



Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-63

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Gatineau, 9 April 2026

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Broadband Fund – Fourth call for applications

Deadline for filing of applications: 13 August 2026 at 5 p.m. Vancouver time (8 p.m. Gatineau time)

Summary

In 2019, the Commission launched the [Broadband Fund](#) to help connect rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Canada. To date, the Commission has allocated approximately \$769 million to projects that provide Internet or cellphone services to over 54,000 homes in more than 320 communities. The Broadband Fund has also helped improve cellphone service on over 650 kilometres of major roads and supported the building of nearly 6,000 kilometres of fibre across the country.

In 2024, the Commission made improvements to its Broadband Fund to simplify the evaluation criteria and reduce the amount of information required from applicants. These improvements will make it easier and faster for applicants to apply for and obtain funding. Following these improvements, the Commission is now launching its fourth call for applications to the Broadband Fund. The objective of this call is to increase the number of Canadian households with access to reliable high-speed Internet services that meet or exceed the universal service objective speed target of 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload.

The following types of projects will be eligible for funding: (i) universal service objective projects that provide fixed broadband Internet access to households and (ii) satellite-dependent community projects that provide improved telecommunications services to satellite-dependent communities.

This notice outlines key information for the present call for applications. The Application Guide (Appendix 1) and the Technical and Program Details Guide (Appendix 2) set out the full eligibility and assessment criteria and provide detailed instructions for submitting an application.

Applications for funding will be accepted until **13 August 2026**.

Background

1. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496, the Commission established the universal service objective, namely that Canadians have access to voice services and broadband Internet access services on both fixed and mobile wireless networks.
2. To measure the achievement of this objective, the Commission established several criteria. One is that Canadian subscribers to fixed broadband Internet access services (i.e., home Internet) should be able to access speeds of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload (50/10 Mbps). Another is that they should be able to subscribe to a service offering unlimited data. Further, the Commission determined that the latest generally deployed mobile technology¹ should be available not only in Canadian homes and businesses, but also on as many major transportation roads as possible in Canada.
3. To support the development of a telecommunications system that can provide Canadians with access to these basic telecommunications services, pursuant to subsection 46.5(1) of the *Telecommunications Act* (the Act), the Commission established the Broadband Fund. The objective of the Broadband Fund is to help achieve the universal service objective and close connectivity gaps in underserved areas by providing the necessary financial support to projects that (i) will build or upgrade infrastructure for fixed broadband and mobile wireless Internet access services and (ii) would not be financially viable without funding assistance.
4. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328, the Commission issued a revised Broadband Fund policy that focused on three key improvements: (i) streamlining and improving the process for funding capital projects, (ii) reducing barriers for Indigenous applicants and increasing requirements for community engagement and consent by Indigenous communities, and (iii) making it faster and easier for all applicants to apply for and obtain funding to connect underserved areas.
5. The improvements set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328 have been incorporated into the present call for applications, with key criteria highlighted in this notice and further detailed in the Application Guide (Appendix 1) and the Technical and Program Details Guide (Appendix 2).

Fourth call for applications

6. The Commission is launching its fourth call for applications to the Broadband Fund. Applicants may submit proposals for projects for this call as outlined in the “Procedure” section below.
7. The objective of this fourth call is to increase the number of Canadian households with access to reliable high-speed Internet services that meet or exceed the universal service objective speed target of 50/10 Mbps.

¹ See the CRTC communications market reports: [High-speed broadband coverage](#) and [Mobile wireless coverage](#).

8. Persons interested in responding to this call must submit a completed application to the Commission no later than **13 August 2026 at 5 p.m. Vancouver time (8 p.m. Gatineau time)**, using the [Online Intake System](#).
9. Applications submitted under previous calls will not be considered for funding for this call. Applicants must submit a new application with updated information for consideration.

Evaluation of applications

10. In evaluating the applications it receives, the Commission will proceed in three stages, as set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328:
 - **Stage 1 - Eligibility:** The Commission will evaluate applications according to defined eligibility criteria. Applications that do not meet all the eligibility criteria will not be considered further.
 - **Stage 2 - Assessment:** The Commission will assess eligible applications according to an established list of assessment criteria. If an application receives an unfavourable evaluation for one or more criteria, it may not be considered further.
 - **Stage 3 - Selection:** The Commission will select projects based on specific selection considerations from among the proposed projects deemed suitable for funding.
11. A comprehensive overview of all the eligibility and assessment criteria for this call can be found in appendices 1 and 2 to this notice.

Eligible types of projects

12. In this call for applications, the Commission will consider the following types of projects:
 - universal service objective projects that provide new or improved fixed broadband Internet access service of at least 50/10 Mbps to Canadian households in an underserved area that is not considered to be a satellite-dependent community; and
 - satellite-dependent community (SDC)² projects, as defined below:
 - projects that increase satellite transport capacity, thereby improving telecommunications service speeds beyond the highest speeds currently available in an SDC (operational expenses only); and

² An SDC is a community that relies on satellite transport capacity for one or more telecommunications services, such as voice, wireless (both fixed and mobile), and Internet services.

- capital projects that build or upgrade earth station equipment and/or access infrastructure to improve telecommunications services in an SDC.
13. Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project will either build new infrastructure or upgrade existing infrastructure and connect households to broadband infrastructure, resulting in improvements to Internet services in the area.
14. In this call for applications, the Commission will not be considering the following types of projects:
- mobile wireless projects that provide new or improved mobile services (voice and data), whether to households in communities or along major transportation roads; or
 - capital terrestrial transport projects that connect an SDC to an existing terrestrial network.
15. More information on eligible types of projects can be found in appendices 1 and 2 to this notice.

Minimum service levels

16. For a universal service objective project to be eligible for funding, an applicant must propose to build or upgrade infrastructure to achieve speeds that meet the universal service objective of 50/10 Mbps. This requirement applies to projects that are built in areas that are not designated as SDCs. For projects in SDCs, applicants are encouraged to meet or exceed the 50/10 Mbps target speeds.
17. In addition, if a universal service objective project includes a transport component, the project must propose to offer wholesale open access services at each point of presence (PoP)³ along the transport route at speeds of 100 Mbps, 1 gigabit per second (Gbps), or 10 Gbps to be eligible for funding. If a project is selected, the funding recipient will be required to propose rates, terms, and conditions for wholesale open access services, subject to further Commission approval.⁴
18. Indigenous applicants are not required to offer wholesale open access services as part of their applications (see the “Indigenous applicants” section below).

Eligible geographic areas

19. Applications must serve geographic areas in Canada that are eligible for funding.

³ A PoP is a point in the network that connects the transport infrastructure to the local access infrastructure and can offer wholesale and/or retail transport services.

⁴ Once a project is selected for funding, the applicant must submit a completed statement of work detailing its project plan. This document must be approved by Commission decision before reimbursement claims can be submitted. It must include the project scope, schedule, budget, geographic coverage, technical specifications, milestones, obligations, and reporting requirements.

20. For universal service objective projects, eligible geographic areas include all underserved households in Canada that currently do not have access to broadband speeds of at least 50/10 Mbps and are not located in areas designated as SDCs.
21. For SDC projects, eligible geographic areas are limited to those identified as SDCs in appendices 1 and 2 to this notice and include all communities that have no connection to terrestrial telecommunications facilities.
22. The Commission will prioritize projects that target geographic areas that are not already forecasted to receive services that meet the universal service objective through any federal, provincial, territorial, or regional broadband funding programs. The Commission considers the coordination of funding efforts to be a key factor in ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources under the Broadband Fund.
23. Applicants proposing to serve SDCs are strongly encouraged to submit projects that target communities where the speed target of 50/10 Mbps is not yet available. Projects proposing service speeds that meet or exceed 50/10 Mbps and improve telecommunications services will be assessed more favourably by the Commission.
24. More information on eligible geographic areas, including maps, can be found in appendices 1 and 2 to this notice.

Special weighting of assessment criteria

25. The Commission will triage applications to ensure funding is allocated to the most impactful projects as quickly as possible and will prioritize projects that propose to serve the greatest number of households accordingly.
26. In addition, the Commission will apply special weighting to assessment criteria that promote the universal service objective of connecting 100% of Canadian households to fixed broadband Internet access service.
27. During the assessment phase, emphasis will be placed on cost per household, with projects demonstrating a lower cost per household being assessed more favourably.
28. Emphasis will also be placed on minimizing overbuild and funding overlap. Accordingly, the Commission will give preference to projects that do not target geographic areas that are already forecasted to receive services that will meet the universal service objective through other public funding programs.

Indigenous applicants

29. The Commission aims to help advance reconciliation and reduce barriers for Indigenous applicants⁵ in this call for applications. To assist Indigenous applicants in applying for and obtaining funding, the Commission set out the following measures in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328:

- an exemption from the requirement to provide retail and wholesale open access to funded transport infrastructure for Indigenous funding recipients;
- funding for up to two years of technical training for local Indigenous staff in communities that Indigenous applicants propose to serve as part of funded capital projects;
- upfront funding of up to 15% of the total approved funding for a capital project, to a maximum of \$750,000, for Indigenous funding recipients; and
- an exemption from the 10% holdback requirement for Indigenous funding recipients whose projects have approved funding of \$5 million or less.

30. More information on requirements specific to Indigenous applicants can be found in appendices 1 and 2 to this notice.

31. In addition to recent changes to the Broadband Fund aimed at supporting Indigenous applicants, the Commission has launched a [proceeding](#) to establish an Indigenous stream. This initiative seeks to amend the Broadband Fund policy to create a stream to help address the distinct needs of and challenges faced by Indigenous applicants in accessing and maintaining high-speed Internet and cellphone services.

Community outreach and engagement

32. Notification and outreach to all communities where an applicant proposes to provide service or build infrastructure is a crucial aspect of effective project planning and successful implementation. An applicant must provide evidence of its notification and outreach efforts to demonstrate that it has contacted each of the potentially impacted communities before the application deadline and that it has invited community representatives to respond.

33. The Commission also requires all applicants to engage meaningfully with Indigenous communities. This enables applicants to understand the potential impacts of their project on the rights and interests of Indigenous communities and groups, and to respond to any concerns they

⁵ An Indigenous applicant is an applicant that is:

- a profit or non-profit organization that is at least 51% owned and controlled by Indigenous peoples;
- a band council within the meaning of section 2 of the *Indian Act*; or
- an Indigenous government authority established by a self-government agreement or a comprehensive land claim agreement.

raise. If an applicant is responsive to concerns raised by representatives of Indigenous communities or groups and provides evidence of collaboration with potentially impacted Indigenous communities, the Commission will assess their application more favourably.

34. Where an applicant proposes to provide service or build infrastructure in an Indigenous community, it must provide evidence of consent from the representatives of that Indigenous community before the Commission provides its final funding approval.
35. More information and resources on community outreach and engagement can be found in appendices 1 and 2 to this notice. This includes instructions to assist applicants in identifying affected Indigenous communities and any applicable Aboriginal or treaty rights, template letters for consulting with affected communities, and examples of meaningful engagement.

Procedure

36. To assist it in the assessment of Broadband Fund applications, the Commission requires applicants to provide all the information requested in the Application Guide (Appendix 1) and the Technical and Program Details Guide (Appendix 2) for the type of project they are proposing. Applicants must (i) clearly demonstrate that their application includes the required information; and (ii) submit the appropriate completed application.
37. Except as set out below, the [*Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure*](#) (the Rules of Procedure) apply to Broadband Fund applications. Given the nature of Broadband Fund applications and the public interest in an efficient and effective application process, the Commission has determined that the rules applicable to Part 1 Telecommunications applications set out in sections 9, 22–27, and 32–33 of the [Rules of Procedure](#) shall not apply to Broadband Fund applications. The process for filing Broadband Fund applications is set out below.
 - (1) This procedure must be read in conjunction with the [Rules of Procedure](#) (with the exception of sections 9, 22–27, and 32–33) and related documents, which can be found on the Commission’s website at www.crtc.gc.ca, under “Statutes and regulations.”
 - (2) The deadline for filing applications is **13 August 2026 at 5 p.m. Vancouver time (8 p.m. Gatineau time)**. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the timely delivery of their application. The Commission will not consider late applications. Applicants must keep proof of the sending and receipt of each document for 60 days after the date on which the document is filed. In addition, there will be a process for applicants and communities affected by proposed projects to file additional documents related to community engagement after the deadline for filing applications has passed.
 - (3) Applications must be made using the [Online Intake System](#) on the Commission’s website.

- (4) Applicants must complete all relevant forms and templates included in the Online Intake System.
 - (5) Applications that are incomplete or that have not been filed in accordance with the process set out herein by the application deadline may not be accepted. The Commission may give an applicant the opportunity to clarify or correct inadvertent errors, deficiencies, or omissions in their application.
 - (6) Applicants must not amend their application or file any supplementary documents related to their application after the application deadline, unless the Commission requests that they do so or such documents are additional community engagement documents permitted to be filed after the application deadline.
 - (7) Applicants should refer to the Application Guide (Appendix 1) and the Technical and Program Details Guide (Appendix 2) for additional details and explanations to assist them in completing their application.
 - (8) The Commission will not make available for public inspection, whether on its website or otherwise, any Broadband Fund application for which confidentiality is claimed, except to the extent that the Commission has determined that disclosure is in the public interest, in accordance with section 39 of the Act, or as may otherwise be required by law. Details on confidentiality are available in the Technical and Program Details Guide (Appendix 2).
 - (9) The Commission will notify applicants by email that their application has been received and will provide a confirmation number. The Commission will not inform applicants of the status of their application prior to issuing funding decisions. Successful applicants will be notified when the Commission issues its funding decisions. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will be notified confidentially.
38. Interested persons should consult the [Broadband Fund](#) web page regularly to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information before filing their application. This web page provides access to all important information concerning the Broadband Fund. It also includes links to the Online Intake System and other relevant documents, instructions on how to contact the Commission, any additional or updated information on the application process, and any other clarifications. In addition, interested persons can subscribe to the Commission's RSS feed⁶ to be notified of any updates.

Secretary General

⁶ Rich Site Summary (RSS), or, as some refer to it, Real Simple Syndication, is an XML-based format for content distribution in real time.

