



Telecom Order CRTC 2021-135

PDF version

Ottawa, 16 April 2021

Public record: 1011-NOC2019-0191

Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Northwestel Inc.’s Northwest Territories fibre project

Background

1. In *Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Northwestel Inc.’s Northwest Territories fibre project*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2020-258, 12 August 2020 (Telecom Decision 2020-258), the Commission awarded funding to Northwestel Inc. (Northwestel) for the project proposed in its application filed in response to the first call for applications for funding from the Broadband Fund. On 14 August 2020, the Commission received written acceptance of this funding award from Northwestel.
2. On 8 December 2020, the Commission received Northwestel’s proposed statement of work, including the information package regarding its Northwest Territories fibre project (the project).
3. The Commission received Northwestel’s community engagement report on 8 December 2020 and, after a thorough review, finds that Northwestel has complied with the condition of approval set out at subparagraph 14(c) of Telecom Decision 2020-258. The Commission expects that engagement activities will continue in accordance with Northwestel’s plan for engagement as committed to in its application.

Commission’s analysis and determinations

4. Having reviewed the documents submitted, the Commission approves the finalized statement of work and will provide it separately and in confidence to Northwestel.
5. Provided that Northwestel complies with all conditions of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2020-258, constructs the project as described in Schedule A: Statement of Work, and complies with all procedural requirements to submit reports, invoices, and requests for funding, the Commission will direct the Central Fund Administrator to make payments to Northwestel in respect of the project. Failure to comply with these conditions and requirements could result in funding being delayed or not being disbursed.
6. Northwestel is required to submit, quarterly, a progress report and expense claim beginning on **16 July 2021**, or as otherwise agreed to, and every **three months** thereafter until the project is completed.

7. Further, in accordance with the Commission's determinations in Telecom Decision 2020-258, Northwestel must use the project to offer and provide telecommunications services, as committed to in its application and approved in Schedule B: Project Services.

Policy Directions

8. The 2006 Policy Direction¹ and the 2019 Policy Direction² (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,³ and should specify how its decisions can, as applicable, promote competition, affordability, consumer interests, and innovation.
9. The Commission considers that its approval of funding from the Broadband Fund for the project described in this order is consistent with the Policy Directions. Specifically, the decision to allocate funding towards improving broadband services in the Northwest Territories will help to close the gap in connectivity in underserved areas and will respond to the social and economic needs of consumers. In doing so, this order will implement the telecommunications policy objectives, including those set out in paragraphs 7(a), (b), and (h) of the Act.⁴

Secretary General

¹ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

² *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

³ 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.

⁴ 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; (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 (h) to respond to the economic and social requirements of users of telecommunications services.