



Industry, Energy and Technology

**Expression of Interest
Cellular Service Improvement Initiative**

Date Issued: June 20, 2023

2023 Cellular Service Improvement Initiative

This cost-shared initiative will help facilitate new investments in the province's cellular service infrastructure to improve the business case for telecommunication carriers to expand coverage and provide service to communities that are currently unserved or underserved.

Administered by the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology (IET), through its Regional Development Fund, the **Cellular Service Improvement Initiative** will primarily target communities that do not have or have limited access to cellular service.

Phase 1: Expression of Interest - Communities

IET is seeking cost effective 'best fit' solutions that can expand and maximize cellular coverage to more communities.

To assist with identifying unserved and underserved areas in the province, IET is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from communities who want to be considered in the program to improve cellular service.

Communities have until **September 15, 2023** to confirm interest in the program, identify an underserved area, and indicate capacity to contribute financially to the project (normally 10 per cent of total project costs). Total project costs will be verified in a subsequent Request for Proposals to cellular providers. To ensure minimum financial contribution required is met, partnerships are encouraged among stakeholders such as:

- Municipalities/communities
- Non-profit community, business, or development organizations
- Other non-profit community-oriented organizations including co-operatives and other social enterprises
- Local industry

Communities will be selected from the Expression of Interest based on project feasibility.

Phase 2: Implementation Request for Proposals – Service Providers

After the close of Phase 1: EOI - Communities, IET will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to cellular providers to address gaps and deficiencies in cellular service infrastructure in unserved and underserved communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Please note that cellular service providers will be the applicants to this subsequent Phase 2: RFP.

A listing of communities received during the Phase 1: EOI will be given to providers interested in submitting proposals during Phase 2: RFP of the initiative. IET and providers will review each unserved or underserved area identified through the EOI, the cellular enhancement feasibility of each area, and related costing to select communities to participate in the initiative.

Funding Contributions for Selected Communities

The Cellular Service Improvement Initiative is a cost-shared cellular service funding program. The objective is to encourage service providers—working in partnership with interested communities/municipalities, regional organizations, private sector and other government partner—to prepare cost-shared proposals during Phase 2: RFP with funding parameters of:

- Provincial Government – maximum **40%**
- Cellular service provider – minimum **50%**
- Community/municipal and other government partners, other private sector, non-profit organizations – remaining **10%**

Successful communities will be notified and provided related project costs, and must verify financial contributions prior to funding being approved for projects. Please note that project implementation timelines may be dependent on providers' capital project plans.

Expression of Interest and Questions

To express interest and be considered for the Cellular Service Improvement Initiative, communities must make a written submission, including targeted geographic area, financial contribution probability, any potential partners, and overall benefits to the area.

Expressions of Interest to be sent via email to:

Dion Sheppard
Dept. of Industry, Energy and Technology
Telephone: 709-729-7274
Email: ddsheppa@gov.nl.ca

IET will provide written confirmation that the Expression of Interest is received/registered once all pertinent information is provided. Results of the EOI will be provided to applicants once the review is completed in the fall.

Expression of Interest Submission Deadline

Expressions of Interest must be received by no later than **September 15, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. NST**. in order to be provided as part of the Phase 2: Request for Proposals to service providers.