Related documents

- *Broadband Fund policy review – New policy for funding capital projects*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-328, 12 December 2024
- *Call for comments – Broadband Fund policy review*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2023-89, 23 March 2023, as amended by Telecom Notices of Consultation CRTC 2023-89-1, 17 April 2023, and 2023-89-2, 25 July 2024
- *Modern telecommunications services – The path forward for Canada’s digital economy*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-496, 21 December 2016
- *Changes to the contribution regime*, Decision CRTC 2000-745, 30 November 2000

Appendix 1 to Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-63

Application Guide for the 9 April 2026 Call for Applications for the Broadband Fund

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A. Introduction

Canadians need access to reliable, affordable, and high-quality Internet and cellphone services for every part of their daily lives.

The CRTC launched its Broadband Fund in 2019. Through the Broadband Fund, the CRTC contributes to a broad effort by federal, provincial, and territorial governments to address the gap in connectivity in underserved rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Canada.

The Commission is launching its fourth call for applications to the Broadband Fund (Call 4). The Application Guide provides an overview of Call 4. Applicants are encouraged to review this guide along with the Technical and Program Details Guide when applying for funding from the Broadband Fund. Applicants must enter all required information directly in the [Online Intake System](#) and submit supporting documents. Together, this information will form an application.

The CRTC will not consider applications submitted under previous calls. A new application must be submitted for Call 4.

B. What is the objective of Call 4?

The objective of Call 4 is to increase the number of households with access to reliable high-speed Internet services that meet or exceed the universal service objective⁷ speed target of 50/10 megabits per second (Mbps). Eligible projects include both (i) universal service objective projects that provide fixed broadband Internet access to households in an underserved area that is not considered to be a satellite-dependent community;⁸ and (ii) satellite-dependent community projects that provide improved telecommunications services to satellite-dependent communities. See section 2.1.2 of the Technical and Program Details Guide for a detailed list of eligible project types.

Information on assessment criteria can be found in section 2 of the Technical and Program Details Guide.

C. How does the Broadband Fund work?

The Broadband Fund provides funding to projects that will improve access to reliable high-speed Internet services that meet or exceed the universal service objective speed target of 50/10 Mbps. These projects may not be financially viable without its support.

⁷ In 2016, the CRTC set the following universal service objective:

- all Canadians should have access to Internet speeds of at least 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload (50/10 Mbps) with unlimited data options; and
- all Canadians should have access to the latest generally deployed mobile technology, not only in homes and businesses but also along major transportation roads.

⁸ A satellite-dependent community is a community that relies on satellite transport capacity for one or more telecommunications services, such as voice, wireless (both fixed and mobile), and Internet services.

Funding model

Under the Broadband Fund, recipients are reimbursed for eligible expenses incurred during project implementation (see section 5 of the Technical and Program Details Guide). Expense claims must be submitted to and approved by the CRTC, after which funds will be released to the recipient. The CRTC will retain 10% of the amount of funding provided for each project, which it will disburse six months after project completion, provided that the project is completed to the CRTC's satisfaction and the recipient demonstrates that it is fulfilling the conditions of service.

Indigenous funding recipients are exempt from the 10% holdback requirement in the case of projects with approved funding of \$5 million or less.

Funding process

The funding process for the Broadband Fund follows a sequence of steps, with distinct responsibilities for applicants, recipients, and the CRTC. The process is designed to help ensure projects are evaluated fairly and efficiently.

Step 1: Application submission

Applicant: Prepares and submits a complete application using the [Online Intake System](#). Applications must be submitted by the deadline and include all required forms and supporting documents listed in the Technical and Program Details Guide. Applicants may update their application at any time before the deadline. They can also request clarification on the general application process or the information required. However, CRTC staff cannot advise applicants on how to best present their applications or assist applicants with completing their applications.

Step 2: Application evaluation

CRTC: Triages applications to help ensure funding is allocated to the most impactful projects as quickly as possible and prioritizes projects that propose to serve the greatest number of households.

Applications are evaluated in three stages:

1. **Eligibility:** The CRTC evaluates applications according to eligibility criteria described in section 2.1 of the Technical and Program Details Guide. Applications that do not meet all the eligibility criteria are not considered further.
2. **Assessment:** The CRTC assesses eligible applications according to assessment criteria described in section 2.2 of the Technical and Program Details Guide. An application that receives an unfavourable evaluation for one or more assessment criteria may not be further considered for funding.

The CRTC will also:

- Apply special weighting to assessment criteria that promote the universal service objective of connecting 100% of Canadian households to fixed broadband Internet access service.
 - Emphasize the assessment of cost per household, with projects demonstrating a lower cost per household being assessed more favourably.
 - Emphasize applications that minimize overbuild and funding overlap. The CRTC will give preference to projects that do not target geographic areas that are already forecasted to receive services that will meet the universal service objective through other public funding programs.
3. **Selection:** The CRTC selects projects from among the proposed projects deemed suitable for funding based on specific selection considerations described in section 2.3 of the Technical and Program Details Guide.

Step 3: Conditional funding decision

CRTC: Issues a conditional funding decision for each selected project, approving it in principle and setting requirements the applicant must meet before final approval is granted. Successful applicants are notified when the CRTC issues its funding decisions. Applicants whose projects are not selected are notified confidentially when their application is no longer being considered.

Applicant: If selected, prepares a detailed statement of work that includes full project details, including scope, timeline, budget, technical specifications, milestones, and reporting obligations. CRTC staff is available to work with applicants on their draft statement of work.

Step 4: Final funding decision

CRTC: Reviews the statement of work and issues a final funding decision if the statement of work is approved. This confirms the applicant as a recipient of funding.

If the CRTC does not approve a statement of work, it provides reasons for not doing so to the applicant. The applicant may submit a new statement of work for consideration.

Step 5: Project implementation and reporting

Recipient: Implements the project and submits progress reports and claims for reimbursement quarterly. Also aims to complete its capital project and have service available within three years following the conditional funding decision.

CRTC: Tracks progress, reviews reports, ensures compliance with funding conditions, and approves eligible expense claims.

Central Fund Administrator: The administrator of the fund will release funds to the recipient for approved expense claims after the CRTC directs it to do so.

Step 6: Project completion and holdback release

Recipient: Submits a project completion report detailing services offered and milestones met, any delays, and any requests by service providers or non-carriers for access to funded transport infrastructure.

CRTC: Reviews completion report and approves the release of the 10% holdback, where applicable, once all conditions and obligations have been met.

D. How do I determine if an application or a project is eligible for funding?

Before starting an application, use the self-assessment tool below to check whether your project would be considered eligible for funding. If you answer “yes” to every question, your project may be eligible to receive funding. Please note this is not an exhaustive list of eligibility criteria. A complete list of eligibility criteria, along with examples, can be found in section 2.1 of the Technical and Program Details Guide.

Eligible project type

Is your project one of the following?

- **a universal service objective fixed broadband project:** your project proposes to deliver new or improved wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service that meets or exceeds 50/10 Mbps directly to households in an underserved area that is not considered to be a satellite-dependent community.
- **a satellite-dependent community operational expense project:** your project proposes to increase satellite transport capacity to improve telecommunications services beyond the highest speeds currently available in a satellite-dependent community.
- **a satellite-dependent community capital project:** your project proposes to build or upgrade earth station equipment and/or access infrastructure to improve telecommunications services in a satellite-dependent community.

Project location

Does your project serve an eligible geographic area, as identified for Call 4 (see sections 2.1.3(a), 2.1.4(a), and 2.1.5(a) of the Technical and Program Details Guide)?

For universal service objective fixed broadband projects: does your project area include households that do not have 50/10 Mbps broadband Internet access service?

For satellite-dependent community projects (both types): does your project area serve satellite-dependent communities?

Applicant eligibility

Is your organization, or your applicant group, one of the following?

- a corporation (for-profit or not-for-profit) incorporated in Canada;
- a provincial, territorial, or municipal entity (or a public body established by law and wholly owned by one of these governments);
- an Indigenous government or band council (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, including self-governing nations); or
- a partnership, joint venture, or consortium made up of any one of the above types (an applicant group)?

Is your organization, or at least one member of your applicant group, eligible to operate as a Canadian carrier under the *Telecommunications Act*?

Is your organization, or are the members of your applicant group, financially solvent? Can you/they provide independently prepared financial statements for the last two fiscal years?

Does your organization, or a member of your applicant group or a partner/supplier you have identified and have a signed letter of intent or equivalent with, have at least three years' experience building and operating broadband infrastructure in Canada?⁹

Project contingency

Is your application financially and technically independent of other applications and/or unsecured funding? This means it is not dependent on other projects or funding that has not yet been secured.

E. How do I apply for funding?

Broadband Fund applications must be filed in accordance with the [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure](#) (the Rules of Procedure). Given the nature of the Broadband Fund, sections 9, 22–27, and 32–33 of the Rules of Procedure do not apply to Broadband Fund applications.

The process for filing Broadband Fund applications is set out below:

1. This procedure must be read in conjunction with the [Rules of Procedure](#) (with the exception of sections 9, 22–27, and 32–33) and related documents, which can be found on the CRTC's website at www.crtc.gc.ca, under “Statutes and regulations”.
2. The deadline for filing applications is **13 August 2026 at 5 p.m. Vancouver time (8 p.m. Gatineau time)**. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the timely delivery of their applications. The CRTC will not consider late applications. Applicants must keep proof of the sending and receipt of each document for 60 days after the date on which the document is filed. In addition, there will be a process for applicants and communities affected by proposed projects to file additional documents related to community engagement after the deadline for filing applications has passed.

⁹ An applicant group can use combined experience to meet this criterion. For example, one member can have the required experience building broadband infrastructure in Canada while another member has the required experience operating such infrastructure.

3. Applications must be made using the [Online Intake System](#) on the CRTC's website.
4. Applicants must complete all forms and templates included in the [Online Intake System](#).
5. Applications that are incomplete or that have not been filed in accordance with the process set out herein by the application deadline may not be accepted. The CRTC may give an applicant the opportunity to clarify or correct inadvertent errors, deficiencies, or omissions in its application.
6. Applicants must not amend their application or file any supplementary documents related to their application with the CRTC after the application deadline, unless the CRTC requests that they do so or such documents are additional community engagement documents permitted to be filed after the application deadline.
7. Applicants should refer to the Application Guide (Appendix 1) and the Technical and Program Details Guide (Appendix 2) for additional details and explanations to assist them in completing their application.
8. The CRTC will not make available for public inspection, whether on its website or otherwise, any Broadband Fund application for which confidentiality is claimed, except to the extent that the CRTC has determined that disclosure is in the public interest in accordance with section 39 of the *Telecommunications Act*, or as may otherwise be required by law. Details on confidentiality are available in the Technical and Program Details Guide (Appendix 2).
9. The CRTC will notify applicants by email that their application has been received and will provide a confirmation number. The CRTC will not inform applicants of the status of their application prior to issuing funding decisions. Successful applicants will be notified when the CRTC issues its funding decisions. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will be notified confidentially.

Applicants should consult the [Broadband Fund](#) web page regularly to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information when filing their applications. This web page provides access to all important information concerning the Broadband Fund. It also includes links to the [Online Intake System](#) and other relevant documents, instructions on how to contact the CRTC, any additional or updated information on the application process, and any other clarifications. In addition, applicants can subscribe to the [CRTC's RSS feed](#)¹⁰ to be notified of any updates.

F. What reference documents and tools are available for me to apply?

Several documents and tools are available to help applicants prepare their submission under Call 4:

¹⁰ Rich Site Summary (RSS), or, as some refer to it, Real Simple Syndication, is an XML-based format for content distribution in real time.

1. ***Broadband Fund policy review – New policy for funding capital projects, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-328*** (the Broadband Fund policy) – The official policy outlining the Broadband Fund’s objectives and the evaluation criteria. It is the authoritative source on the Broadband Fund policy; if the Application Guide, the Technical and Program Details Guide, or any other sources differ, the Broadband Fund policy takes precedence. The Broadband Fund policy also covers other key areas, including administration, the application process, project-specific criteria for universal service objective and satellite-dependent community projects, selection considerations, confidentiality, funding conditions, and distribution of funding.
2. **Application Guide** – An overview of the Broadband Fund and Call 4, including its objectives, the general process, and available supports. It also highlights considerations for eligibility and provides information on additional supports for Indigenous applicants as well as guidance on community outreach and engagement.
3. **Technical and Program Details Guide** – Provides detailed instructions and policy interpretations – beyond what is provided in the Broadband Fund policy and the Application Guide – explaining what applicants must demonstrate and how to present the required information.
4. **Online Intake System** – The secure online portal through which applications must be completed, managed, and submitted.
5. **Eligibility Mapping Tool** – An interactive tool that applicants must use to create their maps to apply to the Broadband Fund. The mapping tool shows existing broadband coverage and funding across Canada and allows applicants to create coverage shapes, sites, and routes. Applicants must subsequently download their completed map. Applicants can also use this tool to determine the number of eligible underserved households under their proposed coverage area.
6. **Call 4 Reference Map** – A map showing geographic areas that are eligible for funding under Call 4. The map also shows census subdivisions and communities, including official language minority communities, which will assist applicants in fulfilling their community outreach and engagement obligations. Applicants can use this map to view eligible areas and areas that are already forecasted to receive broadband funding, which may render them ineligible as a result.

G. If I am an Indigenous applicant and my application is successful, what supports will I have?

The CRTC aims to help advance reconciliation and reduce barriers for Indigenous funding recipients. Indigenous applicants are invited to self-identify during the application process in order to benefit from the following measures if their project is selected for funding:

- **Reduced barriers:** Indigenous recipients face fewer requirements, including an exemption from the requirement to provide retail and wholesale open access to funded transport infrastructure.
- **Upfront funding:** Indigenous recipients may receive upfront funding of up to 15% of the total approved funding for a capital project (capped at \$750,000) to cover costs for equipment, materials, or expertise once a project has received final funding approval.
- **Technical training support:** Funding is available for up to two years of initial technical training for local Indigenous staff in communities that Indigenous applicants propose to serve. Applicants must provide justification for the number of staff that need training in each community.
- **Holdback exemption:** Indigenous recipients are exempt from the 10% holdback requirement in the case of projects with approved funding of \$5 million or less.

