



Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-211 encompassing Telecom Decisions CRTC 2022-212, 2022-213, 2022-214, and 2022-215

PDF version

References: 2019-372, 2019-372-1, and 2019-372-2

Ottawa, 4 August 2022

Public record: 1011-NOC2019-0372

Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Bell Canada’s and Bell Mobility Inc.’s access and mobile projects in Manitoba and Quebec

Summary

The Commission **approves** four funding applications by Bell Canada and Bell Mobility Inc. for a total of up to \$7,724,399 to build and/or upgrade local fixed access and mobile wireless infrastructure in a total of three communities and along approximately 110 kilometres of eligible major transportation roads in Manitoba and Quebec. The individual funding awards are set out in the following decisions, which are encompassed by this decision:

- In Telecom Decision 2022-212, the Commission **approves** up to \$862,638 for two communities in Manitoba.
- In Telecom Decision 2022-213, the Commission **approves** up to \$486,547 for approximately 20 kilometres of multiple sections of a road near one community in Manitoba.
- In Telecom Decision 2022-214, the Commission **approves** up to \$751,356 for approximately 30 kilometres of multiple sections of a road in Quebec.
- In Telecom Decision 2022-215, the Commission **approves** up to \$5,623,858 for approximately 60 kilometres of multiple sections of a road in Quebec.

Applications

1. In response to the Commission’s second call for applications for funding from the Broadband Fund set out in Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-372, Bell Canada and Bell Mobility Inc. (Bell Mobility) filed various applications. In the four applications discussed in this decision, they requested funding for one access project by Bell Canada and three mobile projects by Bell Mobility to improve the broadband Internet services available to eligible areas in a total of three communities and along

approximately 110 kilometres of eligible roads in Manitoba and Quebec. Bell Canada and Bell Mobility proposed to implement projects that will offer mobile wireless services or fixed broadband Internet access services consistent with the universal service objective, which the Commission defined in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496.¹

2. Details for each application are provided in the individual funding decisions included in the Appendix to this decision:² Telecom Decision 2022-212, Telecom Decision 2022-213, Telecom Decision 2022-214, and Telecom Decision 2022-215.

Commission's analysis

3. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377, the Commission established the eligibility and assessment criteria for the Broadband Fund. In Telecom Decision 2022-204, the introductory decision accompanying the round of funding decisions issued today, the Commission provided background information and described the eligibility and assessment process and selection considerations used to evaluate and select projects to be funded. In that decision, the Commission also set out the conditions that funding recipients must meet in order to receive funding for their projects. The introductory decision should be read in conjunction with this decision.

Eligibility criteria

4. Bell Canada's and Bell Mobility's applications met each of the relevant eligibility criteria applicable to access and mobile projects.³ First, as financially solvent and reliable Canadian corporations that are eligible to operate as Canadian carriers and that have more than three years' experience deploying and operating broadband infrastructure in Canada, Bell Canada and Bell Mobility met each of the criteria for eligible applicants. In addition, Bell Canada and Bell Mobility demonstrated that they will invest more than a nominal amount in each project, and that the projects would not be financially viable without funding from the Broadband Fund. Further,

¹ The universal service objective is that Canadians, in urban areas as well as in rural and remote areas, have access to voice services and broadband Internet access services, on both fixed and mobile wireless networks. To help achieve this objective, projects funded by the Broadband Fund should (i) enable Canadian residential and business fixed broadband Internet access service subscribers to access speeds of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload, and to subscribe to a service offering with an unlimited data allowance; and (ii) make available the latest generally deployed mobile wireless technology not only in Canadian homes and businesses, but on as many major transportation roads as possible in Canada.

² The content of each of these applications was designated confidential pursuant to section 39 of the *Telecommunications Act*, but certain details are being disclosed in this decision, consistent with section 11 – *Confidentiality* of the Application Guide, set out in the Appendix to Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-372, and as agreed to by the applicant. Other elements of the applications remain confidential but were considered when the Commission evaluated the applications.

³ Specifically, the Commission used the eligibility criteria set out in sections 6.1.1(a) to (d) of the Application Guide, applicable to applicants; in sections 6.1.2(a) to (c), applicable to all project types; in sections 6.1.3(d) to (f), applicable to access projects; and in sections 6.1.3(g) to (i), applicable to mobile projects. Because the applicant does not comprise a partnership, joint venture, or consortium, the criterion set out in section 6.1.1(e) does not apply.

