



**Industry, Energy and Technology**

**Call for Proposals  
from Service Providers  
Cellular Service Improvement Initiative**

**Date Issued: December 4, 2023**  
**Revised Closing Date: February 9, 2024**  
(original January 26, 2024 deadline extended)

## 2023 Cellular Service Improvement Initiative

The objective of the cost-shared Cellular Service Improvement Initiative is to improve the business case for telecommunication carriers to expand coverage to communities that are currently unserved or underserved and facilitate new investments in the province's cellular service infrastructure. At the conclusion of this Call, it is expected that cellular service providers, working in partnership with interested communities/municipalities, regional organizations, and other government partners, will be invited to prepare cost-shared proposals for consideration.

To assist with identifying unserved and underserved areas in the province, IET launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) in June 2023 for communities and regions who wish to be considered in the initiative. EOIs were received until September 15, 2023.

Service providers interested in submitting proposals during this Call may receive a list of EOIs received from communities/regions by contacting: **Dion Sheppard (ddsheppa@gov.nl.ca or 709-729-7274)**. The list of communities should be reviewed and technical commentary provided on solution feasibility and the potential of enhancing coverage in the noted areas.

After the close of the Call for Proposals from providers, IET will review each community EOI in relation to cellular service provider's proposed solutions and interests. Based on best-fit solutions, providers may be invited to submit an application for funding for a cellular enhancement project in a number of communities, as identified by IET.

Any resulting projects will be cost-shared with the following funding parameters:

- Provincial Government – up to **40%**.
- Cellular service provider – minimum **50%**.
- Community/municipal and other government partners, other private sector, non-profit organizations – remaining **10%** (Shortlisted communities must verify financial contributions prior to funding being approved for projects).

### Eligible Call for Proposal Proponents:

- Telecommunication providers that are eligible to operate in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in good standing with the Province.

### Eligible Expenses

- Eligible expenses to be considered for subsequent funding applications include:
  - machinery/equipment.
  - building material/supplies.
  - travel considered fundamental to the implementation of the initiative.
  - GST/HST (applicants who are entitled to a CRA refund or credit on a portion of the GST/HST paid on goods and services deemed eligible will be allowed to claim only the portion of tax not refunded by CRA).
  - any other costs deemed eligible by IET.

### Ineligible Activities

- The following activities are **not eligible** for funding consideration:
  - core administrative functions of any organization.
  - administration fees.
  - entertainment.

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

The desired outcome of the Cellular Service Improvement Initiative is to provide selected communities/regions with best option service and speeds for the geographic region, using a minimal cellular service connectivity speed of Long Term Evolution (LTE) standard or better.

The proposal should outline the technical and financial requirements for coverage solutions for each community/region identified during the EOI for communities:

### 1. Proposed Solution(s)

- Community/region location and existing surrounding cell sites.
- Best-fit technical solution proposed, demonstrating that it is the most effective solution for the community/region and expected resulting coverage.
- Partial solution alternatives, if relevant.
- Benefits and any limitations of proposed solution(s),
- Financial summary:
  - capital costs
  - operation and maintenance (O&M) - annual, and net present value (10 years)
  - total project value
  - Contributions anticipated - service provider, Government, community partner(s)
- The proposal must demonstrate that long term maintenance and operations related to the infrastructure is the responsibility of the service provider.
- Any related technical and geospatial data, in a format acceptable to IET, as requested.

### 2. Coverage

- Anticipated coverage specs from solution(s) proposed, and catchment from the new infrastructure installations including current and future coverage maps.
- An overview of the existing and future subscription base (e.g., number of subscribers), types of clients (households, schools, businesses, anchor tenants, etc.).
- In areas where there are a number of communities in close proximity that are unserved or underserved, the proposal must demonstrate the expected coverage and potential limitations of the proposed solution(s) for each community involved.

### 3. Project Implementation

- Service provider's intention and capacity to complete a project in noted area within the next two-three years.
- Capital works timeline expectations, including estimated start date and completion date for each project component.
- Brief description of any partner organizations required for project completion.