These measures are in addition to the general requirement that, where an applicant proposes to provide service or build infrastructure in an Indigenous community, it must engage meaningfully with that Indigenous community. Further, the applicant must obtain proof of consent for the project from representatives of that community before the CRTC provides its final funding approval.

More information on each of these measures can be found in sections 2.1.4(b), 2.1.4(c), 3.1, 5.1, and 5.3 of the Technical and Program Details Guide.

H. How should I engage with communities affected by my proposed project?

Applicants are required to notify and conduct outreach to all communities they propose to serve. This outreach is a crucial aspect of effective project planning and successful implementation. As explained in detail in sections 2.1.1(e) and 2.2.1(d) of the Technical and Program Details Guide, an applicant must, among other things, identify and list all communities that will be served by the proposed project or that are located where the proposed infrastructure will be built. The following guidance and tools are provided by the CRTC to support applicants in contacting communities and identifying Indigenous communities and groups that may be affected by their proposed projects.

Applicants should use the [Call 4 Reference Map](#) to identify all communities that may be affected by their proposed project, including:

- Indigenous communities;
- communities that will directly benefit from receiving services; and
- communities where infrastructure is being built (e.g., roadside installations or towers) that would not receive new or improved service as a result of that construction.

Applicants should also consult the [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System \(ATRIS\)](#). ATRIS helps applicants to identify and obtain contact information for representatives of Indigenous communities and provides information on any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights in the proposed project area. Applicants can use the information obtained from ATRIS to engage with Indigenous communities in a meaningful and informed manner.

How to appropriately contact communities

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the applicable level of elected governance:

- First, contact the local government (e.g., town, city, municipality, or equivalent), where applicable.
- If local government does not exist or is not responsive, contact the regional government (e.g., county or equivalent), where applicable.
- For areas with no local or regional governance, contact the provincial electoral district representative.
- For Indigenous communities, contact the First Nations, Métis, or Inuit government representative, as appropriate.

Once an applicant is ready to engage with a community, they should send an outreach letter to community representatives, as identified above. The outreach letter should provide community representatives with details about the proposed project, including information about the proposed service and projected timelines. The letter should also provide contact information and allow sufficient time for community representatives to discuss the proposed project with the applicant.

Evidence of engagement or support could include letters from elected officials, minutes from meetings or calls, or community investment (financial or otherwise) in the project.

To support you in your notification and outreach efforts, the CRTC has developed [community outreach template letters](#) that can be used when first contacting affected communities. Use of the template is not mandatory, but applicants should, at a minimum:

- notify key community representatives of project details early, openly, and respectfully, identifying the proposed project and providing key project details;
- invite community representatives to discuss the proposed project with the applicant;
- request information regarding Aboriginal or treaty rights that may be adversely impacted; and
- provide the CRTC's contact information in case a community wishes to discuss the proposed project directly with the CRTC.

Guidance for engaging with Indigenous communities

- **Start early, using a distinctions-based approach:** Engage with Indigenous communities as soon as possible to understand potential impacts of the proposed project and respond to any concerns. Engage in a manner that respects the unique rights, interests, and circumstances of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. Engagement should respect the community's preferred or established approach.
- **Take a broad view of potential impacts:** A project may impact an Indigenous community's Aboriginal or treaty rights, even if the applicant is not proposing to directly serve that community. These can be identified through the [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System \(ATRIS\)](#).
- **Respect the community's desired level of engagement and capacity to participate:** Outreach should be conducted in the format and timeframe requested by the community and should include an invitation for community representatives to discuss their priorities and concerns.
- **Obtain consent:** Projects that propose to provide service or build infrastructure in an Indigenous community require written consent from the community's representatives before the CRTC will issue a final funding decision. While proof of consent is required before final funding approval, applications that include this evidence at the time of submission will be assessed more favourably. Written consent can be provided in any form chosen by the Indigenous community: e.g., a letter, a formal resolution (such as a band council resolution), an agreement or a memorandum of understanding, or a transcript of oral consent (such as minutes from a meeting). If proof of consent is not available at the time the application is submitted, the CRTC may issue a conditional funding decision requiring the applicant to obtain this before it issues the final funding decision.
- **Consider community benefits:** The CRTC encourages projects that propose to provide economic or employment opportunities in Indigenous communities, or co-investment or co-ownership arrangements with them. Projects that show evidence of collaboration and support with Indigenous communities will be considered more favourably by the CRTC.

Duty to consult

Applicants must consider impacts that their proposed project may have on established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights. Applicants should engage with Indigenous communities to identify any potential impacts on established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights, and any accommodation measures that have been or will be implemented, along with plans for future engagement.

In support of this and as part of the application process, applicants must:

1. indicate whether the proposed project presents a risk of adversely affecting any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights; and
2. demonstrate how this view was informed.

As rights holders, Indigenous communities are best positioned to identify any impacts on their rights and advise on potential measures to avoid them. If a risk is identified at the application stage, applicants must provide details on consultations undertaken and any accommodation measures that have been or will be implemented as a result. The CRTC may request additional information during the application stage.

Applicants must also sign a declaration confirming their understanding that if a duty to consult arises, they must conduct all necessary consultations to the Crown's satisfaction before the CRTC publishes a final funding decision.

Final funding decisions include a condition that, if a risk of adverse impact becomes known following the approval of a statement of work, the recipient must notify the CRTC. Release of any further funding is contingent on demonstrating that necessary consultations and accommodations were conducted to the Crown's satisfaction.

I. How will applications be selected for funding?

Once applications are evaluated, the CRTC identifies a subset of projects that meet the eligibility and assessment criteria. From this subset, the CRTC selects projects for funding, taking various policy considerations into account.

When selecting projects for funding, the CRTC considers the following factors:

- **Efficient use of funds:** The CRTC considers the amount of funding required, when the funds should be distributed, and the amount of funding available in the Broadband Fund. The CRTC will also consider whether the project minimizes overlap with other projects or sources of funding.
- **Projects in multiple regions of Canada:** The CRTC may consider how funding can be distributed across multiple regions of Canada, so that more than one region or a small number of regions benefits.
- **Social considerations:** The CRTC may consider whether the project proposes to serve Indigenous communities or official language minority communities, or whether the applicant is Indigenous.

Projects that demonstrate strong alignment with these considerations and show evidence of community support are more likely to be selected. Applicants will be notified whether or not their project is selected for funding.

J. Who can I contact about the application process or the status of my application?

The CRTC is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal that regulates the communications sector in the public interest. It must follow the administrative law principles that apply to statutory tribunals. To ensure fairness, contact between applicants and CRTC staff is limited.

- **Before the application submission deadline:** Applicants may request clarification on the application process or the information required. CRTC staff cannot provide advice on how to complete an application. To submit a question to the CRTC, please visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) web page. Please note that responses may be published (with no identifying details) on the Broadband Fund web page.
- **After the application submission deadline:** CRTC staff can no longer respond to applicants' questions after the application submission deadline.
- **After application evaluation:** Applicants do not need to request updates on the status of their application. The CRTC will contact both successful and unsuccessful applicants directly. Successful projects will be announced through the publication of a conditional funding decision, and applicants whose projects are not selected will be notified confidentially.

If you have questions related to the Broadband Fund, visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) web page and submit your inquiry using the online contact form provided there.

Appendix 2 to Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-63

Technical and Program Details Guide for the 9 April 2026 Call for Applications for the Broadband Fund

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1. Introduction

The Technical and Program Details Guide (this Guide) provides detailed instructions and policy interpretations for the Broadband Fund’s fourth call for applications (Call 4). It explains what applicants must demonstrate and how they should present required information in their applications to meet the evaluation criteria, which include eligibility requirements, assessment criteria, and selection considerations.

Applicants should review this Guide alongside the Application Guide and the [Mapping Guide](#) when preparing an application. The Application Guide provides an overview of the Broadband Fund and Call 4, including its objectives, the overall process to apply for and receive funding, and the supports provided to Indigenous applicants to help advance reconciliation and reduce barriers. It also provides details on how to apply (section E), lists resources to help applicants complete their applications (section F), and provides guidance on engaging communities affected by a proposed project (section H).

The [Mapping Guide](#) provides detailed instructions on how to use the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#), which is an external tool created by [Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada](#).¹¹ This tool must be used to create a map of a proposed project, which is required to apply to the Broadband Fund.

To apply for funding from the Broadband Fund, applicants must enter all required information directly in the [Online Intake System](#) and submit a project map along with supporting documents. Together, this information makes up an application. The application should demonstrate how a proposed project meets the evaluation criteria. Applicants must also provide additional details that are not directly tied to eligibility, such as a high-level project description and timelines. Applications that are missing any required information may be considered incomplete and may not be assessed further. The CRTC will not consider applications submitted under previous calls. A new application must be submitted for Call 4.

2. Evaluation of applications

The CRTC uses evaluation criteria to assess applications and identify proposed projects that could contribute to meeting the universal service objective¹² and have the most positive impact on Canadians.

In Call 4, the CRTC will prioritize projects that target geographic areas that are not forecasted to receive services that meet the universal service objective through any federal, provincial,

¹¹ The [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) identifies areas that do not have high-speed broadband Internet service, or funding for such service, with the label “Broadband eligible”. Areas that already have high-speed broadband Internet service, or funding for such service, are labelled “Broadband ineligible”. These labels will assist applicants in considering existing funding and the efficient use of funds prior to applying, increasing the likelihood that an application will be successful.

¹² In 2016, the CRTC set the following universal service objective:

- all Canadians should have access to Internet speeds of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload (50/10 Mbps) with unlimited data options; and
- all Canadians should have access to the latest generally deployed mobile technology, not only in homes and businesses but also along major transportation roads.

territorial, or regional broadband funding programs. The CRTC will also prioritize projects that propose to serve the greatest number of households.

2.1 Eligibility criteria

In the first stage of evaluation, the CRTC verifies that an application is eligible for funding. Eligibility criteria include both criteria that apply to all project types and additional criteria that apply only to the specific project type proposed in the application. An application that fails to meet one or more eligibility criteria will not be considered further.

An applicant must clearly demonstrate, with supporting evidence, how their application meets each of the applicable eligibility criteria.

2.1.1 General eligibility criteria

The following eligibility criteria apply to all applications.

2.1.1(a) Applicant eligibility – Eligible applicant types and roles and responsibilities

An application may be submitted on behalf of a single applicant or an applicant group. To be eligible for funding, an applicant must demonstrate that it is one of the following:

- (i) a corporation, either for-profit or not-for-profit, incorporated under the laws of Canada, a Canadian province, or a Canadian territory;
- (ii) a Canadian provincial, territorial, or municipal entity, including a public sector body that is established by statute or by regulation or that is wholly owned by a Canadian provincial, territorial, or municipal government;
- (iii) a band council within the meaning of section 2 of the *Indian Act*, or an Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis) government as established by a self-government agreement or a comprehensive land claim agreement; or
- (iv) a partnership, joint venture, or consortium that is composed of the parties identified in (i), (ii), and/or (iii) above (an applicant group)

An applicant group must describe the roles and responsibilities that each group member will have in managing and implementing the project. For universal service objective fixed broadband projects and satellite-dependent community capital projects, an applicant group must identify which entity will:

- own the funded network assets, if applicable;
- build the network, if applicable; and
- operate the network.

The following are **not eligible** as applicants or as members of an applicant group: individuals, federal departments, agencies, boards, commissions, Crown corporations, and special operating agencies.

How to meet 2.1.1(a):

An applicant that is a Canadian corporation must include its corporate registration number in the [Online Intake System](#).

An applicant group must describe the roles and responsibilities of each member. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- contractual arrangements, partnership agreements, or other legal documents that create the applicant group and describe the various roles and responsibilities of each member;
- a short description of the roles and responsibilities of each member of the applicant group, including identifying, as applicable, which entity will:
 - own the network assets;
 - build the network; and
 - operate the network.

2.1.1(b) Applicant eligibility – Eligible to operate as a Canadian carrier

An applicant, or at least one member of an applicant group, must demonstrate that it is eligible to operate as a Canadian carrier under section 16 of the [Telecommunications Act](#).

2.1.1(c) Applicant eligibility – Financially solvent

An applicant or each member of an applicant group, except for an applicant that is a provincial or territorial government, must adequately demonstrate its financial solvency and reliability by providing independently prepared financial statements for the last two years (see [section 8](#) for definitions of “solvent” and “reliable”).

How to meet 2.1.1(c):

An applicant, except for provincial and territorial governments,¹³ must confirm that it, or each member of the applicant group, is financially solvent and reliable in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles of Canada. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- a copy of independently prepared financial statements for the last two fiscal years that have been audited, reviewed, or compiled (Notice to Reader). Each set should contain the

¹³ Financial solvency and reliability are assumed for provincial and territorial governments.

balance sheet, income statement, cash flow statement, and financial statement notes. The financial statements must include:

- the auditor’s report and opinion on the financial statements if audited;
- the practitioner’s report and conclusion if reviewed; and
- the compilation engagement report if compiled.

Where possible, applicants should submit each fiscal year’s financial statements as separate files.

2.1.1(d) Applicant eligibility – Experience building and operating broadband infrastructure

An applicant must demonstrate that:

- it, or at least one member of the applicant group, has experience building and operating broadband infrastructure in Canada for a minimum of three years; or
- it will rely on a supplier or contractor that is an entity as described in [section 2.1.1\(a\)](#) of this Guide and has experience building and operating broadband infrastructure in Canada for a minimum of three years.

An applicant group can use combined experience to meet this eligibility criterion. For example, one member of an applicant group can have the required minimum of three years of experience building broadband infrastructure in Canada, while another member can have the required minimum of three years of experience operating broadband infrastructure in Canada (see [section 8](#) for definitions of “building broadband infrastructure” and “operating broadband infrastructure”).