Bell Canada and Bell Mobility provided evidence that they consulted or attempted to consult with communities affected by the projects, either directly or through community representatives. Finally, the projects will serve eligible geographic areas and will meet the requirements regarding pricing and affordability (applicable to broadband Internet access services and mobile wireless services), service speeds (applicable to broadband Internet access services only), and the technology to be used to deliver service (applicable to mobile wireless services only).

Assessment criteria

5. On the basis of its evaluation of Bell Canada's and Bell Mobility's projects against the assessment criteria for access and mobile projects,⁴ as set out below and in the Appendix to this decision, the Commission finds that the projects are all of high quality and will assist in achieving the goals of the Broadband Fund.
6. The projects are all technically sound and capable of delivering speeds and data allowances consistent with the universal service objective. The proposed equipment is capable of delivering the proposed services, and the projects are all scalable and resilient. In addition, the projects will implement widely adopted and supported technologies with good long-term sustainability.
7. For the access project, Bell Canada proposed residential retail broadband service plans with various data limits, speeds, and prices, including a plan targeting low-income households. However, the Commission considers that the price proposed for the plan that Bell Canada identified as suitable for low-income households is high. Although the Commission concludes that Bell Canada's project is of high quality based on a balanced application of all the relevant assessment criteria, the Commission encourages Bell Canada to review the price proposed for its low-income plan prior to submitting its statement of work. The Commission also encourages Bell Canada to submit a new price for the plan in order to enable low-income households to better access broadband services at affordable rates, which would promote affordability and consumer interests, and further advance the telecommunications policy objectives set out in paragraph 14 below.
8. The construction of mobile wireless projects represents a long-term investment in critical infrastructure expansion and public safety. These types of projects are not necessarily expected to be profitable. With these factors in mind, the Commission considered various financial indicators to assess the financial viability of Bell Canada's and Bell Mobility's projects, and finds them to be financially sound and the proposed project costs to be reasonable. In addition, the Commission considers that for each project, a suitable proportion of the funding for the proposed total project costs comes from sources other than the Broadband Fund, and finds that the cost per household to the Broadband Fund is reasonable for the access project.

⁴ Specifically, the assessment criteria set out in the Application Guide in sections 6.2.1(a) to (d) and in sections 6.2.2(f) to (m).

9. The remaining evaluation details and the conclusions specific to each Bell Canada and Bell Mobility application are set out in the individual funding decisions for the projects, which are included in the Appendix to this decision.

Conclusion

10. As indicated in the funding decisions in the Appendix, the Commission **approves** four funding applications by Bell Canada and Bell Mobility for a total of up to \$7,724,399 to build and/or upgrade local fixed access and mobile wireless infrastructure in a total of three communities and along approximately 110 kilometres of eligible major transportation roads in Manitoba and Quebec. The Commission's approvals in the individual funding decisions are subject to the directions and conditions set out in paragraphs 30 to 40 of the introductory decision (Telecom Decision 2022-204).
11. The Commission reminds Bell Canada and Bell Mobility of the funding condition related to the duty to consult (see subparagraph 36(g) of Telecom Decision 2022-204) and expects Bell Canada and Bell Mobility to keep local Indigenous groups informed of their projects so that the Commission can be satisfied that any adverse impact on Aboriginal or treaty rights will be identified and addressed.

Policy Directions

12. The 2006 Policy Direction⁵ and the 2019 Policy Direction⁶ (collectively, the Policy Directions) state that the Commission, in exercising its powers and performing its duties under the *Telecommunications Act* (the Act), shall implement the telecommunications policy objectives set out in section 7 of the Act, in accordance with the considerations set out therein,⁷ and should specify how its decisions can, as applicable, promote competition, affordability, consumer interests, and innovation.
13. The Commission considers that its decision to approve funding from the Broadband Fund for the projects described in detail in this decision and in the individual funding decisions encompassed herein is consistent with the Policy Directions.
14. Specifically, this decision to approve funding for four projects to build and/or upgrade infrastructure in order to improve fixed broadband Internet access services and mobile

⁵ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

⁶ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives to Promote Competition, Affordability, Consumer Interests and Innovation*, SOR/2019-227, 17 June 2019

⁷ The relevant considerations are subparagraph 1(a)(i) of the 2006 Policy Direction, which states that the Commission should rely on market forces to the maximum extent feasible as the means of achieving the telecommunications policy objectives, and paragraph 1(a) of the 2019 Policy Direction, which states that the Commission should consider how its decisions can promote competition, affordability, consumer interests and innovation.

