

Connecting Communities BC

Application Guide

Canada



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

On March 8, 2022, a Canada-British Columbia broadband partnership was [announced](#). In coordination with Innovation, Science and Economic Development's (ISED) Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), the Connecting Communities BC Program (CCBC or the "Program") supports a target of connecting 100 per cent of households in B.C. to high-speed internet services by 2027. The Program funds Broadband Infrastructure to reach Underserved Households in areas that currently lack internet service of at least 50 Megabits per second (Mbps) Download Speed /10 Mbps Upload Speed.

CCBC is funded through a total investment of up to \$830 million, funded equally by both the federal and British Columbia provincial levels of government.

This guide has been developed to assist potential Applicants to the Program. It provides information about Program requirements, how to apply, and how applications will be assessed. Terms defined in the Annex 7: Definitions are capitalized to indicate a specific definition.

Applications selected by CCBC may be funded by either the Province or ISED or both. Successful jointly funded Applicants will negotiate separate Funding Agreements with the Province and ISED. To streamline the application process, CCBC is providing one Applicant Portal for the Program and will coordinate reporting requirements, where possible. Applicants should note that, despite the streamlined application process, ISED has its own decision-making process and the Province does not represent ISED or make determinations regarding the UBF.

Applicants with questions related to the status of an application can refer to the [Program landing page](#) and log in to the Applicant Portal. Program administration is being led by British Columbia's Ministry of Citizens' Services (the Ministry).

Acknowledgement

This guide has been developed with assistance from ISED. The Province would like to thank the team at ISED for their contributions to the development of this guide.

Disclaimer

This guide is a resource to help Applicants in applying to the Program. The guide is not intended as a standalone resource or definitive guide to developing a final application or a budget, or to managing implementation of a Broadband Infrastructure solution. Professional advisory services, technical expertise and other resources will also be critical when designing Broadband Infrastructure solutions.

It is recommended that all Applicants conduct their own research and consult with the appropriate professionals when developing their application. The requirements within this guide are subject to change without notice, at the discretion of the Province and its funding partners. The Province disclaims any responsibility or liability whatsoever for any reliance placed on information contained in this guide or any intention or obligation to update information contained herein.

Contact Us

For more information on this Program, please visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/connectingcommunitiesbc

For questions regarding the Program or how to access the [Applicant Portal](#), please contact Program staff at the following email address: connectingcommunitiesbc@gov.bc.ca.

For questions regarding the [National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map](#), or the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#), please contact ISED at: nationalbroadbandmap-cartenationaledesservicesalargebande@ised-isde.gc.ca.

Confidentiality, Proactive Disclosure and Transparency Requirements

Any information in the application that, in the Applicant's opinion, is of a Proprietary or Confidential nature must be clearly marked by the Applicant as "Proprietary" or "Confidential" in each relevant item on a cover page, on each page of the item, or in a statement covering the entire application. Subject to the terms of this guide, no information which is marked Proprietary or Confidential that is submitted by an Applicant will be disclosed to a Third Party by the Ministry, unless otherwise authorized by the Applicant, or if required to be released by law.

Regardless of whether such information is identified as Proprietary or Confidential, information provided by Applicants in connection with their Application or Project may be accessible under the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

Information provided by Applicants that is not identified as Proprietary or Confidential may be used by the Province, or its funding partners, in communications products or materials without further consultation with the Applicants, provided such use is in accordance with the Province of British Columbia's communications protocols.

As part of the Province of British Columbia's policies to ensure transparency and accountability, the Ministry is required to proactively disclose information regarding approved applications when it is in the public interest to do so. This may include but is not limited to disclosing Open Access pricing, work progress and other details relevant to the Project.

The Ministry may share any information submitted by an Applicant in connection with an application with the Province's federal funding partners and with other provincial ministries and territorial governments, to improve national coordination and bilateral decision-making related to broadband funding. Information on Recipients who receive Provincial Contributions will be shared in accordance with the terms of the Funding Agreement between the Recipient and the Province.

Additional disclosure, reporting and transparency requirements can be found in Recipients' Funding Agreements, Program templates, and on the [Apply to Connecting Communities BC](#) web page.

Although Applicant information remains Confidential subject to the above-mentioned conditions and applicable legislation, policies and directives, any document or content submitted as part of the Program application process shall be deemed and remain the property of the Province of British Columbia.

Communications Materials, Products and Promotion

Recipients who receive Provincial Contributions are required to acknowledge the role and contribution of the Province of British Columbia as directed by CCBC. For CCBC projects that receive a Federal Contribution to their funding, in accordance with the [Federal Identity Program](#), Recipients will be required to acknowledge the role and contribution of the Government of Canada in all of its Project partners' public communications.

For Projects that receive a Federal Contribution to their funding, it is the Government of Canada's prerogative to make the first public announcement of Program funding; however, for Projects that receive only Provincial Contributions, it is Province's prerogative to make the first public announcement of Program funding.

Instructions on the form of acknowledgement to be used by Recipients and the use of official government identifiers will be provided to Recipients.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must meet the following Program eligibility requirements to be considered for Program funding. Applications that do not meet all the requirements outlined below may not be assessed. Program requirements may be subject to change.

Note: Any updates to requirements, templates, or timelines will be posted on the [Apply to Connecting Communities BC](#) web page.

Eligible Applicants

An Eligible Applicant is:

- a) A corporation, either for profit or not-for-profit, that is incorporated in Canada;
- b) An Indigenous entity including:
 - ❖ A profit or non-profit organization run by and for First Nations, Métis, or Inuit Peoples;
 - ❖ A band council within the meaning of section 2 of the [Indian Act](#);
 - ❖ An Indigenous government authority established by a self-government agreement or a comprehensive land claim agreement;
- c) A public sector body that is established by statute or by regulation or is wholly owned by a provincial, municipal or regional government, which provides services to communities; or
- d) A partnership, joint venture or consortium that is composed of parties identified in (a), (b), and/or (c) above.

And, that:

- i. Builds, owns and operates Broadband Infrastructure; or
- ii. Enters into a contractual arrangement with an entity identified in (a), (b), (c), or (d) above to design, build, own and operate Broadband Infrastructure.

Eligible Applicants must meet the following general conditions:

- iii. Must commit to maintaining the Broadband Infrastructure funded by the Program on an ongoing basis for five years after Project Completion. If the Applicant does not maintain and operate the Broadband Infrastructure for five years, a pro-rated repayment of Program funds would be required.

- iv. All eligible Applicants should have experience deploying and operating the proposed technology solution for a minimum of three years in Canada. Applicants without sufficient experience may partner with an established Service Provider to complete a Project. For partnership arrangements, an agreement should be established outlining how the two parties will work together with the ongoing and active involvement of the Service Provider for the initial three-year duration of the Broadband Service.

Ineligible Applicants who may not apply to the Program:

- a) Federal and provincial entities, including Crown corporations.
- b) Individuals.

Eligible Activities

The Program funds applications that extend or enhance Underserved Household access to Broadband Service in Eligible Areas, as defined below.

To be eligible for funding contributions under the CCBC, applications must:

- Cover areas that do not have consistent 50/10 Mbps service as identified on the [Availability Map](#), as determined by the Province in its discretion;
- Propose to deliver minimum service speeds of 50/10 Mbps; and
- Provide Open Access to Points-of-Presence (PoPs).

Eligible Areas

Eligible Areas are those identified by the Province as having inconsistent 50/10 Mbps service, or those areas identified by ISED's [Availability Map](#) as having less than 50/10 Mbps Broadband Service.

The [Availability Map](#) represents available Broadband Services down to the road segment level. To produce this map, ISED uses demographics and road information from Statistics Canada, combined with information from Service Providers. More details about this data are available on the [National Broadband Data Information](#) page. The [Availability Map](#) is updated at the sole discretion of ISED as new information becomes available.

Areas identified on the [Availability Map](#) as currently having access to internet service speeds of 50/10 Mbps or greater are not eligible for funding under the Program. Any elements or areas of a Project that propose to Overbuild existing services will be

considered ineligible for funding. Projects proposing to entirely Overbuild existing services will not be assessed.