If an applicant will rely on a third-party entity such as a supplier, contractor, or equivalent to meet this eligibility requirement (the entity), it will be required to (i) identify the entity that will provide the required experience, (ii) describe how the entity meets the eligibility criteria, and (iii) provide a letter of intent or equivalent confirming the entity’s commitment to the proposed project.

How to meet 2.1.1(d):

An applicant must provide evidence that it has three or more years of experience in both building and operating broadband infrastructure in Canada, either individually or in combination across applicant group members. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- for each experience requirement (building and operating), identify the entity that will provide the required experience (i.e., the applicant itself, a member of the applicant group, or a third-party supplier or contractor);
- a description of broadband infrastructure project(s) it has built or operated in Canada, which demonstrates that the applicant has at least three years of experience. Examples should specify the following information:

- project names and locations;
- project start and end dates;
- scope of work (e.g., fibre deployment, wireless towers, backhaul, or last mile);
- technologies used (e.g., fibre, fixed wireless, LTE);
- operational status (e.g., in service, under maintenance, in design, in implementation phase);
- the number of customers currently served; and
- the type of services offered; and
- if relying on a third-party entity to meet this eligibility requirement:
 - the entity’s contact information;
 - a description of the contractor’s experience building and operating broadband infrastructure in Canada for at least three years;
 - whether the contractor will build and/or operate the infrastructure; and
 - a letter of intent or equivalent confirming the contractor’s commitment to provide services for the project.

2.1.1(e) Project eligibility – Outreach

To be eligible to receive funding from the Broadband Fund, an applicant must:

- identify and list all affected communities, clearly indicating which of these communities, if any, are Indigenous (see [section 8](#) for the definition of “affected community”);
- provide evidence of notification and outreach efforts to demonstrate that it has attempted to contact each affected community before the application deadline and has invited community representatives to respond (see [section 8](#) for a definition of “community representative”);
- identify any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights that the proposed project may impact;
- indicate whether the applicant considers that the proposed project presents a risk of adversely affecting any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights; and
- demonstrate how its consideration of established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights was informed, describing the specific efforts it has made to identify potential impacts to Aboriginal or treaty rights.

Each applicant will be required to commit to undertaking any further outreach or engagement efforts that the CRTC considers necessary. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, obligations regarding engagement with Indigenous communities and groups that are published in any CRTC funding decision.

This eligibility criterion focuses on demonstrating that outreach has been undertaken or attempted. The quality and outcome of the engagement and the involvement of the affected community will also be considered as part of the CRTC's assessment.

How to meet 2.1.1(e):

An applicant should consult the following resources to help meet this criterion:

- Application Guide:
 - Section F provides a list of reference documents, including the Call 4 Reference Map, which an applicant can use to identify the communities that may be affected by a proposed project; and
 - Section H provides information on how to identify and contact affected communities, engage with Indigenous communities, and consider whether the proposed project presents a risk of adversely affecting any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights;
- [Step 4, Community engagement](#): a dedicated web page with helpful information and tools to assist an applicant to meet the outreach and engagement criteria;
- [Community outreach template letters](#): customizable template letters are available to assist an applicant with the engagement process and provide affected communities or groups with the means to directly contact the applicant and/or the CRTC about a proposed project; and
- [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System \(ATRIS\)](#): a web-based geographic information system that helps an applicant to identify Indigenous communities, as well as any treaties, claims, or assertions in effect in the proposed project area.

An applicant must provide evidence that it has notified and reached out to all affected communities. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- a list of all affected communities, identifying:
 - the community's name;
 - the province or territory;
 - any Indigenous and/or official language minority communities; and

- any potential risks to Aboriginal or treaty rights; and
- evidence of notification and outreach efforts, such as outreach letters, telephone calls, in-person or virtual meetings, presentations made to community representatives, etc.

Note that a single outreach activity (for example, a letter sent to an elected body representing multiple communities) may apply to more than one affected community, but each community must be identified.

2.1.1(f) Project eligibility – Contingency

To be eligible to receive funding, an application cannot be contingent on factors such as (i) funding for another application under the Broadband Fund or (ii) funding from another program that has not been secured by the time the application is submitted. Each application must be technologically and financially independent and will be assessed on its own merit.

How to meet 2.1.1(f):

An applicant must confirm in the [Online Intake System](#) that its application is not contingent on any other factors.

2.1.2 Eligible project types

In Call 4, the following project types are eligible for funding:

- universal service objective fixed broadband projects;
- satellite-dependent community operational expense projects; and
- satellite-dependent community capital projects.

An applicant is required to demonstrate in its application that it meets the eligibility criteria applicable to its proposed project type.

The following project types are **ineligible** in Call 4:

- universal service objective mobile (cellular) projects that provide new or improved mobile services to households and/or along transportation roads; and
- satellite-dependent community capital transport projects to connect a satellite-dependent community to an existing terrestrial network, eliminating the dependency on satellites for telecommunications services.

2.1.2(a) Project eligibility – Universal service objective fixed broadband projects

A universal service objective fixed broadband project builds or upgrades broadband network infrastructure and uses fixed broadband technology to provide wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service to underserved households. Underserved households are those that do not currently have access to broadband Internet service at the universal service objective speed of

50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload (50/10 Mbps). A proposed project must provide new or improved Internet service that meets or exceeds 50/10 Mbps directly to end-users as a result of a fixed broadband project.

Fixed broadband infrastructure includes all the equipment and material required to connect eligible households to transport infrastructure. It also includes any new or upgraded transport infrastructure that is directly required to connect eligible households and to enable the project to meet the universal service objective. Customer premise equipment is not eligible for funding.

Projects must be located in eligible geographic areas. See [sections 2.1.3\(a\)](#) and [2.1.4\(a\)](#) for a full description of geographic eligibility.

2.1.2(b) Project eligibility – Satellite-dependent community operational expense project

A satellite-dependent community operational expense project receives funding for operational expenses to increase satellite transport capacity and improve the telecommunications services offered in a satellite-dependent community beyond the highest service speeds currently available in the area. Eligible operational expenses are limited to costs directly related to covering operational costs to increase satellite transport capacity for up to five years and must be associated with improving the speed, capacity, and quality of telecommunications services in comparison to the level of service already provided in the area.

Projects must be located in eligible geographic areas. See section [2.1.5\(a\)](#) for a full description of geographic eligibility.

2.1.2(c) Project eligibility – Satellite-dependent community capital project

A satellite-dependent community capital project builds or upgrades earth station equipment and/or access infrastructure to improve telecommunications services. An application must demonstrate how the proposed project will improve service quality, speed, or reliability for the community.

Projects must be located in eligible geographic areas. See section [2.1.5\(a\)](#) for a full description of geographic eligibility.

2.1.3 Specific eligibility criteria for universal service objective projects

The following eligibility criteria only apply to universal service objective projects.

2.1.3(a) Fixed broadband project – Eligibility criterion – Geographic eligibility

An applicant's proposed project must serve one or more households that do not have terrestrial service that meets the universal service objective for broadband Internet access service within Canada (i.e., eligible geographic areas). An applicant may submit more than one application in response to a call for applications. If an applicant submits more than one application, it should not propose to serve the same geographic areas in its different applications.

[Eligible geographic areas](#) are shown as road segments on the CRTC's updated map and datasets for Call 4.¹⁴ These tools are current as of the date of publication on the website and are provided for reference purposes only. Applicants are responsible for conducting their own due diligence to confirm that the geographic areas they propose to serve remain eligible. The CRTC may also rely on the most current data available, whether public or confidential, as it is received and verified to evaluate applications in order to avoid overbuilding and ensure the efficient use of funds.

How to meet 2.1.3(a):

An applicant should consult the following resources to help meet this criterion:

- [Call 4 Reference Map](#): a map showing geographic areas that are eligible for funding under Call 4; and
- [Mapping Guide](#): detailed instructions on how to use the Eligibility Mapping Tool, which is an external tool created by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

An applicant must propose to serve one or more households in an eligible geographic area. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- a map of the proposed project area, generated using the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#), identifying:
 - sites;
 - routes; and
 - coverage.

Note that the attributes in the mapping file must match the Site and Route IDs identified in the [Online Intake System](#).

2.1.3(b) Fixed broadband project – Eligibility criterion – Minimum service levels

An applicant must commit to meeting minimum service levels for fixed broadband Internet access services. For Call 4, projects must provide at least 50/10 Mbps service delivered directly to end-users.

¹⁴ Eligible road segments are based on datasets developed jointly with Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada and published in the National Broadband Data (NBD) as NBD Roads. Households under proposed coverage are calculated using Pseudo-Household Demographic Distribution (PHH) data. The datasets, detailed descriptions, and data dictionaries can be found at their respective Open Government pages.

2.1.3(c) Fixed broadband project – Eligibility criterion – Pricing and affordability for wireline or wireless broadband Internet access services

To be eligible for funding, an applicant must commit to meeting the pricing and affordability requirements set out below for the wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service packages that it will offer.

An applicant will be prompted to meet this commitment in the [Online Intake System](#). If the applicant receives conditional funding approval, it will be required to propose, in its statement of work, wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service packages with rates, speeds, and data allowances that meet the following commitments:

- provide several wireline and/or wireless broadband Internet access service packages with rates, speeds, and data allowances that address different customer needs, including at least one package that is suitable for low-income households;
- provide these packages at rates that are comparable to:
 - the lowest rates already provided by the applicant in the proposed project’s province or territory; or
 - the rates offered in one of the major urban centres (to be identified by the CRTC during the statement of work development phase) in the proposed project’s province or territory; and
- provide these packages at a rate no higher, and at a speed and with a data allowance no lower, than the original proposal, for a minimum of five years following the project completion date.

An applicant can propose to provide rates that match the lowest rates it already provides in its proposed project’s province or territory. If the applicant proposes to match its own lowest rates, it must continue to match those rates for a minimum of five years following the project completion date. This means that if the applicant chooses to match its own service packages, it cannot increase the proposed rates or reduce the proposed service speeds and data allowances approved in the statement of work by adjusting the comparable packages.

See [section 4.1.1\(b\)](#) for information on project and service requirements considered in the development of the statement of work.

2.1.4 Transport infrastructure required for universal service objective projects

The following eligibility criteria only apply to universal service objective projects that include transport infrastructure.

An applicant who intends to build or upgrade terrestrial transport infrastructure as part of a fixed broadband project must ensure that its proposed project directly supports the delivery of high-speed Internet to underserved households. Funding is only available for transport infrastructure if it is part of a universal service objective project.

2.1.4(a) Transport infrastructure – Eligibility criterion – Geographic eligibility

An applicant requesting funding for terrestrial transport infrastructure must propose to build a universal service objective project in an eligible geographic area (see [section 2.1.3\(a\)](#)). The proposed terrestrial transport infrastructure must directly support the building or upgrading of broadband infrastructure to provide universal-service-objective-level services to underserved households.

The applicant should use existing transport infrastructure where possible and should propose to build or upgrade transport infrastructure only if it is unable to rely on existing transport infrastructure.

How to meet 2.1.4(a):

An applicant should consult the following resources to help meet this criterion:

- [Call 4 Reference Map](#): a map showing geographic areas that are eligible for funding under Call 4; and
- [Mapping Guide](#): detailed instructions on how to use the Eligibility Mapping Tool, which is an external tool created by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

An applicant must propose to serve one or more households in an eligible geographic area. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- a map of the proposed project area, generated using the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#), identifying:
 - sites;
 - routes; and
 - coverage.

Note that the attributes in the mapping file must match the Site and Route IDs in the [Online Intake System](#).

If the project cannot use existing transport infrastructure, the applicant must provide a short description of the current state of transport infrastructure in the area and explain why using that infrastructure is not feasible or sufficient to support the proposed project (e.g., the existing transport provider has no available capacity).

2.1.4(b) Transport infrastructure – Eligibility criterion – Wholesale open access to funded transport infrastructure

To be eligible for funding, an applicant that proposes to build or upgrade transport infrastructure as part of a universal service objective project must commit to offering wholesale open access service packages.

An applicant will be prompted to meet this commitment in the [Online Intake System](#). If the applicant receives conditional funding approval, it will be required to propose, in its statement of work, wholesale open access service packages with rates, speeds, and data allowances that meet the following commitments:

- dedicated wholesale open access to all funded transport infrastructure at each of the proposed new or upgraded points of presence along the proposed transport route at one of the following speeds:
 - 100 Mbps;
 - 1 gigabit per second (Gbps); or
 - 10 Gbps; and
- each point of presence along the transport route must also comply with the open access requirements.

Existing regulatory obligations (e.g., the requirement to file tariffs for wholesale open access services that are not forborne from regulation) will apply to any funded project to build or upgrade transport infrastructure.

Indigenous applicants are not required to make this commitment in their applications.

See [section 4.1.1\(c\)](#) for information on project and service requirements considered in the development of the statement of work.

2.1.4(c) Transport infrastructure – Eligibility criterion – Retail open access to funded transport infrastructure

An applicant that proposes to build or upgrade transport infrastructure as part of a universal service objective project must commit to providing retail open access to that infrastructure.

Existing regulatory obligations (e.g., the requirement to file tariffs for retail open access services that are not forborne from regulation) will apply to any funded project to build or upgrade transport infrastructure.

Indigenous applicants are not required to make this commitment in their applications.

2.1.5 Specific eligibility criteria for satellite-dependent community projects

The following eligibility criteria only apply to satellite-dependent community projects, including both operational expense and capital projects.

2.1.5(a) Satellite-dependent community project – Eligibility criterion – Geographic eligibility

An applicant’s proposed satellite-dependent community project must cover an eligible geographic area that is considered a satellite-dependent community (see [section 8](#) for a definition of “satellite-dependent community project”). An applicant may submit more than one application

in response to a call for applications. If an applicant submits more than one application, it should not propose to serve the same geographic areas in its different applications.

[Eligible geographic areas](#) are shown as community points on the CRTC's updated map and datasets for Call 4. These tools are current as of the date of publication on the website and are provided for reference purposes only. Applicants are responsible for conducting their own due diligence to confirm that the geographic areas they propose to serve remain eligible. The CRTC may also rely on the most current data available, whether public or confidential, as it is received and verified to evaluate applications in order to avoid overbuilding and ensure the efficient use of funds.