wireless services in eligible areas in or near three communities and along approximately 110 kilometres of major transportation roads in Manitoba and Quebec will help to close the gap in connectivity in underserved areas. There would be no business case for the projects without funding from the Broadband Fund. Funding the projects will help connect roads and enable approximately 600 households to access voice services and/or broadband Internet access services that meet or exceed the universal service objective level, and thus respond to the social and economic needs of consumers. In doing so, this decision will implement the telecommunications policy objectives, including those set out in paragraphs 7(a), (b), and (h) of the Act.⁸

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Broadband Fund – Second call for applications – Introductory decision regarding the August 2022 round of project funding approvals*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-204, 4 August 2022
- *Broadband Fund – Second call for applications*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2019-372, 13 November 2019; as amended by Telecom Notices of Consultation CRTC 2019-372-1, 20 March 2020; and 2019-372-2, 27 April 2020
- *Development of the Commission’s Broadband Fund*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2018-377, 27 September 2018
- *Modern telecommunications services – The path forward for Canada’s digital economy*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-496, 21 December 2016

⁸ The cited policy objectives of the Act are 7(a) to facilitate the orderly development throughout Canada of a telecommunications system that serves to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the social and economic fabric of Canada and its regions; 7(b) to render reliable and affordable telecommunications services of high quality accessible to Canadians in both urban and rural areas in all regions of Canada; and 7(h) to respond to the economic and social requirements of users of telecommunications services.

Appendix to Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-211

Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-212

Ottawa, 4 August 2022

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Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Bell Canada’s access project in Manitoba

Application

1. Bell Canada requested \$862,638 from the Broadband Fund to implement a project that will provide improved broadband Internet access services to eligible areas in two communities in Manitoba. Bell Canada indicated that it will offer services with unlimited data, with speeds ranging from 10 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload (10/10 Mbps) to 1,500/940 Mbps, in the communities of Cranberry Portage and Snow Lake.

Commission’s analysis

2. As noted in Telecom Decision 2022-211 above, this application to serve eligible areas in two communities in Manitoba has met all the relevant eligibility criteria, and the Commission has found it to be of high quality based on an evaluation of the project against the relevant assessment criteria. However, the Commission encourages Bell Canada to review the price proposed for its low-income plan and to submit a new price for that plan.
3. Bell Canada provided evidence of support for the project from one of the affected communities, which included a resolution authorizing that support.

Conclusion

4. In selecting the project for funding, the Commission concludes that, in providing broadband Internet access services with speeds of 1,500/940 Mbps and an unlimited data allowance, the project is consistent with the universal service objective and will have a significant positive impact on the eligible areas to be served, which encompass approximately 600 households. In addition, the Commission concludes that supporting this project represents an efficient use of the funding available from the main component of the Broadband Fund.
5. In light of the above, the Commission **approves**, to the extent and subject to the directions and conditions set out in paragraphs 30 to 40 of the introductory decision (Telecom Decision 2022-204), up to a maximum of \$862,638 from the Broadband Fund to be distributed to Bell Canada for the purpose of the access project described above and as set out in the approved statement of work.

Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-213

Ottawa, 4 August 2022

Public record: 1011-NOC2019-0372

Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Bell Mobility Inc.’s mobile project in Manitoba (Provincial Trunk Highway 20)

Application

1. Bell Mobility Inc. (Bell Mobility) requested \$486,547 from the Broadband Fund to implement a project that will improve mobile wireless services along approximately 20 kilometres of multiple sections of an eligible road near one community in Manitoba. Bell Mobility proposed to use long-term evolution – advanced (LTE-A) technology to offer services with voice and/or text, with data limits ranging from 0 gigabytes (GB) per month (voice-only plans) to unlimited, along Provincial Trunk Highway 20 near Camperville.

Commission’s analysis

2. As noted in Telecom Decision 2022-211 above, this application to serve eligible areas along multiple sections of a major transportation road near one community in Manitoba has met all the relevant eligibility criteria, and the Commission has found it to be of high quality based on an evaluation of the project against the relevant assessment criteria.
3. Bell Mobility provided limited evidence of its attempt to consult with communities located near the project area. The Commission considers that meaningful engagement with affected communities is an important element for a project funded by the Broadband Fund and therefore expects Bell Mobility to undertake further community engagement activities, as it committed to do in its application, prior to submitting its statement of work for this project.

