



Telecom Order CRTC 2025-158

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Gatineau, 23 June 2025

Public record: 1011-NOC2022-0325

Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Sogetel Mobilité inc.’s mobile wireless project in southeastern Quebec (Saint-Augustin-de-Woburn)

Background

1. In Telecom Decision 2024-193, the Commission awarded up to \$3,594,659 to Sogetel Mobilité inc. (Sogetel Mobilité) for its project to build cellular sites to serve approximately 15 kilometres of roads along routes 161 and 212 in southeastern Quebec.
2. In accordance with the conditions of approval set out in Telecom Decision 2024-193, Sogetel Mobilité confirmed in writing its acceptance of the funding award. On 20 December 2024, Sogetel Mobilité submitted its completed statement of work for Commission approval.

Commission’s analysis

3. The statement of work included a \$204,629 increase in project funding. Sogetel Mobilité submitted that this increase was a result of modifications to the design and planned location of the new cellular sites.
4. The Commission recognizes that as a result of these changes, the mobile wireless signal coverage along routes 161 and 212 will improve, from the original estimated 15 kilometres to approximately 24 kilometres of coverage.

Conclusion

5. The Commission approves, by majority, the finalized statement of work, including the requested increase of \$204,629 to the approved funding amount, for a new total of \$3,799,288.
6. The Commission will provide the statement of work separately and in confidence to Sogetel Mobilité.
7. Provided that Sogetel Mobilité complies with all conditions of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2024-193, the Commission will direct the Central Fund Administrator to make payments to Sogetel Mobilité for its mobile wireless project.

Failure to comply with these conditions could result in funding being delayed or not being disbursed.

8. The Commission reminds Sogetel Mobilité of the following condition of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2024-193: Where a risk of adverse impact on an Aboriginal or treaty right becomes known and a duty to consult exists, Sogetel Mobilité must advise the Commission within **20 days** and submit a plan detailing the form and process for fulfilment of the duty. The release of any additional funding will be contingent on Sogetel Mobilité demonstrating that any necessary consultations were held to the Crown's satisfaction.¹
9. Sogetel Mobilité is required to submit progress reports and expense claims beginning no later than **22 September 2025**, or as otherwise agreed to with the Commission, and every **three months** thereafter, until the project is completed.
10. Finally, in accordance with the Commission's determinations in Telecom Decision 2024-193, Sogetel Mobilité must file for Commission approval a final implementation report within **90 days** of construction being complete and broadband services being offered. In the report, Sogetel Mobilité must confirm that project construction is complete and that broadband services are being offered. The date on which the final implementation report is submitted will be considered the project completion date. Sogetel Mobilité must also demonstrate in the report that the project has met the requirements set out in all related decisions.²
11. A dissenting opinion by Commissioner Bram Abramson is attached to this order.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Bell Canada's mobile wireless project in Newfoundland and Labrador (Gander Bay South)*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-117, 23 May 2025
- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for TBayTel's mobile wireless project in northwestern Ontario (Highway 527)*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-116, 23 May 2025
- *Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Sogetel Mobilité inc.'s mobile wireless project in southeastern Quebec (Saint-Augustin-de-Woburn)*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2024-193, 28 August 2024

¹ See subparagraph 42(i) of Telecom Decision 2024-193.

² See subparagraph 42(k) of Telecom Decision 2024-193.

Dissenting opinion of Commissioner Bram Abramson

1. It is good if those subscribed to the right mobile carriers have access, when driving southeastern Quebec's routes 161 or 212, to mobile wireless service. It is better if subscribers to all major carriers do.
2. In Telecom Orders 2025-116 and 2025-117, I dissented from the approvals of similar statements of work, on the following basis: If the National Contribution Fund is to be tapped to support direct-to-device ground-based connectivity, then, as a public policy matter, a large number of device users should not be left unable to access the critical mobile wireless services so supported. Accordingly, to be approved for the Broadband Fund, detailed statements of work ought to be directed to include what efforts, if any, have been undertaken to secure cross-carrier coverage—and, perhaps more straightforwardly, information on which carriers' subscribers should expect to access the new connectivity described in the statements.
3. I am of the same view here, and dissent from the decision of the majority of the Telecommunications Committee rendered on behalf of the Commission on that basis.¹ Wherever one carrier provides access, but others do not—whether through roaming agreements, closer collaboration ranging from radio access network (RAN) sharing² to support structure and active equipment sharing,³ or even capital-intensive parallel builds—a fundamental connectivity question arises: Will market forces suffice to resolve the matter, to the extent it needs resolving, over the long term? Or should steps be taken to ensure that all major wireless providers' subscribers can expect to be able to phone a friend wherever any carrier has connectivity?
4. The answer, in my view, will vary. In some areas, competing coverage may best be left to market competition: consider a residential neighbourhood where switching carriers is a viable response. In other areas, market competition is unlikely to suffice: consider remote roads where traffic is more likely to be just passing through. In all cases, technological measures (like ubiquitous, affordable, and persistent direct-to-device connectivity) and consumer information measures (better and more

¹ See *Telecommunications Committee*, By-Law No. 10 (CRTC), paragraph (e): “[a]ny act or thing done by the Telecommunications Committee shall be deemed to be an act or thing done by the members [...]” This delegating by-law was made pursuant to paragraph 11(1)(b) and subsection 12(3) of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act* (CRTC Act), providing for duties to be delegated to standing committees by by-law. Such delegation to standing committees, whose remit is made explicit through by-law, is distinguished from other forms of delegation, like the assignment of particular cases and of panels to those cases: CRTC Act, subsection 6(2), as read by *Shoan v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2016 FCA 261 (CanLII), paragraph 6.

² This is often referred to as multi-operator core networks.

³ When the arrangement goes beyond tower-sharing to include the sharing of some active RAN equipment, but each carrier continues to use its own radios and spectrum, this is often referred to as multi-operator RAN.

automated advance information about where their phones will and won't work) could reduce the need for regulatory intervention. These possibilities have not yet been addressed by the Commission.

5. That answer will also evolve, and in nuanced ways. The growth of direct-to-device satellite connectivity will surely relieve the urgency that drives support for direct-to-device ground connectivity. On the other hand, building out wireless towers and associated backhaul in rural and remote areas also brings fibre backhaul deeper into these regions, improving the overall connectivity posture from which they can build.
6. For now, though, some Canadians will be able to make phone calls in these areas. Some may not. But if public-interest subsidy is justified to support this infrastructure, then so too is public oversight to ensure broad access. At a minimum, we should know which subscribers are served and which are not—and, where gaps exist, determine whether action is warranted. The Commission's current approach does neither. It should. Directing Broadband Fund statements of work to indicate both *(a)* what steps, if any, have been taken to secure cross-carrier coverage and *(b)* which carriers' subscribers should expect to be able to access the new connectivity, would be a start.