How to meet 2.1.5(a):

An applicant should consult the following resources to help meet this criterion:

- [Call 4 Reference Map](#): a map showing geographic areas that are eligible for funding under Call 4; and
- [Mapping Guide](#): detailed instructions on how to use the Eligibility Mapping Tool, which is an external tool created by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

An applicant must propose to serve one or more households in an eligible geographic area. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- a map of the proposed project area, generated using the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#), identifying:
 - sites;
 - routes; and
 - coverage.

Note that the attributes in the mapping file must match the Site and Route IDs in the [Online Intake System](#).

2.1.5(b) Satellite-dependent community project – Eligibility criterion – Network improvement

An applicant's proposed satellite-dependent community project must increase the existing transport capacity of each community that the proposed project will serve.

How to meet 2.1.5(b):

An applicant must propose to increase the existing transport capacity of each community that the proposed project will serve. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- a description of the proposed network improvements and increase to existing transport capacity;
- planned uplink capacity, downlink capacity, and equipment for each satellite earth station;
- current and proposed capacity figures for each eligible community; and
- capacity agreements with satellite transport service providers, including a copy of the satellite transport capacity contract or of a memorandum of understanding.

2.1.5(c) Satellite-dependent community project – Eligibility criterion – Pricing and affordability for wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service

To be eligible for funding, an applicant must commit to meeting the pricing and affordability requirements for the wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service packages that will be offered in a satellite-dependent community.

An applicant will be prompted to meet this commitment in the [Online Intake System](#). If the applicant receives conditional funding approval, it will be required to propose, in its statement of work, wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service packages with rates, speeds, and data allowances that meet the following commitments:

- provide several wireline and/or wireless broadband Internet access service packages with rates, speeds, and data allowances that address different customer needs, including at least one package that is suitable for low-income households;
- provide these packages at rates that are comparable to:
 - the lowest rates already provided by the applicant in the proposed project's province or territory;¹⁵ or
 - the rates offered in one of the major urban centres (to be identified by the CRTC during the statement of work development phase) in the proposed project's province or territory; and
- provide these packages at a rate no higher, and at a speed and with a data allowance no lower, than the original proposal, for a minimum of five years following the project completion date.

An applicant can propose to provide rates that match the lowest rates it already provides in its proposed project's province or territory. If the applicant proposes to match its own lowest rates, it must continue to match those rates for a minimum of five years following the project completion date. This means that if the applicant chooses to match its own service packages, it

¹⁵ For satellite-dependent community projects, applicants must propose rates that are sufficiently comparable to rates offered in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

cannot increase the proposed rates or reduce the proposed service speeds and data allowances approved in the statement of work by adjusting the comparable packages.

See [section 4.1.1\(b\)](#) for information on project and service requirements considered in the development of the statement of work.

2.2 Assessment criteria

In the second stage of evaluation, the CRTC assesses eligible applications to determine which applications are suitable for funding. Assessment criteria include criteria common to all project types as well as criteria specific to the proposed project type.

An applicant must clearly demonstrate, with supporting evidence, how their proposed project addresses each of the applicable assessment criteria.

For Call 4, the CRTC will increase the weighting of the following assessment criteria:

- projects that offer the lowest cost per household served (see [section 8](#) for a definition of “cost per household”):
 - see [section 2.2.2\(c\)](#) for the cost per household assessment criterion for a universal service objective fixed broadband project; and
 - see [section 2.2.3\(b\)](#) for the cost per household assessment criterion for a satellite-dependent community project;
- projects that minimize overbuild and funding overlap while maximizing coverage in underserved areas:
 - see [section 2.2.2\(b\)](#) for the coverage assessment criterion for a universal service objective fixed broadband project; and
 - see [section 2.2.2\(d\)](#) for the geographic scope of the proposed project assessment criterion for a universal service objective fixed broadband project.

2.2.1 General assessment criteria

The following assessment criteria apply to all applications submitted under Call 4.

2.2.1(a) Assessment criterion – Technical merit

The CRTC will assess whether a proposed project is technically feasible and resilient. The technical merit of a proposed project will be assessed based on the following:

- Feasibility: The appropriateness of the network technology and infrastructure to be deployed and continually operated in the project’s eligible geographic area. An applicant should provide a rationale for:
 - the proposed technology to be used;

- how the proposed capacity of the project will be able to support the services committed to in the application in the future;
- how the proposed technology overcomes any specific limitations or concerns in the applicable geographic areas; and
- where applicable, how the proposed technology will be able to support the coverage as described in the application; and
- **Resiliency:** The proposed network's ability to continue to provide and maintain an acceptable level of service, both during normal operations and in unforeseen circumstances, when a network failure occurs. Unforeseen circumstances may include physical network failures such as fibre cuts or equipment malfunctions, radio failures due to weather, power failures, and natural disasters. The CRTC will evaluate the inherent resiliency of the proposed project and/or how the project would improve the resiliency of existing infrastructure. The applicant should include details on the steps it has taken to enhance the reliability and resiliency of the proposed network and/or how the proposed infrastructure will introduce additional resiliency to the applicant's existing network.

The CRTC will assess a project more favourably if it incorporates advanced and adaptable network technologies, robust infrastructure, and proactive maintenance plans.

In its statement of work, the applicant will be required to provide further details demonstrating the ability of the proposed network(s) to handle future growth and ensure long-term viability. See [section 4](#) for information on funding conditions and the statement of work.

How to meet 2.2.1(a):

An applicant must describe the technical merit of its proposed project. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- a short description of the project's feasibility, including identifying:
 - the proposed technology and why it is the most suitable for the project's geographic area;
 - how the chosen technology will meet the capacity requirements, achieve the proposed coverage, and support the delivery of the proposed services in the application;
 - any limitations of the proposed technology; and
 - any project dependencies beyond those included in the project description, and how these will be addressed efficiently and in a timely manner;
- a short description of the proposed project's resiliency, including identifying:

- the risks inherent in the project's design and the preventive measures and redundant components (e.g., backup links or failover systems) that reduce the likelihood and impact of service disruptions;
- critical components that could fail and the contingency plans and design strategies that ensure that the network will continue to perform during disruptions caused by, for example, fibre cuts, equipment malfunctions, or severe weather; and
- the approach to detecting and resolving issues, including monitoring procedures, incident handling and expected timelines for response, remediation, and service restoration; and
- a logical network diagram (LND), including a legend with icons and colours, that gives a clear relation to the map data and identifies:
 - project sites, including project interconnection points, access points (wireline and fixed wireless), points of presence, and satellite earth stations as applicable:
 - the site ID provided in the Site List in the [Online Intake System](#) must be referenced on the LND;
 - all major network elements from the Eligible Equipment List in the [Online Intake System](#), for each identified site:
 - the manufacturer/model provided in the [Online Intake System](#) must be referenced on the LND;
 - all routes connecting the identified sites:
 - show link speed, types (e.g., fibre or wireless), and network paths; and
 - the route ID provided in the Route Segment List in the [Online Intake System](#) must be referenced on the LND;
 - the capacity (up/down) for each link and the overall network;
 - which sections of the network that currently exist, are to be built, and/or will be upgraded;
 - network resiliency capabilities:
 - the diagram must clearly indicate which sections of the network are to provide resiliency; and
 - open access points, if applicable.

Note that an application will be assessed on its own merit and cannot be contingent on (i) funding for another application under the Broadband Fund or (ii) funding from another program that has not been secured by the time the application is submitted.

2.2.1(b) Assessment criterion – Financial viability

The CRTC will assess the potential financial success of a proposed project, based on an accurate and realistic business model (including a project cost estimate, project funding and financing details, and financial projections), to ensure that the project is viable and sustainable over the long term.

A proposed project should not be financially viable without funding from the Broadband Fund. To demonstrate this, the applicant must submit a business plan for its proposed project based on (i) pro forma standardized financial projections for the project and (ii) the assumption of zero funding from the Broadband Fund.

The CRTC will assess the business plan, together with the applicant's financial statements, to determine the project's financial viability. The CRTC will then factor in the requested funding amount to calculate the project's net present value (NPV). A business plan that demonstrates a positive NPV would generally be considered viable with funding, while a business plan that demonstrates a negative NPV would generally be considered not viable even with the applicant's requested amount of funding.

How to meet 2.2.1(b):

An applicant must demonstrate the potential financial success of a proposed project. It must also provide a business plan by submitting the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- project cost estimates, including identifying:
 - eligible costs (see [section 3.1](#)); and
 - ineligible costs (see [section 3.2](#));
- project funding and financing details, including identifying:
 - the amount requested from the Broadband Fund;
 - the amount the applicant will contribute to the project:
 - an applicant who relies on credit or other financial commitments to support its contribution to the project must provide supporting documentation. Examples include:
 - a letter from its chief financial officer, chief administrative officer, or treasurer;

- a letter from a financial institution; or
- a Council Resolution confirming budget allocations;
 - the amount of funding from other sources, if applicable (see [section 2.2.1\(c\)](#)); and
- financial projections, including identifying:
 - expected revenues; and
 - projected operating expenses related to the proposed project.

An applicant should ensure that all submitted financial information is as realistic and accurate as possible, based on the nature of the project. All financial information should pertain exclusively to the proposed project outlined in the application.

2.2.1(c) Assessment criterion – Level of funding from other sources

The CRTC will assess whether the applicant has successfully raised funds for the proposed project and if so, how much was raised. This will help ensure that telecommunications companies and various levels of government continue to invest in broadband infrastructure and that funding from the Broadband Fund is used efficiently.

The CRTC will assess a project more favourably if it includes funding from sources other than the Broadband Fund (either from the applicant itself or third-party sources) towards total eligible project costs. The CRTC will evaluate this criterion by dividing the amount of funding requested from the Broadband Fund by the total eligible project costs to obtain a percentage (see [section 3.1](#) for a list of eligible project costs).

An applicant must inform the CRTC of any additional funding it secures for its project between the application submission deadline and publication of the conditional funding decision.

How to meet 2.2.1(c):

An applicant must provide confirmation of any third-party funding commitments. If the project will receive funding or in-kind contributions from other sources (including other government funding programs or community grants), it must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- details for each secured source of funding, including:
 - the name of the funding program or source;
 - details of the source of funding (e.g., jurisdiction of the provincial, territorial, or municipal government);
 - the confirmed funding amount; and

- a written declaration (e.g., a general letter, a letter of intent, or a service level agreement from the funding source) outlining the extent of support that will be provided. This applies whether the support is monetary or in-kind (with an estimated monetary value provided for in-kind contributions).

2.2.1(d) Assessment criterion – Engagement

The CRTC will use this criterion:

- to assess the quality and outcome of early outreach and engagement with affected communities that the applicant proposes to serve;
- whenever possible, to determine whether these affected communities support the project and are likely to subscribe to the services provided as a result of the project; and
- where applicable, to help the CRTC understand the needs of the Indigenous communities that will receive the services provided as a result of the project and to assess the quality and outcome of outreach to those Indigenous communities.

The CRTC will assess an application based on the quality of the applicant’s outreach efforts with affected communities. Outreach should be informative and timely and should establish a line of communication between the affected communities and the applicant.

The CRTC is providing a confidential process for applicants and communities affected by a proposed project to file additional documents related to community engagement after the application deadline has passed. This is intended to accommodate the reality that meaningful engagement takes time and may not be completed prior to the application deadline. An applicant must, however, provide sufficient evidence at the time of the application deadline to meet the eligibility criterion set out in [section 2.1.1\(e\)](#). Evidence filed after the application deadline has passed will be considered as part of the assessment of the quality of engagement.

Consent required for projects in Indigenous communities

An applicant that proposes a project that involves providing service or building infrastructure in an Indigenous community must provide evidence of written consent from the representatives of that Indigenous community before the CRTC provides its final funding approval. In these circumstances, the CRTC may issue a conditional funding decision requiring the applicant to provide proof of consent from the representatives of the Indigenous community before it issues the final funding decision. However, the CRTC will treat applications that are able to provide this prior to a conditional funding decision more favourably.

Engagement with Indigenous communities and groups

A proposed project may impact Indigenous communities, Aboriginal rights, or treaty rights. An applicant should take a distinctions-based approach¹⁶ to engagement to ensure its efforts align

¹⁶ Per [Principles respecting the Government of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples](#), a distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests, and circumstances of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis are acknowledged, affirmed, and implemented. The work of forming renewed relationships based on the

with the community's preferred or established approach. If applicable, the applicant must provide information gathered in its early engagement efforts, including:

- whether the potentially impacted Indigenous communities and groups have responded, and whether they have identified adverse impacts to any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights; and
- what those adverse impacts are, and what accommodation measures, if any, have been or will be implemented, along with any plans for future engagement or accommodation measures.

An applicant should engage with Indigenous communities and groups using respectful timelines and in a way that is satisfactory to the community or group being engaged.

The CRTC will assess an application more favourably if:

- the applicant provides proof of consent from the representatives of the Indigenous community where the applicant proposes to build infrastructure and/or provide service that meets the universal service objective;
- the proposed project has the support of potentially impacted Indigenous communities or groups;
- the application has a greater level of community support (an applicant should prioritize direct engagement with the communities to be served or with representatives of those communities);
- the proposed project will provide economic benefits and/or employment opportunities to Indigenous communities and groups, such as:
 - community benefit agreements;
 - ongoing employment opportunities;
 - co-investment; and
 - co-ownership agreements; and
- the applicant is responsive to concerns raised by the communities and/or Indigenous communities or groups, and provides evidence of collaboration with communities and/or potentially impacted Indigenous communities or groups.

recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership must reflect the unique interests, priorities, and circumstances of each People.

How to meet 2.2.1(d):

An applicant should consult the following resources to help meet this criterion:

- Application Guide:
 - Section F provides a list of reference documents, including the Call 4 Reference Map, which applicants can use to identify the communities that may be affected by a proposed project; and
 - Section H provides information on how to identify and contact affected communities, engage with Indigenous communities, and consider whether the proposed project presents a risk of adversely affecting any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights;
- [Step 4, Community engagement](#): a dedicated web page with helpful information and tools to assist an applicant to meet the outreach and engagement criteria;
- [Community outreach template letters](#): customizable template letters are available to assist an applicant with the engagement process and provides affected communities or groups with the means to directly contact the applicant and/or the CRTC about a proposed project; and
- [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System \(ATRIS\)](#): a web-based geographic information system that helps an applicant to identify Indigenous communities, as well as any treaties, claims, or assertions in effect in the proposed project area.