Any concerns or questions with regards to the [Availability Map](#) cannot be addressed by the Ministry and must be directed to ISED. Specific issues may relate to specific Broadband Services shown on the [Availability Map](#), including data quality and updates to or the correction of specific data. See Annex 4 for additional instructions on contacting ISED.

To facilitate the submission of applications in Eligible Areas, ISED has developed the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#). Using this tool, an Applicant can create or upload its Coverage on top of the [Availability Map](#). Applicants to the Program must use the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) to verify that their Project is targeting Eligible Areas and to generate their Coverage in the format required for submissions to this Program. See Annex 1 for further detail.

Project Zones

The province has been divided into 14 Zones (see Annex 6) that represent conceptual boundaries within which there are Underserved Households and communities for connectivity purposes. Applicants can apply for one or more unique Projects per Zone. Underserved Households in these areas may require Backbone or Last-mile Infrastructure builds to achieve connectivity.

A Project may be applied for to connect a small cluster of homes or all Underserved Households in a Zone. Applicants are encouraged to design Projects where the Coverage Area and required Broadband Infrastructure are both contained within a single Zone.

Eligible Technologies

Under the Program, Applicants may deploy the technology of their choice, including wired and fixed wireless solutions, but all projects will be assessed in the same way in terms of Program requirements, benefits and objectives.

To consistently and fairly assess the capabilities of applications employing wireless technologies, the Program will assess the relative capabilities of applications using ISED's Communications Research Centre's methodology described in the document titled [Capability Evaluation of Fixed Wireless Access Systems to Deliver Broadband Internet Services](#).

Eligible Costs

Eligible Costs under the Program are the relevant and reasonable expenses required to carry out the eligible activities to which they relate. Eligible Costs will be costs for the deployment of Broadband Infrastructure, such as purchases of hardware and software, equipment, leases of satellite capacity, salaries and benefits, and fees for associated contracted services related to the build of the Network.

Note:

- The determination of Eligible Costs rests with the Program.
- Should a Project be approved for funding, Program staff will contact the Applicant to establish the Project Start Date and the Project Completion Date for the Project.
- Eligible Costs incurred after the stated Project Completion Date of the Funding Agreement will not be eligible for funding.

Eligible Costs for regular programming include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Direct Labour Costs.** The portion of gross wages or salaries incurred for work that can be specifically identified and measured as having been performed or to be performed on the Project and that is so identified and measured consistently by the Recipient's cost accounting system, as accepted by the Province.

Costs for salary and wages must only be claimed for employees who are on the Recipient's payroll. The payroll rate to be used is the actual gross pay rate for each employee (normal periodic remuneration before deductions) working on the Project. The payroll rate excludes all premiums (e.g., overtime, workers compensation benefits, as well as payments in terms of shares, stock, stock options, discretionary bonuses, or performance related payments of any kind), shift differentials, and any reimbursement or benefit conferred in lieu of salaries or wages.

- **Direct Material Costs.** Those costs of materials which can be specifically identified and measured as having been used or will be used in the performance of the Project with the following:

- ❖ These materials may include, in addition to materials purchased solely for the Project and processed by the Recipient, or obtained from subcontractors, any other materials issued from the Recipient's general stocks.
 - ❖ Materials purchased solely for the Project or subcontracts shall be charged to the Project at the net laid down cost to the Recipient, net of any taxes and before any discounts for prompt payment.
 - ❖ Materials issued from the Recipient's general stocks shall be charged to the Project in accordance with the method as used consistently by the Recipient in pricing material inventories.
- **Direct Equipment Costs.** The cost of equipment required for the completion of the Project, including but not limited to servers, switches, fibre optic cable, repeaters, radio equipment, towers, poles, back-up power supplies, shelters and enclosures, and Network broadband connectivity devices including upgrades and adaptations.
 - **Direct Satellite Capacity Costs.** The portion of the direct purchase, or lease of Bandwidth or capacity delivered over the physical medium of satellite which can be specifically identified and measured as having been used or to be used in the performance of the Project. These costs will be measured in units of Mbps, MHz, or a quantity of satellite transponders.
 - **Direct Travel Costs.** The cost of travel which is deemed necessary to the performance of the Project. To be eligible, travel costs must be clearly documented as to the purpose of each trip and must respect the spirit of the British Columbia government travel policies, as notified to the Recipient, including without limitation the [British Columbia Core Policy and Procedures Manual](#). Travel expenses, at economy rates, shall be charged as actual costs.
 - **Other Direct Costs.** Applicable costs, not falling within the categories of direct labour, direct equipment, direct material, direct satellite capacity, or direct travel costs, but which can be specifically identified and measured as having been incurred or to be incurred in the performance of the Project and which are so identified and measured consistently by the Recipient's cost accounting practices as accepted by the Province. This includes labour performed by subcontractors.

Direct Costs do not include any allocation for profit or any allocation of general and administrative expenses.

The Eligible Costs which may be reimbursed by the Provincial Contribution are those Direct Costs identified in the Project Budget as Eligible Costs, provided, in each case, that the cost is, in the opinion of the Province, reasonable as well as required for and directly related to the completion of the Project. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following costs are eligible:

- Engineering and design including Network, architecture and systems design and integration;
- Environmental assessments, if required;
- Direct capital costs for the deployment of Broadband Infrastructure;
- Purchase of related hardware, software and associated services;
- Equipment and infrastructure including servers, switches, fibre optic cable, repeaters, radio equipment, towers, poles, back-up power supplies, shelters and Network broadband connectivity devices including upgrades and adaptations;
- Incremental salaries and benefits associated with the project as well as fees for contracted services/professional services;
- Software required for telecommunications and Network facilities related to the Project; and
- Any other costs that, in the opinion of the Province, are considered to be direct and necessary for the successful completion of the Project and which have been approved in writing by the Province prior to being incurred.

Only that portion of the Goods and Services Tax or the Harmonized Sales Tax which is not refundable by Canada Revenue Agency as an input tax credit or as a rebate can be claimed as an Eligible Cost. Only that portion of the Provincial Sales Tax which is also not refundable by the respective provincial tax authority can be claimed as an Eligible Cost.

Ineligible Costs

Ineligible Costs include (but are not limited to):

- Any costs outside of those clearly listed as Eligible Costs, all expenditures incurred after the Project Completion Date and before the Funding Agreement Effective Date;

- Expenditures related to purchasing land, right-of-way and buildings (except for equipment shelters not meant for human occupation) and associated real estate and other fees;
- Leasing land, buildings and other facilities, including permanent shelters for housing Network related equipment (except for temporary facilities directly related to the construction of the Project);
- General repairs and ongoing maintenance resulting from the Project and related structures;
- Legal fees, survey fees, right-of-way/access fees, audit fees, rent, land applications and co-location fees;
- Operational costs to operate the Network built as a result of the Project;
- Maintenance and service contracts and technical support contracts for equipment, software and hardware;
- Warranties including warranties for equipment, software and hardware;
- Taxes for which the Applicant is eligible for a tax rebate and all costs eligible for rebates;
- Contingency provisions;
- Insurance costs (e.g., construction, general liability, commercial, etc.);
- Land purchase costs;
- Existing capital assets including land, buildings, vehicles and other indirect, fixed, and/or capital costs;
- Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) and their installation, including but not limited to:
 - ❖ Devices or infrastructure whose cost is recovered by the Recipient from its Broadband Service subscribers either directly or indirectly;
 - ❖ Devices that form the endpoints of the Recipient's shared last-mile Network such as modems, Optical Network Terminals, and subscriber transceiver equipment;
 - ❖ Devices that form the endpoints of the Recipient's point-to-point link delivering Broadband Service such as routers and Optical Network Terminals but excluding point-to-point radios;
 - ❖ Masts or towers located on a customer's premises.
- Cost of any goods and services which are received through donations or in kind;
- Financing or carrying costs, loan and interest payments;
- Salary bonuses and dividend payments;

