



# CENTRAL ASIA - EU - Central Asia Digital Bridge

#GLOBALGATEWAY

#TEAMEUROPE

## TEAM EUROPE PROPOSAL



**Financing of a major fibre-optic cable, extending the EU-financed Black Sea cable** between the EU (Bulgaria) and Georgia to Central Asia by way of Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea (EIB, EBRD+):

- Build on the Black Sea Connectivity initiative for the cable route
- Design of the exact cable route to connect underserved rural areas where market failures are apparent

### Complementary to the infrastructure investments:

- Data infrastructures financing: data centres and Internet Exchange Points (IXPs)
- Regulatory and policy support: data protection and cyber security, internet standards and protocols
- Strengthening local digital innovation ecosystems: Digital Innovation Hubs
- Academic and research cooperation
- Digitalisation of the public sector: construction of fibre link between public institutions and secure public data centres
- Introduction of IT management systems and public e-Services, capacity building

### The TEI covers the countries in central Asia:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

## MODALITIES/TOOLS

Policy dialogue

Blending operations

Technical assistance

Budget guarantee operations

### TRANSFORMATIONAL POTENTIAL

- Promote digital connectivity and the development of the digital economy in Central Asia
- Tackle the connectivity gap in the region by developing a high-capacity internet network, while increasing access to international bandwidth and establishing a secure connection between Europe and Central Asia
- Mitigate the digital divide in the region and generate positive externalities for the wider economy

## KEY DELIVERABLES

### Satellite connectivity

Building satellite connectivity "Earth stations" with integrated data centres through:

a) Construction of high capacity (10 Gbps) Satellite Gateway links infrastructure, and other connectivity infrastructure to be implemented in the upgraded or newly established, state-of-the-art, secure, and green data centres in each of the covered countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan).

b) Technical assistance and policy dialogue for better governance, including improved adherence to EU data & data flow management core principles and cybersecurity.

\*This Team Europe Initiative is work in progress

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## NATIONAL CONTEXT

### Central Asia is one of the least digitally connected regions in the world:

- Landlocked region
- Far from major fibre-optic lines that lie under the sea

**Connectivity issues:** affordability, quality, speed, and coverage of the internet, particularly in rural areas

### Almost half the population of Central Asia is not digitally connected:

- Missing out on employment opportunities
- Falling behind in learning
- Not receiving adequate healthcare

### WB estimates that in Central Asia:

- 10% increase in broadband penetration add at least 1% to economic growth
- 1% increase in internet connectivity corresponds with 4.3% of export growth

### Need for infrastructure investment to:

- Improve end-to-end connectivity for citizens and businesses
- Realise the potential of digital development

## GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT AND RELEVANT SDGs

EU New Strategy on Central Asia

EU Strategy on Connecting Europe and Asia

Black Sea Connectivity initiative

COVID-19 pandemic

\*\*SDGs included based on a new JRC electronic text mining tool, which identifies SDGs (targets)