### 4. Project Management

- Capacity to manage projects, including administrative and technical capabilities, as demonstrated by:
  - business history, annual revenues, years in business, types of services offered, province of operation, client base, key personnel, and, if applicable, previous broadband funding (federal and/or provincial) received or requested for cellular service projects.
  - track record in cellular service deployment or similar infrastructure projects.

- A list of all project-related contractors and consultants and their proposed roles.
- A description of any risks, level of risk, and strategies to mitigate or manage these risks.

## 5. Regulatory Requirements

- Identify land ownership, permits, licenses or environmental approvals required.

## 6. Financial Requirements

- Budget table.
- HST (include if applicable and requested).
- Any particular expenditure required for the implementation should be itemized in the project costs per site:
  - total cost of project including non-eligible expenses.
  - detailed breakdown of eligible expenses.
  - construction costs.
  - power costs
  - O&M net present value (10 years).
- Sources of funding.
- Amount requested from IET.
- Total sources of funding must equal total project cost.
- Explanatory notes, including financial ability to cover project.
- Costs per community/region should be identified clearly.

## PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

IET encourages partnerships and collaboration for the most cost effective and innovative solutions. IET reserves the right to advance proposals based upon:

- a) creating the greatest coverage of communities,
- b) developing the greatest economic impact in a region or community,
- c) enhancing economic development by providing cellular service to communities, which currently do not have access to or have limited access to cellular service, and
- d) maximum coverage to the region(s).

Proposals and recommended solutions will be reviewed on the following selection criteria to assist with identifying potential cellular improvement projects. IET will have final decision over communities and providers invited to submit subsequent applications for funding for cellular improvement projects under this initiative.

Criteria	Details	Value	Score
<b>Proposed Solution(s) &amp; Coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of proposed solution(s).</li> <li>• Resulting coverage enhancements.</li> <li>• Solution(s) benefits.</li> </ul>	30	
<b>Project Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital works commitments &amp; timelines.</li> <li>• Format, clarity and quality of the proposed work plan and timeline for key tasks.</li> </ul>	15	
<b>Financial Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costing of proposed solution(s).</li> <li>• Contribution commitments.</li> </ul>	25	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O&amp;M commitments.</li> <li>• Lowest cost solution may not necessarily be deemed best fit.</li> </ul>		
<b>Company and Project Team Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Profile.</li> <li>• Capacity to manage projects, including technical and management capacity.</li> <li>• Track record in cellular service deployment or infrastructure projects.</li> <li>• References provided relating to project experience.</li> </ul>	20	
<b>Understanding of the Call for Proposals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of initiative and analysis required.</li> <li>• Clarity of information.</li> <li>• Detailed methodology in addressing the connectivity gaps identified.</li> </ul>	10	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	

## SUBMISSION DATE

To express interest, service providers must make a written submission outlining best-fit solution recommendations and related costing for the identified areas. All documents and other records in the custody of or under the control of some or all of the Government or its representatives may be subject to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* (Newfoundland and Labrador).

Proposals are to be submitted via email to:

**Dion Sheppard**  
**Dept. of Industry, Energy and Technology**  
**Telephone: 709-729-7274**  
**Email: [ddsheppa@gov.nl.ca](mailto:ddsheppa@gov.nl.ca)**

All communication regarding this Call for Proposals shall be directed to the contact noted above.

Proposals must be submitted by **12 noon NDT, February 9, 2024** (Note: original January 26, 2024 deadline extended). IET will provide written confirmation that the proposal is received.

IET reserves the right not to accept any proposal, to cancel and/or re-issue this Call for Proposals at any time, without penalty or cost to Government.

IET reserves the right to discuss proposed solution(s) in whole and in part with proponent(s) and communities who expressed interest; to accept any proposal in whole or in part; or to accept subsequent project applications from any proponent(s) for any or all aspects of their proposal. IET does not bind itself to accept potential projects from sole proponents, lowest priced solutions, highest ranked proposals, or any of the proposals received through this Call for Proposals.