- Fines and penalties;
- General office space and equipment i.e., photocopiers, furniture, telephones, computers, printers and office software;
- All costs to setup a Service Provider including all general business and office related expenses, tools, vehicles, office supply, telephones, computers, printers, telecommunication & networking installation, measuring, maintenance and repair of devices;
- Advertising/promotion activities;
- Radio and Spectrum licensing fees;
- Research and development work and activities and expenses related to experimental work;
- Software development and hardware development and production;
- Non commercial-off-the-shelf networking and telecommunications equipment;
- All software except software to operate the Network of the project;
- All permits required for the ongoing operation of the Network (excludes all one-time costs required to initially obtain the permit);
- Existing telecommunication, Network infrastructure and dark fibre including Indefeasible Right of Use (IRU) dark fibre arrangements;
- Lease-to-own contracts and any costs under a lease-to-own agreement.
- Cleaning fees;
- Costs related to funding application development;
- Overhead administration and labour costs including administration, management, finance, general business overhead;
- Vacation pay, overtime, shift differential, bonuses, stock shares, allowances CPP, EI, WCB, and other benefits;
- Project administration including maintenance, operational costs resulting from the Project such as customer service, progress reports, etc.; or
- Fees paid to members of a board of directors for their time.

PROJECT FUNDING

Applicants must clearly indicate all sources of funding for a Project and demonstrate that the funds being applied for are required to support total Project Costs. In preparing the Project Budget, Applicants must fully cost their entire Project to include all relevant Eligible Costs and Ineligible Costs, as described above.

FUNDING

Program Funding

Funding through the Program may only be used to support Eligible Costs, as outlined above, that are reasonable, measurable, needed, and necessary to complete the Project. Contributions to Project funding will be made by the Ministry and in some cases, by ISED's UBF, upon consultation with the Province. The Applicant will only need to complete one application per project to apply for both Provincial and UBF funding through the Program. The Applicant will complete their application through the Connecting Communities BC Applicant Portal. Applications that submitted directly to UBF follow a separate application process.

The maximum amount of funding that an Applicant can request for a Project under the Program is up to 90 per cent of the total Eligible Costs for a Project.

Applicants should be aware that ISED establishes its own maximum amounts with respect to UBF funding. Rural areas are eligible for up to 75 per cent funding. Very Remote Areas, Indigenous areas, or Satellite-dependent Areas are eligible for up to 90 per cent funding.

If no other funding partner(s) are identified, then the Applicant must provide the remaining 10 per cent (for Very Remote, Indigenous areas or Satellite-dependent Areas) or the remaining 25 per cent (for Rural areas) of the total Eligible Costs for a Project.

With the exception of Large-scale Projects, discussed below, all Projects must be completed by March 31, 2027, with all claims processed by this date.

Note: The Program reserves the right to determine the amount of funding for each Project. Even if an application is selected by the Province, the Recipient may not get the full amount requested from the Program. The Program will take into account Overbuild with existing Coverage and overlap with other applications or projects selected by other federal or provincial programs, level of service improvement, needs and financial capacity of the Recipient, value for money, cost per household, and consideration of the impact on the overall budgetary envelope for the Program.

Other Funding

Wherever possible, the Program expects Applicants will seek to leverage other sources of funding to make the most efficient use of public funds and to maximize the Program's impact on household connectivity. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit financial plans that include additional funding partners, such as regional districts and municipalities, other ministries, federal agencies and departments, or the private sector to ensure that Projects are well-financed and require the minimum Program funding necessary. Other sources of funding could include financial assistance (e.g., grants, forgivable loans), as well as applications for financial assistance that are still pending.

All Projects will have a stacking limit of up to 100 per cent of eligible Project costs. This means that total public funds (Canadian/provincial/territorial/municipal government) in the form of grants, contributions, implicit subsidies, subsidized loans, forgivable loans, investment tax credits or any other tax credits cannot exceed 100 per cent of total Eligible Costs.

Large-Scale Projects Co-funding

British Columbia needs a combination of Projects to solve our connectivity challenge – large and small, regional and community-based, driven by large Service Providers and by local companies and communities. Applications for these Projects will be submitted using the same requirements as those detailed in this guide. Those applications will also be assessed taking the following considerations into account:

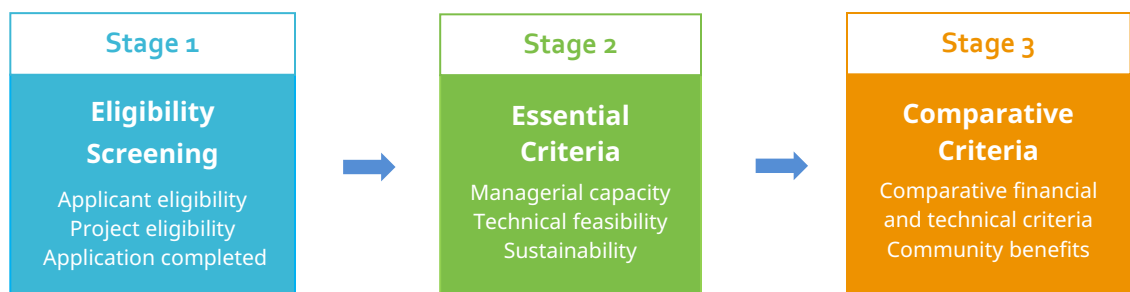
- Scale of the geographic Coverage (e.g., percentage of the Coverage gap to be addressed in a province or territory);
- Number of Underserved Households covered;
- Comprehensiveness of the proposed Coverage (e.g., no Underserved Households remain for Large-scale Projects);
- Magnitude of the improvement in Bandwidth proposed (e.g., the percentage increase over existing available speeds); and
- Cost per Underserved Household.

Large-scale Projects are to be completed by March 31, 2026 at the latest. Large-scale Projects are those Projects which provide Coverage to several communities and have funding from the Canadian Infrastructure Bank.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Program's assessment of Projects is designed to select Projects that maximize value for British Columbians by providing robust, affordable Broadband Service to Underserved Households. The Program will ensure that Projects from a wide variety of Applicants across British Columbia can be considered. Ultimately, the Province will select Projects that best meet the objectives of the Program.

Applications will be assessed using a three-stage assessment process:



Eligibility Screening

Applications will first be screened to ensure they meet the Program's requirements. At the screening stage, the assessment will determine whether:

- The Applicant is a legal entity that is eligible to apply to the Program.
- The application includes all the required Project information, including templates and supporting documents as specified above.
- The application has described eligible activities proposing to improve access for Underserved Households.
- The Acknowledgments section of the Application Form is complete.

Note: The fact that a Project is screened as eligible does not guarantee that it will be funded. All eligible Projects are subject to a comprehensive assessment process, which may or may not result in a positive funding decision.

Essential Criteria

Applications deemed eligible will be subsequently assessed against essential criteria. At this stage of the process, the Program will examine the sustainability of the proposed technology, the reasonableness of the implementation plan, and the financial feasibility to maintain the infrastructure and services on an ongoing basis for five years after the Project is completed. The Applicant must demonstrate that:

- The Project has a sustainable, viable and realistic technical solution.
- The Project management and implementation plan is feasible.
- It has the managerial and financial capacity to deliver the Project and to maintain the infrastructure and services on an ongoing basis for five years after Project Completion.
- The Project will be financially sustainable.

Technology

The Applicant must demonstrate the appropriateness of the chosen technology – it must be able to deliver reliable speeds of at least 50/10 Mbps to Underserved Households as a minimum technology. This analysis will be based on criteria including, but not limited to, the proposed Network information, the equipment list, the Logical Network Diagram, and the Coverage map generated through ISED's [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#).

Further, the sustainability of the chosen technology, over both the short and long term, will be taken into consideration. Prospective Projects will be assessed to ensure that the proposed Networks will remain usable and serviceable for at least five years after Project Completion.

