Internet for Nova Scotia Update July, 2019

Improving rural internet service is a priority. Having a strong internet network will help our province build places where both people and businesses flourish. In 2018, the government placed $193 million in an internet funding trust to help connect more communities, homes and businesses across the province, one of the largest per-capita investments in internet made by a province. In July, 2018, Develop Nova Scotia became the Crown Corporation responsible for developing and implementing a strategy to bring reliable, high-speed internet to rural Nova Scotia.

Develop Nova Scotia created the **Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative** and in December, 2018, we launched a competitive call to organizations interested in providing internet services in Nova Scotia to pre-qualify to bid on projects across the province. Ten organizations were qualified and include a mix of small and large companies, as well as municipalities. They include:

1. Bell Canada
2. Cross Country TV Limited
3. Eastlink
4. ISM Canada (IBM Canada)
5. Mainland Telecom
6. Municipality of Kings
7. Municipality of Pictou County (with Nova Communications)
8. Seaside Communications
9. TNC Wireless Ltd.
10. Xplornet

In an effort to create opportunities for connections as quickly as possible, Develop Nova Scotia issued the first call for proposals to these organizations in May seeking solutions to be implemented within 6-12 months. This call closed on June 28th, 2019. Develop Nova Scotia is now evaluating these proposals and negotiating contracts. A second call for proposals will be issued in the fall seeking longer term solutions. We are confident projects will begin in some communities in 2019.

As contracts are signed, Develop Nova Scotia will provide more information on this website, social media, in the provincial media, and at community events across the province. Solutions must meet or exceed provincial speed targets of 50 mbps for wired connections and 25 mbps for wireless and must evolve with changing technology.

Our Evaluation Process

Develop Nova Scotia has identified four main categories for evaluation of proposals: company information, technical specifications, business case, and financial information. Develop Nova Scotia's process allows the evaluation system to be tailored to best fit for each area. No one factor is more important than another.

Important Notes
- The overall goal of our evaluation process is to create sustainable networks that can provide high-quality internet services now and in the future.
- Our system allows for flexibility so that we can find solutions that work based on the needs of each community.
- Our evaluation process will help create a competitive market, which will open the door for future expansion by the private sector.

Questions and Answers

1) How do you know what's best for my community?
We know that there is no "one size fits all" solution for internet in Nova Scotia. Develop Nova Scotia has detailed data that tells us the unique situations that prevent connections in each community. In our evaluations, we will look at what work must be done to overcome these challenges.

2) Will you weight one type of service over the other (i.e. fibre vs. satellite)?
The type of technology is one of a number of important factors we will use to determine which projects are funded. While different technology can provide different speeds, we know that speed is not the only thing needed to make a strong, sustainable network. Other factors include the overall business case, the capacity to evolve, and the financial contributions needed. Together, these elements must come together to provide the best overall solution for each area.

3) Do I need to tell you that my community is interested in service? Should local elected officials advocate for their areas?
Feel free to contact Develop Nova Scotia at any time to discuss your internet issues. However, please note that Develop Nova Scotia has detailed data that tells us the unique situations that prevent connections in each community. We cannot provide priority to any individual communities based on advocacy from community members or leaders.

4) How will I know if and when my community will be impacted?
As contracts are signed, Develop Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust will communicate more detailed information publicly through channels such as our email updates, our website, local media and local elected officials. As work begins, impacted Nova Scotians will be notified through service providers of how to have their homes and businesses connected.

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