An applicant must submit to the CRTC any documents that provide evidence of notification, outreach, and engagement efforts. Documents submitted for this assessment criterion can be the same as those submitted to meet the 2.1.1(e) criterion. It must provide the following information and documents, as applicable, in the [Online Intake System](#):

- community support, such as:
 - a letter of support from community representatives;
 - minutes from a meeting or a telephone call;
 - a resolution from a local governing body such as a band council or a municipal government;
 - evidence of a community benefit agreement;
 - a plan to use local companies during the project implementation phase;
 - an agreement to train community residents; or
 - investment in the project by the community (financial or otherwise); and

- written consent, which can be provided in any form chosen by the representatives of an Indigenous community, such as:
 - a letter of support;
 - a formal resolution, such as a band council resolution;
 - an agreement or a memorandum of understanding; or
 - a transcript of oral consent, such as meeting minutes.

2.2.2 Specific assessment criteria for universal service objective projects

The following assessment criteria only apply to universal service objective projects.

The CRTC will assess universal service objective projects more favourably if they:

- promote the universal service objective of connecting 100% of Canadian households to fixed broadband Internet access services;
- demonstrate a lower cost per household; or
- do not target geographic areas that are already forecasted to receive services that will meet the universal service objective through other public funding programs.

2.2.2(a) Fixed broadband project – Assessment criterion – Level of service improvement

The CRTC will compare the highest proposed wireline or wireless broadband Internet access speeds with the highest speeds currently available in the eligible geographic area(s). The CRTC will also compare proposed and existing speeds to the target speeds in the universal service objective. The CRTC will assess a project more favourably based on the extent to which the proposed service speeds:

- meet or exceed universal-service-objective-level speeds; and
- exceed the speeds of any wireline or wireless broadband Internet access services currently being offered in the eligible geographic area(s).

2.2.2(b) Fixed broadband project – Assessment criterion – Coverage

The CRTC will assess the number of households to be served in the eligible geographic area(s). If two or more projects propose to serve the same eligible geographic area(s), the CRTC will assess the project that serves the most households in the area(s) more favourably (see [section 8](#) for a definition of “cost per household”).

2.2.2(c) Fixed broadband project – Assessment criterion – Cost per household

The CRTC will determine whether funds are being used efficiently to connect as many households as possible in the eligible geographic area(s). The CRTC will assess a project with a lower eligible cost per household more favourably.

2.2.2(d) Fixed broadband project – Assessment criterion – Geographic scope of the proposed project

The CRTC will assess the geographic scope of a proposed project and determine whether the project should be considered further for funding. The CRTC will assess a project less favourably if there are other proposed or funded projects in the same geographic area(s) or if the project includes transport infrastructure that is not required to support the project. If the project cannot use existing transport infrastructure (e.g., the existing transport provider has no available capacity), the applicant must demonstrate that any existing transport infrastructure is not feasible or sufficient.

2.2.3 Specific assessment criteria for satellite-dependent community projects

The following assessment criteria only apply to satellite-dependent community projects, including both operational expense and capital projects.

The CRTC will assess satellite-dependent community projects more favourably if they:

- propose service speeds that meet or exceed 50/10 Mbps and improve telecommunications services;
- promote the universal service objective of connecting 100% of Canadian households to fixed broadband Internet access service; or
- demonstrate a lower cost per household.

2.2.3(a) Satellite-dependent community project – Assessment criterion – Level of service improvement

The CRTC will compare the highest proposed speeds for the proposed telecommunications services with the highest speeds currently available in the satellite-dependent community. The CRTC will also compare proposed and existing speeds to the target speeds in the universal service objective. The CRTC will assess a project more favourably based on the extent to which the proposed service speeds:

- meet or exceed universal-service-objective-level speeds; and
- exceed the speeds of any telecommunications services currently being offered in the satellite-dependent community.

2.2.3(b) Satellite-dependent community project – Assessment criterion – Cost per household

The CRTC will determine whether funds are being used efficiently to connect as many households as possible in the satellite-dependent community. The CRTC will assess a project

with a lower eligible cost per household more favourably (see [section 8](#) for a definition of “cost per household”).

2.3 Selection considerations

In the third stage of evaluation, the CRTC selects projects from the subset of applications for projects identified as suitable for funding. The CRTC uses specific selection considerations that enable it to choose the projects that best meet the Broadband Fund’s objectives and remain within the limits of available funds.

In deciding between projects identified as suitable for funding, the CRTC will consider not only whether individual projects could contribute to meeting the universal service objective, but also which projects would have the most positive impact on Canadians. The CRTC will consider the policy objectives set out in section 7 of the *Telecommunications Act*, including the need to develop broadband service offerings across the country and to meet the economic and social needs of users.

The following are considerations that the CRTC may use to select projects.

2.3.1 Efficient use of funds

When selecting projects for funding, the CRTC will consider the amount of funding required for each project, when such funding should be distributed, and the amount of funding available in the Broadband Fund. Additionally, different proposed projects may cover the same eligible geographic area(s), or public funding from another source may be committed to a project that is similar to a project the CRTC is considering. In such cases, the CRTC must have flexibility to distribute funding in a way that does not cause overlap between projects or funding sources to ensure the efficient use of funds.

Therefore, when the CRTC selects projects from the group of projects identified as suitable for funding, it will give special consideration to the efficient use of funds.

2.3.2 Projects in multiple regions of Canada

When selecting projects for funding, the CRTC will consider the region(s) a project proposes to serve, the amount of funding requested, and the need to ensure that all regions of Canada receive support for telecommunications infrastructure. This ensures that Canadians have access to reliable high-speed Internet services that meet or exceed the universal service objective speed target. Funding will be distributed, as much as possible, to projects in underserved areas in multiple regions of Canada and not only in a single region or a small number of regions.

Therefore, when the CRTC selects projects from the group of projects identified as suitable for funding, it may give special consideration to projects that propose to serve multiple regions of Canada.

2.3.3 Social considerations

When selecting projects for funding, the CRTC will consider whether the communities to be served by a proposed project include Indigenous communities or official language minority

communities (see [section 8](#) for a definition of “official language minority communities”). The CRTC will consider whether proposed projects would fulfill (i) the economic and social requirements of the Indigenous communities or official language minority communities, consistent with the policy objectives set out in subsections 7(a), (b), and (c) of the [Telecommunications Act](#) and (ii) the Government of Canada’s commitment in the [Official Languages Act](#) to support and assist in the development of English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada.

Therefore, when the CRTC selects projects from the group of projects identified as suitable for funding, it may give special consideration to (i) whether the communities to be served by a proposed project are Indigenous communities or official language minority communities, and (ii) whether a project is proposed by an Indigenous applicant or would provide service to an eligible Indigenous community.

3. Eligible and ineligible project costs

As outlined in [Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328](#), only some of the costs associated with a proposed project will be eligible for reimbursement. An applicant must provide an estimate of its total eligible costs and total ineligible costs in its project budget (see project cost estimates in [section 2.2.1\(b\)](#)).

If an applicant intends to incur a cost that is not explicitly listed below or does not reasonably fit in the costs listed, it may state in its application why that cost should be eligible. The CRTC will then assess whether the cost is eligible.

3.1 Eligible costs

The CRTC will provide funding for eligible costs only. Eligible costs include costs for activities that are directly associated with implementing the proposed project as set out in the application and the CRTC’s funding decisions. The following eligible costs are for all eligible project types and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- direct equipment costs, meaning the costs of the equipment required for project completion that can be specifically identified and measured as having been incurred for the project. This includes the costs of servers, switching and transmission equipment, fibre optic cable (including drop cable to the premise), repeaters, radio and microwave equipment, towers, poles, shelters and enclosures, backup power systems, and network broadband connectivity devices, including upgrades and adaptations;
- direct material costs, meaning the costs of materials that can be specifically identified and measured as having been used for the implementation of the project;
- direct labour costs, meaning the portion of gross wages or salaries for work that can be specifically identified and measured as having been done on the project, including the one-time costs associated with the engineering and installation of capital equipment, network deployment, and service provision;

- direct training costs,¹⁷ meaning the costs for up to two years of initial technical training on equipment installation, operation, and repairs and maintenance for:
 - local staff in communities without year-round road access; and
 - local Indigenous staff in eligible Indigenous communities (for projects proposed by Indigenous applicants);
- direct labour-related travel costs, meaning the costs of travel that is deemed necessary to complete the project and can be specifically identified and measured as having been incurred for the project. This can include travel associated with engineering, installation, network deployment, and service provision, considered on a case-by-case basis (for travel costs to be eligible, the purpose of each trip must be clearly documented; travel expenses, at economy rates, will be charged as actual costs); and
- other direct costs, meaning applicable costs that do not fall within one of the categories listed above but can be specifically identified and measured as having been incurred for the implementation of the project, including costs incurred from subcontractors (if the funding recipient hires a subcontractor to conduct part or all of the work on the project, the CRTC may ask the recipient to provide a breakdown or a detailed invoice of costs paid to the subcontractor that lists the subcontractor's costs).

The following costs are eligible for funding for projects in satellite-dependent communities:

- operational costs (satellite capacity only) associated with improving the speed, capacity, and quality of telecommunications services in comparison to the level of service already provided in the area;
- direct equipment costs, particularly costs directly related to building and/or upgrading earth stations; and
- direct training costs,¹⁸ meaning the costs for up to two years of initial technical training on equipment installation, operation, and repairs and maintenance for local staff in satellite-dependent communities, with training to be provided in the first year of operation of the network.

3.2 Ineligible costs

For all types of projects, the Broadband Fund will not provide funding to recipients to cover ineligible costs.¹⁹ These costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- costs incurred after the project completion date;

¹⁷ An applicant will need to provide justification in its application as to the number of staff that require training in each affected community.

¹⁸ An applicant will need to provide justification in its application as to the number of staff that require training in each affected community.

¹⁹ This includes ineligible costs arising from any contract that the recipient has entered into with a subcontractor.

- costs related to developing the application for funding;
- costs for existing capital assets, including land, buildings, and vehicles, as well as other indirect, fixed, and/or capital costs;
- costs of contracts for services, such as satellite capacity, that the recipient entered into before submitting the application;
- land purchase costs and other costs related to purchasing land or buildings (except for equipment shelters not meant for human occupation) and associated real estate and other fees;
- costs for leasing land, buildings, and other facilities, including permanent shelters for housing network-related equipment (except for temporary facilities directly related to project construction);
- operational costs to run infrastructure built as a result of the project;
- costs for general repairs and ongoing maintenance resulting from the project and related structures;
- contingency provision costs;
- costs for legal fees;
- costs for taxes for which the recipient is eligible for a tax rebate, and all other costs related to expenses that are eligible for rebates;
- insurance costs, including insurance premiums, deductible payments, and insurable losses incurred during the implementation of the project and after the project completion date;
- costs for customer premise equipment, including customer mobile devices or satellite antennas;
- costs for any goods and services that are received through donations or in-kind;
- financing or carrying costs, loan costs, and interest payments;
- overhead costs for general office space and equipment;
- costs for training to set up an Internet service provider (except for training costs, as outlined in [section 3.1](#));
- ongoing training costs to implement the project or operate the funded infrastructure (except for training costs, as outlined in [section 3.1](#));
- costs for advertising/promotion activities; and
- radio and spectrum licensing fees.

If the funding recipient, or recipient, hires a subcontractor to conduct part or all the work on the project, the CRTC may ask the recipient to provide a breakdown or a detailed invoice of costs paid to the subcontractor that lists the subcontractor's costs. A claim for reimbursement for subcontractor costs must correspond to an eligible cost listed above.

4. Funding Conditions

Once the CRTC has selected a project to be funded, further actions will be required to finalize and implement the project, such as issuing a conditional funding decision, reviewing and approving the applicant's statement of work, publishing a final funding decision, overseeing project implementation and reporting, and approving project completion and the final release of funds.

Instead of implementing funding agreements, the CRTC will rely on its statutory powers under subsection 61(1) of the *Telecommunications Act* to make funding decisions conditional on the fulfillment of certain program requirements (i.e., conditional funding decisions). Those decisions will also set out other conditions that must be met for funds to be released.

The CRTC will also rely on sections 24 and 24.1 of the *Telecommunications Act* to impose conditions on the offering and provision of any telecommunications services by a Canadian carrier and by a person other than a Canadian carrier, respectively.

Conditions will be published in the conditional funding decision and the final funding decision (see [section 8](#) for definitions of "conditional funding decision" and "final funding decision"). A standard list of conditions is listed in [section 4.2](#).

The CRTC will also use a multipronged approach to compliance and enforcement, which can include the imposition of obligations, reporting requirements, the distribution and withholding of funding, and the imposition of conditions on the offering and provision of broadband services pursuant to section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*. For conditions imposed under section 24 or 24.1 of the *Telecommunications Act*, the CRTC may also issue administrative monetary penalties or mandatory orders.

In addition, all existing regulatory obligations will continue to apply to all recipients, including, for example:

- the regulatory obligations related to wholesale high-speed Internet access services, as established in *Review of wholesale wireline services and associated policies*, [Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2015-326](#), 22 July 2015, as amended by [Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2015-326-1](#), 9 October 2015, and related follow-up proceedings;
- the provision of Wholesale Connect service by Northwestel Inc.;
- the requirement to file tariffs for services that are not forborne;
- the regulatory obligations set out in *Framework for assessing the differential pricing practices of Internet service providers*, [Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2017-104](#), 20 April 2017;

- the requirement for incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) to provide competitors with aggregated wholesale access to their fibre-to-the-premises networks; and
- the obligations under section 27 of the *Telecommunications Act* to charge just and reasonable rates and not to unjustly discriminate or give an undue or unreasonable preference, or subject any person to an undue or unreasonable disadvantage, in the provision of telecommunications services or the charging of rates.

