transport projects was 16 February 2016**. At present there are no set plans on when the next round of calls will be made to allocate the remainder of the budget. It is expected that there will be no general calls for funding until at least 2018. There could be a call for funding for **cohesion fund states** before then, but Wales will not be eligible to apply.

## 6. The Future of TEN-T in Wales

Wales has several transport routes that are included in the TEN-T core and comprehensive networks, but to date the Welsh Government has not secured any CEF funding. Unsuccessful applications were submitted by the Welsh Government for the 2014 funding call. The then Minister for Economy, Science and Transport wrote to the Chair of the Fourth Assembly's Enterprise and Business Committee in February 2016 regarding the possibility of joint project applications with Ireland to say:

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*The consensus from this engagement with stakeholders, including infrastructure owners, is that no suitably mature, committed projects are likely to emerge to bid for under this call. All involved were very positive about continuing the dialogue... We will continue to build on these relationships and discussions with a view to working on joint projects that could be suitable for bids under the next TEN-T funding call.*

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If the Welsh Government does not win any funding from CEF under the next call for funding, or during subsequent funding cycles, it will have to seek alternative methods of funding the required infrastructure improvements that falls within its competence (which are primarily roads). This may come from other sources of EU funding, private investment or Welsh or UK government investment. Any investment required in non-devolved infrastructure, such as rail, is the responsibility of the UK Government.

The routes on the TEN-T networks in Wales include the north and south rail main lines, the ports at Milford Haven and Holyhead, Cardiff Airport and some of Wales' main trunk roads. The European Commission has published maps which show the infrastructure included on the network.

Click here **for the map highlighting core and comprehensive inland waterways and ports, railways (freight), ports and rail-road terminals** in the UK (PDF 351KB). Click here **for the map highlighting core and comprehensive railways (passengers) and airports, roads, ports, rail-road terminals and airports** in the UK (PDF 377KB).

The Fourth Assembly's Enterprise and Business committee noted that Wales would benefit from developing projects under the Motorways of the Sea priority, in conjunction with Ireland, in their 2016 **report on the potential of the maritime economy in Wales**. These projects could also potentially be eligible for support through the **Wales-Ireland Co-operation programme**.

## 7. Other potential sources of EU finance

While the Welsh Government has not received any funding from the CEF to date, it can apply for other sources of EU finance. One of these is the recently launched European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), which is the part of a new '**Investment Plan for Europe**' launched by the

European Commission President in the autumn of 2014. The EFSI is managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and aims to mobilise at least €315 billion to support key infrastructure developments across the EU by 2018, using an investment of €21 billion of EU finance.

**Several projects in Wales have already been identified** as potentially eligible for support under the Investment Plan, including improvements to the A465, which is part of the comprehensive network, and the **Cardiff Capital Region Metro**, the integrated transport programme in south-east Wales which does not form part of the TEN-T network. While these projects have been pre-identified as eligible for funding, states can also seek support from the EIB's traditional sources of finance for any project which boost the economy and support EU policy priorities, including TEN-T.

Other potential European sources of funding include the **EU Structural Funds**, which invest in projects which support economic and social cohesion. **More specifically they fund projects** which support research and innovation, the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, renewable energy and energy efficiency and connectivity and urban development.

The Welsh Government currently has two operational programmes, one for **East Wales** and one for the **West, North Wales and Valleys**, that outline its plans for Welsh structural funds. Both of these operational programmes highlight show that the connectivity priority is intended to support and develop the TEN-T objectives in Wales.

There also **European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) programmes** which could provide grant funding for projects. In a letter to the Chair of the Enterprise and Business Committee, in February 2016, the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, noted that the then Welsh Government was exploring 'funding opportunities, in particular INTERREG, and we will continue to explore the potential for joint tourism projects and renewable energy projects with Ireland'.

The two ETC's which are most relevant to TEN-T objectives are:

- **Ireland-Wales Cross Border programme** – While this programme does not explicitly designate funding for transport links, it does support projects contributing to sustainable development and jobs growth in both nations. Therefore there may be potential for synergies between projects developed under this programme and developments along the TEN-T routes in north and south Wales.
- **North West Europe Transnational Co-operation (NWE) Programme 2014-2020** – The NWE programme has three main headings under which interested parties can apply; Innovation, Low Carbon and Resource and Materials Efficiency. The Low Carbon strand aims to 'promote sustainable transport and remove bottlenecks in key network infrastructures'.

## 8. Key Sources

- EU Parliamentary Research Service **Assessment of Connecting Europe Facility** (PDF 5.75MB) (2016)
- EU Parliamentary Research Service, **An overview of the Trans-European Transport Network** (PDF 1.97MB) (2015)
- EU Parliamentary Research Service, **Connecting Europe Facility** (PDF 391KB) (2015)
- Fourth Assembly Enterprise and Business Committee, **Realising the Potential of the Maritime Economy of Wales** (2015)