



Telecom Order CRTC 2024-284

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Reference: 2021-253

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Broadband Fund – Change request – TELUS Communications Inc.’s access and mobile project in British Columbia (Xeni Gwet’in)

Summary

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

Through its Broadband Fund, the Commission 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.

With this order, the Commission approves TELUS Communications Inc.’s request to postpone the completion date of its access and mobile project in Xeni Gwet’in. This revised timeline will support the continued effort to complete this project and ensure connectivity.

Background

1. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377, the Commission set out objectives and governing frameworks for the Broadband Fund. In the Application Guide appended to Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-372, which initiated the second call for Broadband Fund applications, the Commission defined a material change as including a major change in the cost or scope of a project.
2. TELUS Communications Inc. (TCI) participated in the second call. In Telecom Decision 2021-253, TCI received approval for that application. The approved application supports providing fixed wireless access services and introducing Long-Term Evolution – Advanced (LTE-A) mobile services to eligible areas in one community in British Columbia: Xeni Gwet’in.
3. The Commission later received written acceptance of the funding award from TCI and approved TCI’s related statement of work in Telecom Order 2022-187, subject to the conditions of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2021-251. Among the conditions of funding is the requirement, set out in paragraph 32 of Telecom Decision 2021-251, that any material changes to the project be approved by the Commission. An application for material changes is known as a change request.

Change request

4. In the Application Guide appended to Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-372, the Commission stipulated its expectation that projects be completed within three years of the funding award. Telecom Decision 2021-253 was issued on 4 August 2021, creating an expectation that this project be completed by 4 August 2024.
5. However, on 17 July 2024, TCI submitted a change request, seeking additional time to complete the project before the end of summer 2025. TCI stated that additional time is needed due to factors submitted in confidence but relating to ongoing negotiations with the community to finalize the location of the build.

Commission's analysis

6. The Commission has reviewed the information submitted with the change request.
7. The Commission underlines the importance of addressing connectivity gaps quickly by completing Broadband Fund projects in a timely manner.¹ However, the Commission is satisfied that, under the circumstances and based on its analysis of the materials submitted, the revised timeline is appropriate.
8. Accordingly, the Commission considers that approving the change request would satisfy the objectives set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377.

Conclusion

9. The Commission therefore approves TCI's change request and expects that the project be completed before 22 September 2025. All funding conditions and conditions imposed under section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*, as set out in Telecom Decision 2021-251, continue to apply.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for TELUS Communications Inc.'s access and mobile project in British Columbia (Xeni Gwet'in)*, Telecom Order CRTC 2022-187, 19 July 2022
- *Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for TELUS Communications Inc.'s and TELUS Mobility's access and mobile projects in Alberta and British Columbia*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-252 encompassing Telecom Decisions CRTC 2021-253, 2021-254, and 2021-255, 4 August 2021

¹ Detailed operational information in respect of funded Broadband Fund projects is generally treated in confidence. See Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377, paragraphs 405–408, and section 11 (“Confidentiality”) of the Application Guide cited in paragraph 1 of this order.

- *Broadband Fund – Second call for applications – Introductory decision regarding the third round of project funding approvals*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-251, 4 August 2021
- *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