Project management and sustainability

The objective of this criterion is to assess the ability of an Applicant to successfully implement a Project on time and within budget, as well as to assess how the resulting Network and minimum Broadband Service guarantee of 50/10 Mbps will be sustained once in operation. Applicants will need to describe how they, alone or in partnership, are prepared to implement, manage, and operate the proposed Broadband Service. If multiple Applicants are involved in a Project, the application must describe the roles and responsibilities that each Applicant will have in managing the Project, and if applicable, indicate whom among the parties will retain ownership of the Network assets, who will be

responsible for building the Network and who will be responsible for operating the Network.

The Applicant and, if applicable, co-Applicants, must demonstrate that the Project will be delivered through strong project management, financial control and technical development skills.

The Financial forecast template will be used to assess the financial viability of the Project and to understand what revenues and other income will be generated to operate the Network over the longer term. Minimally, Applicants must demonstrate that they will have sufficient financial resources to operate their Network and provide Broadband Services at the price(s) specified in their application for a period of five years from the Project Completion Date.

Comparative Criteria

Those applications that pass the essential criteria will then undergo an assessment using comparative criteria. The aim of the comparative assessment is to ensure that Projects of various sizes and in various regions are considered as those being the best able to meet the Program objectives based on the availability of Program funding.

Co-funding and Scalability will be given increased emphasis as comparative criteria.

Co-funding

As specified above, the CCBC will seek to leverage other sources of funding, where possible, to maximize value for money and the Program's overall impact on connectivity for Underserved Households. Where it is possible to do so, Projects including additional funding partners, such as regional districts, municipalities, First Nations, Indigenous organizations, other federal or provincial agencies and departments or ministries, or the private sector will be assessed more favourably.

Scalability

Consistent with [Canada's Connectivity Strategy](#), the Program's 50/10 Mbps target is a minimum, and Projects that are capable of delivering or scaling to higher speeds will be assessed more favourably. Consideration of Scalability will include relative timeliness, additional cost and necessary technical limitations.

Fixed wireless Project Scalability includes additional user capacity (i.e., the number of potential subscribers and available data capacity) as well as user speeds. Limitations linked to the need for Spectrum should be indicated.

Affordability

Projects that offer lower retail pricing will be assessed more favourably. Proposed pricing will also be compared to the range of prices, by region, as reported in the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) [Communications Market Reports](#).

Open Access to Networks and Passive Infrastructure

Projects that construct and provide Open Access to more Points-of-Presence (PoPs), and/or offer lower prices to access these PoPs, will be assessed more favourably. Projects that offer Open Access to Last-mile Infrastructure, though not required, will also be assessed more favourably.

Applicants owning Passive Infrastructure that do not undertake any action to make it more promptly accessible to Third Parties will be assessed less favourably than others. Applicants requiring access to Third Parties' Passive Infrastructures, and who can demonstrate a commitment of speedy collaboration with said Third Parties, may be assessed more favourably.

Community and/or Rural Economic Development

Projects that can demonstrate an expected positive impact on community and/or rural economic development in addition to connectivity for Underserved Households will be assessed more favourably. This includes, without limitation, any expected positive impact on:

- Additional Broadband Services to businesses and other community locations.
- Plans and capacity to support cellular coverage expansion that supports mobile applications including emergency alerting.
- Employment rates.
- Facilitation of commercial or industrial development.
- Improvement of public services, social program delivery or on other government initiatives.
- Improvement of small business or entrepreneurship capacity.
- Socioeconomic participation of under-represented groups including women, persons who are two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, First Nations, Inuit and Métis

communities, official language minority communities, belonging to a visible minority, children, seniors, or persons with disabilities.

- Applicants whose internal corporate policies, social responsibility or philanthropic practices have a positive impact on the above-mentioned groups will also be assessed more favourably.

Comprehensiveness

Consistent with [Canada's Connectivity Strategy](#) and [British Columbia's Connectivity initiatives](#), Large-scale Projects should be comprehensive and not leave households unconnected, favouring complete Coverage of the targeted areas and with contiguous regions.

Other benefits

In cases where an Applicant can demonstrate additional Project benefits outside of the categories above, the Applicant should explain that benefit in the application. See Annex 3 for more details.

TIMELINES

When to apply

The first intake of the Program and will be launched in September 2022. Subsequent intakes will be launched sequentially until the Program has achieved its connectivity goals. Visit the [Apply to Connecting Communities BC](#) web page for specific intake timelines.

Projects will be assessed over the months following the end of each application period, with selection decisions and the negotiation of Funding Agreements to follow. Program staff reserve the right to assess Projects from all intakes concurrently.

Funding is limited and subject to budgetary considerations. Decisions are final and there is no appeal process.

Applicants must not start their proposed Project until notified by the Program in writing of approval. Applicants may begin Project work once it is approved and expend up to 20 percent of project cost prior to a signed Funding Agreement. A decision to start Project work prior to a signed Funding Agreement is at the Applicant's own risk.

When completing the application please ensure that the Project Start Date is **not before** the closing date of the first intake. Applications with a Project Start Date that occurs before the first intake closes will not be accepted.

All Projects must be completed by March 31, 2027. Large-scale Projects are to be completed by March 31, 2026.

SUBMITTING A CCBC APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicant Toolkit

In addition to this guide, several tools are available to help Applicants prepare their submissions to the Program:

- [National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map](#) (Availability Map) – ISED makes broadband Coverage information available along road segments. This map is based on information provided by service providers and census data.
- [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) – an online [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) has been prepared by ISED to allow potential Applicants design their Coverage Area and identify any Overbuild with existing services (requires separate login).
- [Submission Checklist \(Annex 5\)](#) – provides the complete list of documents Applicants must provide to apply to the Program.
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) – a document prepared and updated by the Province, which answers the most common questions asked about the Program.
- [Applicant Portal](#) – a new secure login Portal is provided by the Province, behind which Applicant information is protected. The login Portal also allows existing Service Providers to provide their updated broadband Coverage.

How to Apply

Applicants should apply to the Program through the [Applicant Portal](#).

Applicants are responsible for ensuring their own access to the Applicant Portal. If Applicants are unable to access or otherwise use the Applicant Portal, please contact Program staff at connectingcommunitiesbc@gov.bc.ca. The Applicant Portal is provided on an “as-is” basis. The Province will not be liable to any Applicant for any direct, indirect, special, consequential damages based on an Applicant’s use of or ability to access the Applicant Portal.

Online Registration: Log in Securely to the Applicant Portal

To self-register securely and access the [Applicant Portal](#), visit the [BCeID](#).

1. Log in using a Business BCeID or Basic BCeID account. If an Applicant does not have a Business BCeID account, they may register for a Basic BCeID account by following the instructions on the page. For questions related to BCeID reach out to the [BCeID Help Desk](#).

2. Keep your login information of all above-mentioned services securely including usernames, passwords, recovery questions and Personal Identification Numbers and make sure not to lose them.

Creating an Application Package

In the [Applicant Portal](#), individual applications can be completed for as many eligible Projects that an Applicant wishes to submit. Applicants will be guided through the application creation and document submission process. A Program identification number will be assigned to all submitted Project applications.

Applicants submitting more than one application must ensure that each application is technologically and financially independent and that one application is not dependent on another for successful completion. Applicants should be aware of other Service Providers operating in a targeted area as they consider the scope and span of proposed Project(s). Applicants who wish to propose more than one Project scenario (for instance, a combination of technologies or potential geographic areas for coverage) per Project Zone should submit separate applications for each such proposed Project scenario.

Dashboard

Applicants will be able to view their application submissions on a dashboard within the Applicant Portal. This dashboard displays all submitted, draft, and withdrawn Project applications.

Eligibility Mapping and Statistics

Applicants will be required to use the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) in order to produce the Project application Coverage maps (which include the metadata) in KMZ format. Along with the Coverage maps generated from the tool, Applicants will receive Project statistics from the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#). These statistics are necessary to complete Template 1: Eligibility and Impacts Calculator.

Application Form

The Application Form must be filled out in the online [Applicant Portal](#). Other formats will not be assessed. See Annex 3: Application Form for completion instructions. All fields are mandatory unless marked as optional. The Application Form will identify any unfilled fields for the Applicant to correct. Note: Once an application is submitted, the Applicant will still be able to edit it until intake closing date. Applications will lock once the intake has closed.

