



Telecom Order CRTC 2024-308

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Broadband Fund – Change request – Cogeco Connexion Inc.’s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project – November 2024

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 Cogeco Connexion Inc.’s request to postpone the completion date of its transport fibre project in Algonquin, Ontario.

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. Cogeco Connexion Inc. (Cogeco) participated in the second call. In Telecom Decision 2021-110, Cogeco received approval for that application. The approved application supports improving the broadband Internet access services available to eligible areas in Algonquin, Ontario with an 11-kilometre transport link and point of presence.
3. The Commission later received written acceptance of this funding award from Cogeco and approved Cogeco’s related statement of work in Telecom Order 2021-346, subject to the conditions of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2021-103.
4. Among the conditions of funding is the requirement, set out in paragraph 14 of Telecom Decision 2021-110, that any material changes to the project be approved by the Commission. An application for a material change is known as a change request.

Change requests

5. The Application Guide appended to Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-372 stipulated the Commission's expectation that projects be completed within three years of the funding award. Telecom Decision 2021-110 was issued on 19 March 2021, creating an expectation that this project be completed by 19 March 2024.
6. In Telecom Order 2024-86, the Commission approved change requests from Cogeco to increase the funding for this project by \$37,213 (7.8%), bringing the total funding amount from \$477,678 to \$514,891, and to delay the project's completion by seven months to the spring of 2024. These were the second and third change requests for the project, following an initial change request that affected the project's timeline but not the overall completion date expected by the Commission.
7. On 2 October 2024, Cogeco submitted a fourth change request. This request seeks an additional seven months to complete the project, from the spring of 2024 to the end of 2024, due to delays Cogeco experienced in the aerial permitting and approval process.

Commission's analysis

8. The Commission has reviewed the materials submitted and factors described. The Commission underlines the importance of addressing connectivity gaps quickly by completing Broadband Fund projects in a timely manner.¹ The Commission also notes, with concern, that the change request was not submitted until more than six months after the project's expected completion date.
9. The delays in aerial permitting and approvals are extraordinary delays. Having reviewed the substantial progress made towards project completion, the Commission is satisfied that these third-party administrative delays were beyond Cogeco's reasonable contemplation and control, and contributed to the late submission date.
10. The Commission considers that, under the circumstances, approving the change request would satisfy the objectives identified by the approach set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377, but reminds all parties that any change requests relating to material timing changes must take existing timeline expectations into account.

Conclusion

11. The Commission approves Cogeco's change request and expects that the project be completed by 31 December 2024. All funding conditions and conditions imposed under section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*, as set out in Telecom Decision 2021-110, continue to apply.

Secretary General

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.

Related documents

- *Broadband Fund – Change request – Cogeco Connexion Inc. ’s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project – April 2024*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-86, 26 April 2024
- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Cogeco Connexion Inc. ’s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-346, 22 October 2021
- *Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Cogeco Connexion Inc. ’s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-110, 19 March 2021
- *Broadband Fund – Second call for applications – Introductory decision regarding the second round of project funding approvals*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-103, 19 March 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