Conclusion

4. In selecting the project for funding, the Commission concludes that, in providing mobile wireless services using an LTE-A network, the project exceeds the universal service objective criterion of implementing the latest generally deployed mobile wireless technology, which is currently LTE. The project will therefore have a significant positive impact on the eligible areas to be served, which encompass approximately 20 kilometres of multiple sections of a major transportation road. In addition, the Commission concludes that supporting this project represents an efficient use of the funding available from the main component of the Broadband Fund.
5. In light of the above, the Commission **approves**, to the extent and subject to the directions and conditions set out in paragraphs 30 to 40 of the introductory decision

(Telecom Decision 2022-204), up to a maximum of \$486,547 from the Broadband Fund to be distributed to Bell Mobility for the purpose of the mobile project described above and as set out in the approved statement of work.

Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-214

Ottawa, 4 August 2022

Public record: 1011-NOC2019-0372

Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Bell Mobility Inc.’s mobile project in Quebec (Route 167)

Application

1. Bell Mobility Inc. (Bell Mobility) requested \$751,356 from the Broadband Fund to implement a project that will improve mobile wireless services along approximately 30 kilometres of multiple sections of an eligible road in Quebec. Bell Mobility proposed to use long-term evolution – advanced (LTE-A) technology to offer services with voice and/or text, with data limits ranging from 0 gigabytes (GB) per month (voice-only plans) to unlimited, along Route 167.

Commission’s analysis

2. As noted in Telecom Decision 2022-211 above, this application to serve eligible areas along multiple sections of a major transportation road in Quebec has met all the relevant eligibility criteria, and the Commission has found it to be of high quality based on an evaluation of the project against the relevant assessment criteria.
3. Bell Mobility provided evidence of support for the project from a representative of the provincial government.

Conclusion

4. In selecting the project for funding, the Commission concludes that, in providing mobile wireless services using an LTE-A network, the project exceeds the universal service objective criterion of implementing the latest generally deployed mobile wireless technology, which is currently LTE. The project will therefore have a significant positive impact on the eligible areas to be served, which encompass approximately 30 kilometres of multiple sections of a major transportation road. In addition, the Commission concludes that supporting this project represents an efficient use of the funding available from the main component of the Broadband Fund.
5. In light of the above, the Commission **approves**, to the extent and subject to the directions and conditions set out in paragraphs 30 to 40 of the introductory decision (Telecom Decision 2022-204), up to a maximum of \$751,356 from the Broadband Fund to be distributed to Bell Mobility for the purpose of the mobile project described above and as set out in the approved statement of work.

Telecom Decision CRTC 2022-215

Ottawa, 4 August 2022

Public record: 1011-NOC2019-0372

Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Bell Mobility Inc.’s mobile project in Quebec (Route 155)

Application

1. Bell Mobility Inc. (Bell Mobility) requested \$5,623,858 from the Broadband Fund to implement a project that will improve mobile wireless services along approximately 60 kilometres of multiple sections of an eligible road in Quebec. Bell Mobility proposed to use long-term evolution – advanced (LTE-A) technology to offer services with voice and/or text, with data limits ranging from 0 gigabytes (GB) per month (voice-only plans) to unlimited, along Route 155.

Commission’s analysis

2. As noted in Telecom Decision 2022-211 above, this application to serve eligible areas along multiple sections of a major transportation road in Quebec has met all the relevant eligibility criteria, and the Commission has found it to be of high quality based on an evaluation of the project against the relevant assessment criteria.
3. Bell Mobility provided evidence of support for the project from a representative of the provincial government.

Conclusion

4. In selecting the project for funding, the Commission concludes that, in providing mobile wireless services using an LTE-A network, the project exceeds the universal service objective criterion of implementing the latest generally deployed mobile wireless technology, which is currently LTE. The project will therefore have a significant positive impact on the eligible areas to be served, which encompass approximately 60 kilometres of multiple sections of a major transportation road. In addition, the Commission concludes that supporting this project represents an efficient use of the funding available from the main component of the Broadband Fund.
5. In light of the above, the Commission **approves**, to the extent and subject to the directions and conditions set out in paragraphs 30 to 40 of the introductory decision (Telecom Decision 2022-204), up to a maximum of \$5,623,858 from the Broadband Fund to be distributed to Bell Mobility for the purpose of the mobile project described above and as set out in the approved statement of work.