Applicants will be able to withdraw applications if they no longer wish to be considered for Project funding.

There may be multiple Program intakes. Applicants are encouraged not to submit duplicate applications if there are applications pending from previous intakes. Doing so may result in a delay in assessing your application.

Program Templates

Program templates can be downloaded from the [Apply to Connecting Communities BC](#) web page. Templates are mandatory unless specified as optional. Templates must be uploaded in the [Applicant Portal](#) for the application to be considered complete.

For a list of templates and how to fill them in, see Annex 2: Program Templates. These templates can be saved and edited offline. Each template contains specific instructions on how to complete it. It is important to complete the templates in the given format to assist in the assessment of the application. Failure to provide the requested information in the templates may result in the application being deemed incomplete. Updates or additional templates required for future intakes will be provided on the [Apply to Connecting Communities BC](#) web page.

Supporting Documents

There are several supporting documents that must be uploaded to the application submission. See Annex 5: Checklist of Documents Needed for Application Submission. If electronic versions of incorporation documents, independently prepared financial statements¹, Logical Network Diagrams, Gantt chart project planning documents, or Band Council Resolutions and/or letters of support are not readily available, an Applicant may scan the hard copy and attach it. However, Applicants should not scan maps. See Annex 3: Application Form for specific requirements.

Submitting an Application Package

Upon completion of the Project application, the CCBC Identification Number should be referred to in correspondence regarding the Program and in correspondence related to

¹ In order to optimize project evaluation and ensure sound management of public funds, the Province of British Columbia may share certain financial information with a third party evaluator or controller.

any application to other funding programs with respect to the same Project, including, without limitation, the UBF.

The Province disclaims any responsibility for the transmission and submission to the Province of Project applications. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the successful transmission and upload of their complete applications.

Important Notes

Only complete applications will be assessed. Incomplete applications, i.e. those that do not contain a completed Application Form, Coverage maps, all required templates complete and filled-in, and other supporting documents, will not be reviewed by the Program and will be considered ineligible or rejected.

Annex 5: Checklist of Documents Needed for Application Submission will assist the Applicant in ensuring a complete application.

Submit Before the Deadline

It is strongly recommended that Applicants take the time needed to complete the application but should not wait until the final hours of an intake deadline to submit. Applicants should leave time to ask questions and troubleshoot any technical difficulties, particularly related to the upload of large file attachments. Completing applications in a reasonable time before the deadline will reduce the risk of the application not being submitted in time, especially over slower internet connections. Visit the [Apply to Connecting Communities BC](#) web page for application deadline(s).

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Applicants whose Projects are selected will be required to comply with certain policies and expectations of this Program, which are described in the following section. The Program's terms and conditions are consistent with [the Province's Core Policy & Procedures Manual Policy Chapter 21: Government Transfers](#). For example, Applicants will be expected to use a fair, competitive and transparent procurement process to ensure best value for money when supplies, equipment and services are purchased, or personnel are hired.

Applicants whose Projects are selected will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Province of British Columbia. A copy of the [Funding Agreement can be found here](#). Applicants will also have to enter into a funding agreement with ISED if the Project is jointly funded.

Applicants are required to disclose any other government assistance received prior to or during the Funding Agreement related to the Eligible Costs supported by the Program. The contribution amount may be reduced or recovered for any amount exceeding the Program's stacking limit.

Reporting Requirements

Successful Applicants will be required to demonstrate accountability for use of the funds and must meet the reporting requirements on Project Costs, and achievement of performance indicators as identified in the Funding Agreement.

Under the terms of the Funding Agreement, a Recipient will be required to provide quarterly progress reports describing the progress of Project activities and a final performance report at Project Completion describing the results of the Project. The frequency of reports is determined based on the risk of the Recipient or the Project as determined by the Program. Other reports may be required at the Province's discretion.

Indigenous Consultation

There is a duty to consult Indigenous groups when the Crown contemplates conduct (such as providing funding for a Project) that might impact established or potential Indigenous rights, including, without limitation, where a funded Project will create infrastructure in, or affecting, an Indigenous community. If required, consultation must be taken into consideration very early in the application process, otherwise, Project delays can be

expected if consultation is not completed satisfactorily or in a timely manner. The Applicant agrees to provide such information and assistance to the provincial and/or federal government in connection with such consultation as may be reasonably required, including, but not limited to, those obligations with respect to Indigenous consultation which may be set forth in any Funding Agreement. Where an Applicant has questions regarding this consultation, the Applicant may contact the Program in writing to develop a coordinated approach to consultation.

Regulatory

Applicants must ensure that all activities required for the Project comply with applicable federal and provincial laws and regulations and municipal by-laws. This includes receiving all necessary regulatory approvals prior to initiating work and receiving funds, such as environmental assessment. Applicants should understand the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regulations and any permitting requirements and timelines associated with the Project prior to submitting a Program application.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The Applicant shall ensure that all activities comply with federal, provincial/territorial and municipal laws and regulations, and related laws or guidelines with respect to environmental matters.

Activities to be carried out on provincial or federal lands may require an evaluation of environmental effects under the provincial [Environmental Assessment Act](#) or the federal [Impact Assessment Act](#), as applicable, prior to the start of the proposed Project.

Security

Information for the proposed Project provided in the Application Form and attachments may be shared with other provincial government ministries and agencies, and other sources, as determined by the Province to assess any potential risks related to the overall integrity of Network security. Applicants must ensure compliance with national security requirements of the Government of Canada and any applicable provincial security requirements that may be administered by the Province.

CRTC Regulations and Access to Networks

Applicants that are subject to [CRTC regulations](#) are expected to fulfill their obligations in matters such as Third Party Open Access to Networks and dedicated capacity purchases on a wholesale or retail basis, and are expected to make pricing information available to the Province of British Columbia. Organizations that are not subject to CRTC regulations will need to provide wholesale pricing information for publicly funded new PoPs.

Updating Coverage Information

Applicants should provide their latest existing Last-Mile Infrastructure and/or Backbone Infrastructure Coverage on [ISED's Availability Map](#).

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Eligibility Mapping Tool

Annex 2: Program Templates

Annex 3: Application Form

Annex 4: Process for Reviewing Availability Map Data

Annex 5: Checklist of Documents Needed for Application Submission

Annex 6: Project Zone Map

Annex 7: Definitions

ANNEX 1: ELIGIBILITY MAPPING TOOL

The [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) has been developed by ISED to help facilitate the submission of applications covering Eligible Areas. It provides the same detailed mapping information as the [Availability Map](#) and allows Applicants to draw the Coverage Area on the map in a user-friendly way. The Program requires Applicants to leverage the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) when submitting an application.

Within the tool, Applicants can either draw directly on the map or upload previously generated Project Coverage data which have been saved in the KMZ format. Coverage Areas are captured as enclosed shapes within the tool and Applicants will be able to expand or modify their Coverage Area directly. To streamline analysis and provide accurate statistics, the tool will prompt the Applicant to provide mandatory information about the proposed Coverage Area. For each enclosed shape within an application, an Applicant will need to provide the technology types for access and transport corresponding components, as well as maximum and minimum Download Speeds.

Maps designed with this tool will have the proper format for submission under and will be used to calculate statistics² on the area targeted by the Applicant.

² Note that the application Coverage mapping files (including the metadata) can then be reloaded into the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) so that new statistics can be generated based on the most up to date mapping data in the [Availability Map](#).

ANNEX 2: PROGRAM TEMPLATES

Excel templates must be uploaded with the Application Form to successfully complete the submission. When a document is properly filled, a green line should appear at the top of the document. If the line remains red, it means the template has not been filled properly and must be fixed. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their applications are completed and submitted correctly. Applicants should not add or delete rows or columns from Excel templates. Applicants should contact Program staff if there are questions about how to complete the application templates.