Recipients are expected to construct their projects in compliance with applicable regulatory obligations and federal, provincial, territorial, and industry-imposed standards.

Recipients are also encouraged to follow best industry practices to safeguard the resiliency, security, and sustainability of their networks against foreseeable threats in the geographic areas or regions where they will build their projects.

A non-exhaustive list of standards and industry best practices includes:

- the [National Building Code of Canada](#);
- [standards published by the Canadian Standards Association](#);
- municipal, [provincial, and territorial building codes](#);
- widely adopted international standards and/or recommendations, such as the [International Telecommunication Union's recommendations for telecommunications infrastructure](#) and the [ANSI \[American National Standards Institute\]/APCO \[Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials\] Public Safety Grade Site Hardening Requirements](#);
- telecommunications company standards; and
- equipment manufacturers' installation recommendations.

It is the applicant's responsibility to identify and comply with any regulatory obligation that may apply to the provision of broadband services under its project.

4.1 Statement of work

As a condition of approval set out in each conditional funding decision (see [section 4.2.1](#)), the CRTC will require the applicant to provide additional project details and finalize the project plan in a statement of work. The CRTC must approve the statement of work in a final funding decision before the applicant becomes a recipient, funding is secured, and the recipient can submit claims for reimbursement.

The statement of work will set out, in detail, the applicant's project implementation plan, including project scope; key project dates (including project start and completion dates); budget; requested amount of funding; project geographic area(s); technical details (such as logical network diagrams, network description, and equipment); project milestones and conditions; obligations; and reporting requirements.

Following the publication of the conditional funding decision, the applicant can start implementing its project and accruing project costs at its own risk and expense.

4.1.1 Project and service requirements considered in the development of the statement of work

An applicant must provide additional information, as needed, as part of its statement of work to receive final approval for funding in the final funding decision.

4.1.1(a) Sustainability and scalability

In addition to demonstrating technical merit at the application stage (see [section 2.2.1\(a\)](#)), an applicant must provide in its statement of work further technical details of its proposed project describing how the proposed network can handle future growth and ensure long-term viability.

4.1.1(b) Service packages and commitments for wireline and wireless broadband Internet access services

Building on the commitments made at the application stage (see sections [2.1.3\(c\)](#) and [2.1.5\(c\)](#)), an applicant must provide in its statement of work the specific service packages it will offer as a result of its proposed project. An applicant must propose service packages with rates, speeds, and data allowances that meet the following commitments:

- provide several wireline and/or wireless broadband Internet access service packages with rates, speeds, and data allowances that address different customer needs, including at least one package that is suitable for low-income households;
- provide these packages at rates that are comparable to (i) the lowest rates already provided by the applicant in the proposed project's province or territory²⁰ or (ii) the rates offered in one of the major urban centres (to be identified by the CRTC during the statement of work development phase) in the proposed project's province or territory; and
- provide these packages at a rate no higher, and at a speed and with a data allowance no lower, than the original proposal, for a minimum of five years following the project completion date.

An applicant can propose to provide rates that match the lowest rates it already provides in its proposed project's province or territory. If an applicant proposes to match its own lowest rates, it must continue to match those rates for a minimum of five years following the project completion date.

A recipient will be expected to provide published proof showing that these service packages are being offered to customers once the project is completed. In addition, on the project completion date, when the recipient is offering wireline or fixed wireless broadband Internet access services, the CRTC will publish information about the recipient's approved service packages on its

²⁰ For projects proposed in satellite-dependent communities, applicants must propose rates that are sufficiently comparable to rates offered in Iqaluit, Nunavut. However, in each call for applications, the CRTC may identify a different satellite-dependent community that applicants must use to compare proposed rates.

website. This information will include, at a minimum, details of the service packages (rates, speeds, and data allowances) and geographic areas where the service packages are available.

4.1.1(c) Service packages and commitments for wholesale open access services

Building on the commitments made at the application stage (see section [2.1.4\(b\)](#)), an applicant must provide in its statement of work the specific wholesale open access service packages it will offer. The CRTC will require an applicant that proposes to build or upgrade any transport infrastructure to commit to offering, at a minimum, dedicated wholesale open access to that infrastructure. The applicant must propose wholesale open access to all funded transport infrastructure at each of the proposed new or upgraded points of presence along the proposed transport route at one of the following speeds: 100 Mbps, 1 Gbps, or 10 Gbps. Each point of presence along the transport route must also comply with the wholesale open access requirements.

As outlined in [Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328](#), Indigenous recipients are exempt from the requirement to provide wholesale and retail open access to funded transport network infrastructure.

In addition, on the project completion date, when the recipient is offering wholesale services, the CRTC will publish information about the recipient's approved service packages on its website. This information will include, at a minimum, details of the service packages (rates, speeds, and data allowances) and geographic areas where the service packages are available.

4.2 Conditions set out in funding decisions

The CRTC will set out conditions that apply to all recipients regarding the construction or upgrade of proposed networks and conditions that are specific to each recipient.

The exact conditions may vary depending on the project or the applicant. However, for information purposes, a standard list of conditions that the CRTC expects to impose on projects selected for funding is provided below.

4.2.1 Directions and conditions of approval

1. This approval is subject to the conditions that the applicant:
 - (a) confirm in writing, within **10 days** of the date of this decision, its intent to submit a statement of work package to the CRTC and to proceed with the project;
 - (b) file for CRTC approval, within **120 days** of the date of this decision, a completed statement of work package in the format provided by the CRTC, which includes the project budget, key project dates and schedules, proposed service packages, and detailed project information, such as logical network diagrams, network descriptions, service designs, information pertaining to sustainability and scalability, project sites, equipment details, maps, specific costs, and milestones;

- (c) provide, as part of the statement of work package referenced above, evidence of consent from the representatives of any Indigenous community that will receive service or where infrastructure will be built as a result of the project; and
 - (d) demonstrate, as part of the statement of work development phase, that the project has adequately considered cybersecurity. If the applicant fails to do so, it will be required to mitigate the cybersecurity risk to the CRTC's satisfaction. Failure to propose a mitigation plan that is satisfactory to the CRTC could result in the refusal to approve the statement of work.
2. The applicant may not apply for reimbursement of its costs until the CRTC issues a final funding decision approving the applicant's statement of work. Any eligible costs incurred prior to the final funding decision but following the issuance of a conditional decision are at the applicant's risk and will not be reimbursed if the statement of work is not approved.
 3. In order for the Central Fund Administrator to be able to distribute funding, the recipient must sign the National Contribution Fund Administration Agreement, if it has not already done so.
 4. The recipient may not apply for reimbursement of, and funding will not be issued for, ineligible expenses, expenses that have yet to be incurred, or expenses that are not related to the activities described in the statement of work as approved by the CRTC.
 5. The recipient is expected to construct their project in compliance with all applicable regulatory obligations and federal, provincial, territorial, and industry-imposed standards. The recipient is also encouraged to follow industry best practices to safeguard the resiliency, security, and sustainability of its network.

4.2.2 Conditions of funding

1. Following the final funding decision, the CRTC will direct the Central Fund Administrator to release funds to the recipient, provided that the recipient is in compliance with the following conditions:
 - (a) The recipient must file a progress report, in the format provided by the CRTC, outlining the progress made in the implementation of the project and any variances to the statement of work. This report is to be filed every three months, or as otherwise approved by the CRTC, beginning on the date established in the final funding decision and continuing until the project completion date.
 - (b) The recipient must file a Broadband Fund claim form signed by its chief financial officer, or by an equivalent authorized official of the recipient, certifying that all costs claimed were actually incurred or paid, and are eligible costs related to the activities described in the statement of work, along with such supporting documentation as is requested by the CRTC. This claim form is to be filed along with the progress report every three months, or as otherwise approved by the CRTC, beginning on the date established in the final funding decision and continuing until the project completion date.

- (c) With respect to eligible costs, the recipient must:
- include eligible costs in a claim form submitted within **120 days** of the costs being incurred, unless the costs were incurred after the date of the conditional funding decision but prior to the approval of the statement of work, in which case the costs must be claimed on the first claim form submitted after the approval of the statement of work; and
 - ensure that all goods and services are claimed for reimbursement at amounts not greater than fair market value after deducting all trade discounts and similar items. Only the fair market value of the goods and services acquired is eligible for reimbursement.
- (d) The recipient must measure and claim all goods and services received from related parties, as defined under International Financial Reporting Standards, at cost, with no profits or markups from the supplier.
- (e) To receive funding, the recipient must obtain CRTC approval for (i) any material changes to the project, as set out in the approved statement of work; and (ii) any changes to the recipient that would materially affect the legal or financial documents it provided during the application or statement of work process.
- (f) The recipient (including each member of a recipient partnership, joint venture, or consortium) must notify the CRTC in writing as soon as possible and within no more than **five days** of becoming insolvent.
- (g) If it receives any additional funding for the project from any source, the recipient must notify the CRTC in writing as soon as possible and no later than **10 days** after receiving confirmation of the funding. The CRTC may proportionately reduce the amount of funding it has approved.
- (h) If the recipient wishes to withdraw from the Broadband Fund program, it must notify the CRTC in writing as soon as possible. If a recipient withdraws from the program after project costs have been reimbursed, the CRTC may direct the Central Fund Administrator to seek reimbursement of those payments.
- (i) The recipient must ensure that its travel costs, such as meal per diems, comply with the National Joint Council Travel Directive.
- (j) Where a risk of adverse impact on an Aboriginal or treaty right becomes known and a duty to consult exists, the recipient must advise the CRTC within **20 days** and submit a plan detailing the form and process for fulfillment of the duty. Release of any additional funding will be contingent on demonstration that any necessary consultations were held to the Crown's satisfaction.
- (k) The recipient (including each member of a recipient partnership, joint venture, or consortium) must file its annual financial statements with the CRTC upon request.

- (l) The recipient must notify the CRTC of project completion within **10 days** of the project completion date.
- (m) The recipient must file a project completion report **six months** after the project completion date, demonstrating that the project is complete and that all conditions and obligations set out in the CRTC's decisions related to the project are being met. Holdback funds will be released only once these elements are demonstrated to the CRTC's satisfaction, provided that the CRTC has approved the final quarterly progress report along with the final claim.

4.2.3 Conditions of service (section 24 conditions on the operation of the network)

1. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328, the CRTC determined that it would continue imposing, pursuant to section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*, certain conditions regarding the offering and provision of broadband services using facilities funded through the Broadband Fund that would apply once the infrastructure is built. These conditions relate to the speeds and capacity of broadband services provided and the level of retail pricing, reporting, and associated open access service offerings. The conditions imposed on the offering and provision of broadband services will apply to the recipient and to any other Canadian carrier operating the funded infrastructure.
2. The CRTC may conduct periodic audits and require measurements of the project's performance to verify compliance with the conditions of funding and the conditions imposed pursuant to section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act* on the provision of services using funded infrastructure. To that end, as a condition of offering and providing telecommunications services using the funded infrastructure, the CRTC requires, pursuant to section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*, that the recipient, or any Canadian carrier operating the funded infrastructure, (i) retain all books, accounts, and records of the project, including administrative, financial, and claim processes and procedures, and any other information necessary to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the decision, for a period of **eight years** from the project start date; and (ii) provide the CRTC with measurements of the performance of each of the recipient's implemented projects within **five years** of the project's completion date using methodology that the CRTC may determine. The CRTC may request that an external auditor or a CRTC-approved auditor certify any related report, form, or documentation, or that a third-party professional engineer certify any required measurements.
3. In addition, pursuant to section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*, as a condition of offering and providing telecommunications services using the funded infrastructure, the recipient, or any Canadian carrier operating the funded infrastructure on behalf of the recipient, must:
 - (a) for universal service objective projects, offer and provide fixed broadband Internet access service packages to customers served by the funded infrastructure at a rate no higher, and at speeds and with a capacity no lower, than the ones proposed in the relevant approved statement of work. The packages must be provided for a minimum of **five years** following the project completion date;

- (b) for universal service objective projects that include funded transport infrastructure, provide transport capacity at each eligible point of presence funded by the Broadband Fund with a total capacity no lower than that proposed in the application and described in the approved statement of work;
- (c) for universal service objective projects that include funded transport infrastructure, offer and provide, in a fair, transparent, timely, and non-discriminatory manner, wholesale and retail open access to the transport infrastructure at each eligible point of presence funded by the Broadband Fund (with the exception of Indigenous recipients, who are exempt from this requirement). Terms and conditions that are the same as or better than those applied to the services of subsidiaries, affiliates, or partners must be applied to other service providers requesting access to project sites. Such wholesale and retail open access services must be offered at rates no higher, and a capacity no lower, than those proposed in the application and detailed in the approved statement of work; and
- (d) for projects that increase satellite transport capacity operational costs in satellite-dependent communities, offer and provide fixed broadband Internet access service packages to subscribers within the eligible communities served by the project at a rate no higher, and at speeds and with a capacity no lower, than the ones proposed in its application and described in the approved statement of work for the duration of the funding.

5. Distribution of funding

After the CRTC approves the statement of work in a final funding decision, the applicant becomes a recipient. At this point, funding is secured, and the recipient can begin submitting claims for the reimbursement of eligible project costs.

Funding may be distributed through claims for reimbursement or, in certain cases, through upfront funding. Upfront funding is only available to recipients who self-identify as Indigenous in their application, propose a capital project, and request upfront funding in their statement of work.

All payments are made in accordance with the conditions set out in the final funding decision (see [section 4.2](#) for a list of standard funding conditions).

This section explains how funding is distributed (including upfront funding for Indigenous recipients), the claims process, and the holdback applied to ensure compliance.

5.1 Upfront funding for Indigenous recipients

Upfront funding is available for projects proposed by Indigenous applicants (see [section 8](#) for a definition of “Indigenous applicant”) upon request. This upfront funding provides capital for the recipient to secure the required resources related to eligible costs in the initial stages of the project, such as equipment (e.g., routers, switches, or radios), materials, or expertise (i.e., professional services such as engineering, consulting, or project management). Accordingly, upfront funding is only available for capital projects.