Excel templates must be uploaded in the Applicant Portal. **PDF scans or printouts of spreadsheets will not be accepted.**

Template 1: Eligibility Mapping Tool and Impacts Calculator

This template is **mandatory** and will be used in conjunction with the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) statistics to demonstrate Project eligibility and evaluate the impact of the proposed Project Coverage Area against the Program objectives.

The template is presented in four main sections:

3. Map validation.
4. Eligibility and impacts summary.
5. Overbuild assessment.
6. Eligibility assessment.

After creating a Project map using the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#), Applicants will receive Project statistics. These numbers should be used to complete Template 1.

If an Applicant wishes to modify the Project area while working on the application, they must go back to the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) and produce a new map with new Project statistics to update Template 1.

Map Validation is a summary of the proposed Project Coverage mapping file, as submitted to the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#). This section will highlight the version of that file, the data produced and analyzed, and the currency of the data used for the assessment. There is no Applicant input required for this section.

Eligibility and Impacts Summary provides an assessment of the eligibility of the proposed Coverage. Eligibility is shown for Broadband Service expansion (i.e., areas lacking 50/10 Mbps). Additional feedback regarding potential impacts for households on Indigenous lands, Very Remote Areas or within satellite-dependent communities is also found here. There is no Applicant input required for this section.

Overbuild Assessment provides an evaluation of the potential Overbuild of existing services and other known projects and investments currently underway. This section only applies to applications which include expansion of Broadband Services in areas without 50/10 Mbps. Overbuild refers to building duplicative services within areas that have similar or better existing services or infrastructure. Overbuilding existing services is an ineligible activity under the CCBC. The **Eligibility Mapping Tool** assists Applicants to identify and eliminate potential Overbuild visually when defining their Coverage Area. This section of the template will characterize any remaining Overbuild in terms of a count of impacted households. Applicants are advised to modify their proposed Project and revise their proposed Coverage based on the assessment of Overbuild provided in this section.

Eligibility Assessment provides a step-by-step assessment of the number of eligible households targeted by the submitted Coverage for Projects expanding Broadband Service in areas lacking 50/10 Mbps. Applicants are shown how Eligible and Ineligible Areas of their application impact the assessment of eligibility of the proposed Project. The results of this calculation are carried up to the Eligibility and Impacts Summary section above.

Template 2: Detailed Budget

This template is **mandatory**. Template 2 outlines the detailed budget for the proposed Project, e.g. funding sources, Eligible Costs and Ineligible Costs.

Financial support from the Program is intended to complement, not replace, funding received from other sources for the proposed Project. Applicants are required to disclose all actual and potential sources of funding for their Project.

In completing Template 2: Detailed Budget, provide the following:

- An outline of all Project components and their total estimated costs. This must include a financial breakdown, by project component (e.g., rural, very remote) by category of capital costs (e.g., labour, equipment), and Eligible and Ineligible Costs.

- All proposed funding sources as well as an assurance that funding to undertake and complete the Project has been secured or can reasonably be secured. Funding assurance may include, but is not limited to, a letter from a Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer/Treasurer, a letter from a financial institution, or a Council Resolution of budget allocations.
- An estimated expenditure profile reflecting total Eligible Costs, by Fiscal Year and by funding source.
- Assurance of capacity to operate and maintain the service on a five-year sustainable, long-term basis.

For all costs beyond Network equipment, the Applicant should allocate funds where it makes the most sense. For example, it may be possible to determine how the engineering and Project management costs will be allocated between these components.

Template 3: Financial Forecast

Template 3: Financial forecast is **mandatory** and provides an estimate of the future financial outcomes for the Project (for up to five years after Project Completion). It will be used to demonstrate the need for funding as well as financial viability of the Project.

For the financial forecast only incremental expenses and revenues attributable to the Project and associated with the services to be delivered are to be included. Incremental revenue is the product of the monthly service fee charged per service offering and the estimated percentage of customers that will subscribe to a particular service offering. The result will be used to calculate the average revenue per customer, which will then be used to calculate revenue over the five-year period. Additional instructions are provided in the template. If the Project involves upgrading services to current customers, please ensure to include only the incremental price associated with any upgraded services. Note that all sources of funding for the Project are excluded in the calculation of the net present value for the Project, as the applicable template will be used to assess the viability of the Project at various levels of funding support.

Template 4: Last-mile Broadband Service

Template 4 is **mandatory**. Applicants must use this template to list the service plans that they intend to provide in the applicable Coverage Areas. Service plans should be provided if the Applicant plans to use this information in their financial forecast for their estimated subscriber (residential and/or business) revenue. The template should include at least one residential service plan that meets the objectives of the Program. The template contains further instructions on how to complete the document.

Template 5: List of Points-of-Presence and Wholesale Pricing

This template is mandatory if the Project constructs any PoPs that offer Third Party wholesale pricing.

Please indicate the location of the PoPs, including the latitude and longitude. Provide the applicable wholesale pricing per month for the related capacity (0.1 Gbps, 1 Gbps 10 Gbps) that will be offered for each community. The price for 1 Gbps is mandatory to complete this template. Note that the wholesale/retail Open Access pricing should be provided if the Applicant plans to use this information in their financial forecast for their estimated wholesale/retail revenue. Applicants owning Passive Infrastructure that are committed to making it more easily accessible to Third Parties should submit a letter from their executive management and include it in Template 6. Applicants requiring access to Third Parties' Passive Infrastructure and who can demonstrate a commitment of speedy collaboration with said Third Parties through a support letter should provide it in Template 6.

Template 6: Community and Rural Development Benefits

General letters of support are **optional**. If, however, an Applicant chooses to provide general letters of support that describe the community and economic development benefits of the Project, then Template 6 must be filled out.

Up to 15 pages can be uploaded in Applicant Portal.

Details on what to include in letters of support can be found in Annex 3.

Template 7: Fixed Wireless Addendum

This template is mandatory if the Applicant's Project includes a fixed wireless component, in order to provide additional information to confirm that the fixed wireless component can meet the objectives of the Program.

The Applicant should indicate the key parameters that define the fixed wireless solution proposed. This includes indicating the wireless technology standard proposed, the planned gateway capacity, the key base station parameters, the key subscriber parameters, and the wireless tower specifications.

Template 8: Supporting Connectivity Evidence

This template is **mandatory if an Applicant intends to provide evidence to clarify or improve the Coverage data presented by the Availability Map**. See Annex 4 for more information on the process of updating or improving the data of the [Availability Map](#).

Applicants should provide evidence that Underserved Households or Project Zones cannot access speeds of 50/10 Mbps with any Service Providers.

- Each Speed Test measurement should indicate the following:
 - Service Provider's name.
 - GPS coordinates of the Speed Test (latitude/longitude).
 - Civic address.
 - Last-mile Infrastructure.
 - Subscribed Download service package.
 - Subscribed Upload service package.
 - Measured Download Speed.
 - Measured Upload Speed.
 - Date and time of test and measurement.
- To substantiate the Speed Test results, screen captures must be provided as acceptable evidence to demonstrate the requirements mentioned above.
- Applicants may also provide official correspondence with a Service Provider as connectivity evidence.

Template 9: Backbone and Geographic Names

This template is **mandatory** and used to identify the community or list of communities that will benefit from the proposed Project. The template will also collect information about households served in each community and Network information such as PoPs, Backbone Infrastructure and Bandwidth capacity dedicated to each community.

Detailed instructions for completion can be found within the template itself.

Template 10: Equipment Details

This template is **mandatory** and used to identify Network equipment proposed to be used in the Project. Detailed instructions for completion can be found within the template itself.



ANNEX 3: APPLICATION FORM

Things to Remember

Mandatory fields: All fields are mandatory unless stated as optional.

Save as you go: Save responses and return later to complete it.

Questions with a maximum length: Some questions have a maximum character count. Do not exceed the count.

Review the application before submitting: Once the Application Form is complete and is ready to submit, a thorough review is strongly recommended.

Keep a record of the application: Applications are shown in the Applicant Portal's dashboard. Applications may be printed from a browser. The Applicant is solely responsible for ensuring that their application has been submitted successfully.

Completing the Application

The following documents must be uploaded into the Applicant Portal to support each Project application:

Mandatory: Project Coverage map

- Project Coverage map (KMZ format) from the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) and accompanying statistics (xml format). Statistics are also entered into Template 1: Eligibility mapping and statistics.

Mandatory: Current Network Infrastructure map

- Project mapping data in a geo-coded format (i.e., Google Earth KMZ, ESRI shapefile, or similar). Note: PDF maps or static images will not be accepted. Information will be used for application assessment and used for internal purposes only.
 - ❖ Mapping must include the following layers and information:
 - Current Network infrastructure: All Applicant-owned or operated fibre lines within British Columbia. Fibre data must show Backbone Infrastructure, regional and core community lines. Applicants do not need to show fibre drops to the premise.
 - All Applicant-owned or operated PoPs, Central Offices, towers, and microwave links within British Columbia.

- Current Coverage for the communities proposed in the Project; identify available speeds.
- The location of project specific Backhaul/Backbone Access Points.
- Point-to-point microwave paths between towers within the Project area **(if applicable)**.
- Proposed or upgraded Network infrastructure (Project specific):
 - Proposed Coverage for the communities proposed in the Project; identify available speeds.
 - Locations (colour differentiated) of new and upgraded: towers, PoPs, fibre, Point-to-Point Microwave links, Central Offices.
 - New PTP microwave paths (colour differentiated) between towers *(required for fixed wireless and Long Term Evolution (LTE) projects)*

Mandatory: Logical Network Diagram

- Logical Network Diagram in one of the following formats: PDF, PNG, JPEG, VSD/VSDX, DOC/DOCX, PPT, PPTX. Diagram must include:
 - ❖ All the key Network elements (showing the new and/or upgrade portions of the Network, as well as existing portions of the Network). This includes indicating towers (if wireless), Central Offices, digital subscriber lines (DSL) remotes, remote digital subscriber line access multiplex (DSLAM) units, cable head-ends, fibre-optic line terminals, hybrid fibre nodes, etc.
 - ❖ Indicate some of the key Network elements (showing the upgrade and/or new portions of the Network).
 - ❖ All current and proposed Network devices and links from the point of transport to the Last-Mile Infrastructure Drop Point must be colour differentiated.
 - ❖ Labelled throughput capacity between devices. For consistency, the labeling should match labels found within the mapping layers.

Mandatory: Resolutions and/or Letters for Last-Mile Infrastructure

- For Indigenous communities, a Band Council or Tribal Council Resolution is required.
- For municipalities, a council resolution or letter is required.
- For unincorporated areas, a regional district board resolution or letter is required.
- Must be signed, recently dated and reference the Project.

Mandatory: Facilitating Access to Passive Infrastructure

- **Commitment by executive management of an Applicant to facilitate access to its Passive Infrastructure:** The letter submitted must include a firm commitment by an Applicant's executive management to facilitate Third Party access to the Applicant's Passive Infrastructure³ based on the following parameter(s) or action(s):
 - ❖ Participation on key Passive Infrastructure assets owners' coordinating committee meetings on a regular and ongoing basis.
 - ❖ Establishing a Dig-once Policy and letting Third Parties lay their fibre at the same time that other infrastructures are being built.
 - ❖ Streamlining and accelerating permit submissions, administrative processes, and/or access contracts.
 - ❖ Lowering or cancelling attachment rates and replacement costs on the infrastructures.
 - ❖ Leveraging existing dark fibre or another existing Network not currently being used.

Mandatory: Third Party infrastructure

- **Evidence of imminent access to Third Party infrastructure (if needed for Project Completion):** If the Applicant requires access to the Passive Infrastructure of a Third Party to carry out its Project and that access has been or is about to be acquired by the Applicant, the Applicant must submit:
 - ❖ Evidence of a signed contract with the Third Party.
 - ❖ Evidence that access permits are acquired or in the process of being acquired.
 - ❖ A letter of support from the Third Party demonstrating good faith and specifying, if possible, the relevant terms of the signed contract with the Applicant.

³ Passive Infrastructures include but are not limited to towers, utility poles, rights of way or similar assets and infrastructures.

Mandatory: Other funding sources

- **Evidence of funding from other funding sources:**
Applicants must provide supporting documents to the above, including letters, contracts, or emails which can be attached within the application submission.⁴

Optional: General letters of support (complete Template 6)

- Template 6 must be completed if letters of general support are being provided. Up to 15 pages may be uploaded. For Large-scale Projects covering many communities and co-funded from The Canadian Infrastructure Bank, the Program would accept a number of pages equivalent to the number of communities covered (e.g., 25 communities covered by a Project equals up to 25 pages of support letters).
- **Letters of Support from the Community:** Descriptions of benefits should demonstrate the specific, tangible, and expected benefits a Project is likely to provide within and around its targeted community(ies). This could include, but is not limited to, how the Project will:
 - ❖ Impact the community's economic growth, social development, resiliency, employment, ongoing viability and/or capacity to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic effects.
 - ❖ Improve access to essential services, including tele-health, distance learning, social inclusiveness, and telework.
 - ❖ Facilitate participation in the digital economy by underrepresented groups, including women, persons who are 2SLGBTQ, First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, living in OLMCs, belonging to a visible minority, children, seniors, or persons with disabilities.
 - ❖ Connect institutions, including schools, libraries, hospitals, and other social services or community institutions, and/or enhance the services these institutions deliver.
 - ❖ Connect or facilitate the development of small businesses or entrepreneurship.

⁴ For Large-scale Projects covering many communities and co-funded from The Canadian Infrastructure Bank, the Program would accept a number of pages equivalent to the number of communities covered (e.g., 25 communities covered by a Project equals up to 25 pages of support letters).

- ❖ Connect or facilitate industrial applications.
 - ❖ Contribute to governmental efforts such as Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy, Canada's Homelessness Strategy, Indigenous Community Development National Strategy, Women Entrepreneurship Strategy or the Action Plan for Official Languages.
- Letters of support from the community should avoid presenting general benefits that could apply to any broadband project and should speak to the specific and tangible benefits of the application.
 - **Corporate social responsibility and philanthropic practices:** The letter should be submitted by the human resources branch or the executive management of the Applicant and describe its corporate social responsibility and/or philanthropic practices. This could include, but is not limited to, how the organization will:
 - ❖ Contribute to other federal or provincial government programs related to digital literacy, including but not limited to CanCode, Digital Literacy Exchange program, Connecting Families, Computers for Schools, and Digital Skills for Youth.
 - ❖ Promote or maintain gender equality and diversity in recruitment practices and in the composition of executive management and/or Boards of Directors.
 - ❖ Develop or maintain a volunteer program for its employees.
 - ❖ Encourage sustainable development, environmental protection, reduced carbon emissions, recycling, fair trade or other similar objectives on an ongoing basis.
 - ❖ Develop or maintain any form of internal philanthropy or charity program designed to help the community.

Project planning & management

Item 1: Project management

Mandatory supporting documents

- In Step 4: Supporting Documents of the application submission, Applicants are required to upload and submit, as a separate document, a Project schedule,

preferably a Gantt chart, that shows each activity and a critical path with key Milestones for key Project stages.

- The Gantt chart must be provided in a Microsoft Project format or Microsoft Excel.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an ability to adequately manage and plan a Project through scheduling and timelines. The detailed Project schedule must clearly indicate that the Project is well planned and has defined activities and a critical path with key Milestones for key Project stages, including:
 - ❖ Engineering and Network design.
 - ❖ Securing of all relevant licenses, permits, duty to consult obligations, tower consultations, co-location agreements and other regulatory requirements.
 - ❖ Site preparation.
 - ❖ Equipment procurement.
 - ❖ Equipment deployment.
 - ❖ Network testing.
 - ❖ Network completion and transition to operational status.

Activities must be logically sequenced with realistic timelines and include a Project Start Date and a Project Completion Date for each of the key Project stages. Do not include the time to negotiate and sign the Funding Agreements with the Ministry or ISED in the Gantt chart.