Any upfront funding provided must be linked directly to a contract or contracts for such resources. The Indigenous recipient can request the upfront funding amount before submitting its final version of the statement of work, and the contract(s) must be submitted before the final funding decision is issued.

The upfront funding amount will be capped at 15% of the total approved funding, to a maximum of \$750,000. Payment of the amount will be provided to the recipient after the CRTC has approved the statement of work in the final funding decision and upon the submission of a claim.

5.2 Claims reporting

As a condition of funding set out in each final funding decision (as listed in [section 4.2.2](#)), the recipient must file a claim along with its progress report every three months (or as otherwise approved by the CRTC) after the CRTC issues the final funding decision. Templates will be provided in the recipient's toolkit, which will be made available after the final funding decision is issued.

The CRTC will verify the claim and the progress report, as applicable, against the approved statement of work and the requirements set out in the relevant funding decisions. Once the eligible costs are verified, the CRTC will direct the Central Fund Administrator to issue the requested payment to the recipient. Payments will be made every three months (or as otherwise approved by the CRTC) after the project start date (see [section 8](#) for a definition of "project start date") for the eligible costs incurred during the preceding three-month period. The claim must be certified by the recipient's chief financial officer (CFO) or CFO equivalent or by a delegate and must include supporting documentation (e.g., invoices or receipts).

Eligible and ineligible costs are listed in [section 3](#) of this Guide.

If a progress report demonstrates a material change (see [section 8](#) for a definition of "material change") from the approved statement of work for the project, the CRTC may withhold payment(s) until the recipient has received the CRTC's approval for that change.

5.3 Holdback

The recipient of a capital project must file a project completion report with the CRTC six months after the project completion date (see [section 8](#) for definitions of "project completion report" and "project completion date"). The CRTC may, where appropriate, request that the project completion report be certified by the recipient's external auditor or by an auditor approved by the CRTC.

The CRTC will retain a holdback of 10% of the amount of funding provided for each project, which it will disburse six months after project completion, provided that:

- the project is completed to the CRTC's satisfaction;
- the CRTC has approved the final progress report and the final claim;

- the recipient has submitted the project completion report, and the report has been approved by the CRTC (as set out in section [4.2.2\(m\)](#)); and
- the recipient demonstrates that it is fulfilling the conditions of service.

If any of these requirements have not been met, the CRTC may retain the holdback amount until the recipient demonstrates compliance.

The 10% holdback will not apply to Indigenous recipients whose projects have approved funding of \$5 million or less.

6. Confidentiality

As part of the funding process, some information provided by an applicant will be treated as confidential, while other information will be made public. The CRTC will generally keep commercially sensitive details confidential. However, certain information must be disclosed at different stages of the process, such as in funding decisions, reports submitted by recipients, and reports used by the CRTC for monitoring and accountability purposes. The following section explains what information is kept confidential and what information may be made public.

6.1 Confidential information

Under subsection 39(1) of the [Telecommunications Act](#), the following types of information filed with the CRTC can be designated as confidential:

- information that is a trade secret;
- financial, commercial, scientific, or technical information that is confidential and that is treated consistently in a confidential manner by the person who submitted it; and
- information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to:
 - result in material financial loss or gain to any person;
 - prejudice the competitive position of any person; or
 - affect contractual or other negotiations of any person.

Under this definition, much of the content of applications will likely be considered as financial, commercial, or technical information for which the CRTC would typically uphold confidentiality. This content includes the following:

- project costing (e.g., pricing models, contractual arrangements, and revenue projections);
- site plans (e.g., project sites, point of presence sites, and specifics of technology deployment); and
- information regarding financial viability (e.g., credit statements).

For the reasons set out in [Telecom Regulatory Policy 2024-328 \(section H, subsection 2 of Appendix 1\)](#), Broadband Fund applicants can file their applications confidentially; there is no public process associated with funding applications. The CRTC recognizes the value of confidentiality during the application process and respects applicants' best interests.

6.2 Disclosure of information

When a conditional funding decision is published, the confidentiality of certain information about the selected project is no longer justified. Such information will need to be included in the conditional funding decision and the final funding decision to ensure transparency. For instance, the following information may be published:

- the name of the applicant;
- the number of households or kilometres of roads that are expected to be served as a result of the project;
- the number of kilometres of fibre transport to be built, if applicable;
- the names of the communities that the applicant proposes to serve;
- evidence of community support and/or consent from Indigenous communities;
- the amount of funding awarded;
- the geographic area(s) of the project;
- the technology to be implemented;
- the criteria that supported the selection of the project;
- the status of the project, including the year and the quarter of its anticipated completion; and
- for completed projects, the retail service packages and rates and, if applicable, the wholesale service packages and rates offered by the recipient.

The CRTC will not disclose financial, commercial, or technical information provided in the application that is consistently treated as confidential by the applicant. This includes information such as (i) the applicant's financial statements; (ii) projected revenues and expenses for the proposed project; (iii) detailed costing of the project; (iv) detailed network information; (v) detailed technical descriptions of the service and network design, including logical network diagrams, logical paths, supporting assumptions, and technical dependencies; (vi) equipment and facilities lists; and (vii) details of provisioning assumptions as filed in the application.

If an applicant objects to the disclosure of information that is not captured within the above list, the [Online Intake System](#) will enable the applicant to request confidentiality for that information even if the project is selected for funding.

Where the applicant objects to some or all of the information outlined above being made public as part of the funding decision, the [Online Intake System](#) will enable the applicant to identify the specific information that the applicant considers to be confidential (in addition to the information that is consistently treated as confidential under the [Telecommunications Act](#), as set out above) even if the project is selected for funding. The applicant will be required to provide reasons, as well as any supporting documents, to explain why the disclosure of the information in a funding decision or in public reports would not be in the public interest, including why the specific direct harm that would be likely to result from such disclosure would outweigh the public interest.

Once the project is completed, the retail service packages and rates and, if applicable, the wholesale service packages and rates proposed by the recipient and included in the statement of work will be published on the CRTC's website.

In addition, the recipient will be required to submit information in periodic reports or audits. The CRTC may use some of this information in aggregate form to publicly report on, for example, the number of households connected as a result of funding from the Broadband Fund, which geographic areas have universal-service-objective-level coverage, the amount of funding disbursed to date, and the overall progress of funded projects.

The CRTC is also required, pursuant to subsection 37(3) of the [Telecommunications Act](#), to provide any information the CRTC receives to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development or the Chief Statistician of Canada upon request. This obligation could include the provision of Broadband Fund applications.

The CRTC is further required under the [Telecommunications Act](#) to share application information, including project details and application status for submitted applications, with federal departments and agencies that fund telecommunications infrastructure in underserved areas, as well as provincial or territorial departments or agencies. Those departments and agencies may use the information only to coordinate financial support for access to telecommunications services in underserved areas. This is in addition to the CRTC's existing obligation to share information with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and with the Chief Statistician of Canada.

7. Security

The CRTC prioritizes the cybersecurity of any project funded by the Broadband Fund and requires applicants and recipients to show that they have considered, among other things, supply chain security (see [section 8](#) for a definition of "supply chain security"). To that end, information regarding the proposed project provided in the application and supporting documents, as well as any other information provided during the statement of work development phase, may be disclosed to the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, which is part of Communications Security Establishment Canada, to assist the CRTC in its review of the project's security risks.

The CRTC may consider overall cybersecurity, including supply chain security, in making its funding decisions. The CRTC may also require that recipients mitigate cybersecurity risks in their funded projects, and that they do so to the CRTC's satisfaction.

8. Definitions of key terms

Affected Community: A community, as defined below, that will receive new or improved broadband Internet services, or that is located where infrastructure will be built or upgraded as part of the proposed project. This includes a community that is located directly on the project path, even if it is not receiving services.

Applicant: An entity or a group of entities that submits an application to request funding for a proposed project in response to a call for applications for the Broadband Fund. An applicant becomes a funding recipient, or recipient, upon publication of a final funding decision.

Building broadband infrastructure: Constructing broadband networks or infrastructure through which broadband services will be delivered.

Community: A named place that includes households, businesses, or institutions (e.g., schools, medical facilities, libraries, community halls, First Nations band offices, or other buildings around which a community is formed).

Community representatives: Elected officials, associations, or other representative bodies of a given community.

Conditional funding decision: A decision published by the CRTC to announce a project that is selected for funding. In this type of decision, the CRTC conditionally approves the project for funding and sets out certain requirements that the applicant must meet, such as submitting its statement of work package for CRTC approval, before the project can receive final approval for funding.

Cost per household: The dollar amount of funding requested from the Broadband Fund for a project, divided by the number of eligible households served.

Eligibility date: The date the CRTC issues the conditional funding decision for a project. Project costs incurred on or after this date are eligible for reimbursement. Project costs incurred before this date cannot be claimed for reimbursement and are deemed ineligible (see also “Project start date”).

Final funding decision: A decision published by the CRTC when an applicant has fulfilled the requirements set out in the conditional funding decision to the CRTC’s satisfaction. In this type of decision, the CRTC approves the statement of work and provides final approval for funding for the project. A recipient cannot submit claims for eligible costs incurred for the project until the final funding decision is issued.

Funding recipient or recipient: An applicant whose proposed project has received final funding approval in a final funding decision.

Holdback: A portion (10%) of each recipient’s funding amount that the CRTC withholds until it confirms that the recipient has met or is fulfilling all relevant conditions outlined in the CRTC’s funding decisions for any capital project.

Household: A person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling.

Indigenous applicant: An eligible applicant that is:

- a profit or non-profit organization that is at least 51% owned and controlled by Indigenous peoples;
- a band council within the meaning of section 2 of the *Indian Act*; or
- an Indigenous government authority established by a self-government agreement or a comprehensive land claim agreement.

For applicant groups that include an Indigenous partner, that partner must exercise ownership and control over the funded infrastructure.

In-kind contributions: a contribution of goods or services other than cash grants. For the purpose of the Broadband Fund, in-kind contributions may include, but are not limited to, land permits, government infrastructure, equipment, long-term service contracts, assets, infrastructure, access, land donations, staff support, and tax breaks. Applicants can demonstrate in-kind support with general letters, letters of intent detailing the extent of support that will be provided, a service level agreement, or existing relationships with anchor institutions.

Material change: A change in any substantive aspect of the project listed by the CRTC in its reasons for selecting the project, including any change that could affect the project's eligibility, assessment, implementation timeline, or expected outcomes. For example, (i) a change in control of the recipient; (ii) a change in the proposed financing of the project, including a request for additional funding; (iii) a change in the nature or location of the project; or (iv) a major change in the cost or scope of the project, including an extension of the project completion date.

Official language minority community: Either a community outside the province of Quebec with a French-speaking population where English is predominant, or a community in the province of Quebec with an English-speaking population where French is predominant.

Operating broadband infrastructure: Managing, monitoring, and controlling existing broadband networks or infrastructure through which broadband services are being delivered.

Point of presence: A point in the network that connects transport infrastructure to local access infrastructure and is capable of offering wholesale and/or retail transport services.

Project: The activities described in the application for which funding is being requested, including the establishment of individual project sites.

Project completion date: The date a project is complete, all costs have been incurred, and telecommunications services are being offered. Although the CRTC recognizes that the timing of project implementation will vary, it expects each recipient to aim to complete its capital project and have service available within three years following the conditional funding decision.

Project completion report: A detailed report that a recipient must file with the CRTC six months after the project completion date. This report should demonstrate how the recipient meets the conditions and obligations specified in the conditional funding decision, the approved statement of work, and the final funding decision. It should also include details of the completed project, any project delays, service uptake, and any open access requests.

Project sites: The structures and facilities constructed or otherwise established by the recipient through implementation of the project.

Project start date: The date an applicant proposes to begin implementing its project and incurring eligible costs. This date must be on or after the conditional funding decision is published (the eligibility date) but can be before the publication of the final funding decision. If the applicant incurs project costs before the CRTC issues the conditional funding decision, those costs are not eligible for reimbursement under the Broadband Fund and are at the sole expense of the applicant (see also “Eligibility date”).

Progress report: A report outlining project details, such as the project’s implementation status and an update on the project’s costs. The recipient must file its first progress report after the final funding decision is published. It must file subsequent progress reports every three months thereafter until the project completion date. The Commission has the sole discretion to modify the reporting frequency and will notify the recipient of any changes to the reporting schedule.

Reliable (financially): The trustworthiness of an entity based on the strength of its financial statements. To be reliable, information in a financial statement should be an accurate, verifiable, and faithful representation of an entity’s financial status that is presented neutrally (including the use of conservative estimates under conditions of uncertainty).

Retail open access: Access to funded transport infrastructure available to non-carriers, including end-customers such as businesses, institutions, and other government and non-government organizations.

Satellite-dependent community: A community that relies on satellite transport capacity for one or more telecommunications services such as voice, wireless (both fixed and mobile), and Internet services. This includes communities that receive universal-service-objective-level services through low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites.

Satellite-dependent community project: An operational project or a capital project to provide improved telecommunications services to a satellite-dependent community.

Solvent: A state of financial soundness whereby an entity can meet its monetary obligations when they fall due.

Statement of work: A report provided by the recipient, after the funding decision is published, that provides the detailed plan for the funded project, including, but not limited to, the following items: total project budget, schedule of the construction phase, list of technology materials, detailed engineer network diagrams, project start and completion dates, work breakdown structures, and list of risks and risk-mitigation strategies.

Supply chain security: The management of risks and threats, including physical and cyber threats, while working with other organizations involved in the supply chain. A security compromise anywhere in the supply chain could allow a cyber threat actor to exploit a device or one of its components once it is connected to a company's secured network. Supply chains can be compromised before or after the delivery of a product or service, during software updates, or during hardware upgrades.

Universal service objective project: A capital project to build or upgrade broadband infrastructure in an eligible geographic area, including terrestrial transport infrastructure if needed, to achieve the universal service objective in an underserved area that is not considered a satellite-dependent community.

Wholesale open access: The provision of a telecommunications service or facility to a third-party service provider, regardless of whether that service provider rebills the service or facility to another entity or uses it internally to support the services it bills.