This information will be used to assess the reasonableness of Project implementation as well as the feasibility of Project timelines.

ANNEX 4: PROCESS FOR REVIEWING AVAILABILITY MAP DATA

Applicants may seek to apply to cover Ineligible Areas on the Availability Map if evidence can be provided to substantiate the accuracy of reported Broadband Service speeds.

If an Applicant wishes to review, challenge, or update the information on Broadband Services displayed on the Availability Map, then the Applicant must communicate with ISED through the following email: nationalbroadbandmap-cartenationaledesservicesalargebande@ised-isde.gc.ca.

Updates and confirmations of existing services (or lack thereof) may result in the Availability Map receiving final updates prior to the application deadline. Unresolved or unconfirmed information will not result in the Availability Map being updated.

Applicants seeking to challenge Coverage information on the Availability Map should provide evidence that households or areas in question cannot access speeds of 50/10 Mbps (Download/Upload) with any Service Providers. Information demonstrating a lack of 50/10 Mbps service must include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Template 8: Supporting Connectivity Evidence

One Speed Test measurement is required for every 5 targeted households under the targeted area. Each Speed Test measurement must indicate the following:

- ❖ Service Provider's name;
- ❖ GPS coordinates of the Speed Test (latitude/longitude);
- ❖ Civic address;
- ❖ Last-mile Infrastructure;
- ❖ Subscribed Download service package;
- ❖ Subscribed Upload service package;
- ❖ Measured Download Speed;
- ❖ Measured Upload Speed;
- ❖ Date of test, and
- ❖ Time of day of the measurement.

In order to substantiate the Speed Test results, screen captures must be provided as acceptable evidence to demonstrate the requirements mentioned above.

- Evidence Map: All Speed Tests should be plotted on a geocode map, with a colour code indicating whether the test passed or failed the 50/10 Mbps threshold requirement. To generate a geocode map, a Geographic Information System format must be used such as KML/KMZ, MapInfo and Shapefiles. For the purpose of this Program, images (JPG, PNG, BMP) and PDF documents are not considered as geocoded maps.
- Confirmation in writing from all the Service Providers of the region that they do not offer any service at 50/10 Mbps in the targeted area including specific geographic coordinates (latitude/longitude and associated civic address) for every household. Screen captures from online chats with Service Providers' customer service agents are acceptable information for this evidence section.

All evidence should be attached in the Step 4: Supporting Documents in the application submission.

If an Applicant wishes to cover an Eligible Area, but has reason to believe that the presence of Indigenous Peoples has been underestimated by the impact calculator, the Applicant may clarify the situation by means of a Band Council Resolution, a letter from the Chief in Council, a letter from the Chief or refer to the situation in similar general supporting documents to be attached with Template 6: Community and rural development benefits.

ANNEX 5: SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Step 1: Eligibility Mapping and Statistics

- Project Coverage map submitted using the [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#)
- Eligibility Coverage Mapping Statistics email received from [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#)

Step 2: Templates

- Template 1: [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) and impacts calculator.
- Template 2: Detailed budget.
- Template 3: Financial forecast.
- Template 4: Last-mile Broadband Service.
- Template 5: List of Points-of-Presence and wholesale pricing.
- Template 6: Community and rural development benefits.
- Template 7: Fixed wireless addendum (mandatory for fixed wireless).
- Template 8: Supporting connectivity evidence.
- Template 9: Geographic names.
- Template 10: Equipment details.

Step 3: CCBC Application Form

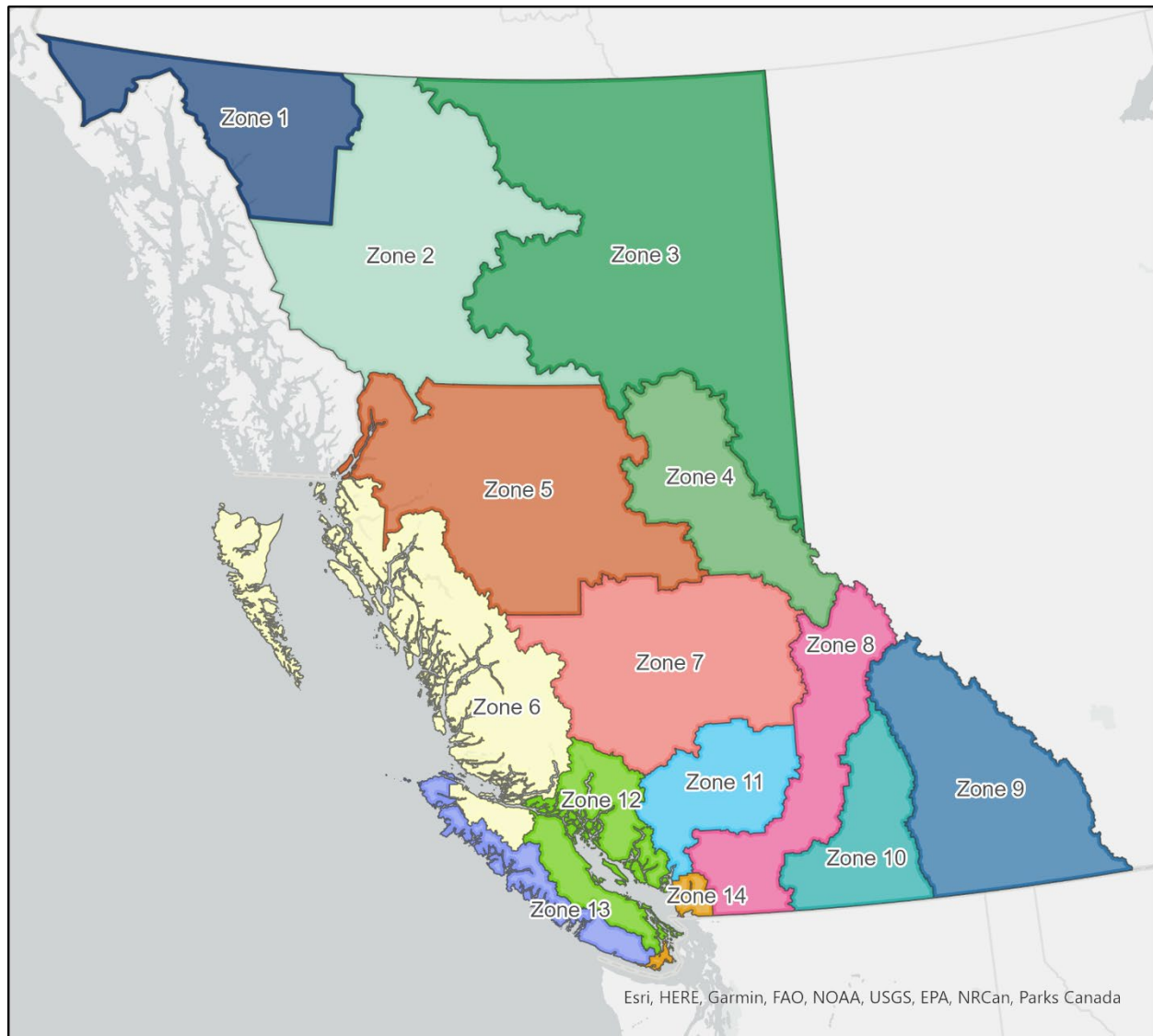
- CCBC Application Form.

Step 4: Supporting documents

- Copies of registration and other relevant documents.
- Independently prepared financial statements for the last three (3) years.
- Logical Network Diagram.
- Project schedule (preferably a Gantt chart).
- Community and rural development benefits (up to 15 pages for support letters).
- Other supporting documents.

ANNEX 6: PROJECT ZONE MAP

Figure 1: Project Zone Map



The [Project Zone](#) map can be accessed from the [British Columbia Data Catalogue](#) in various geospatial formats.

ANNEX 7: DEFINITIONS

Applicant: A legal entity that is eligible to apply to the Program.

Applicant Portal: An online location where an Applicant can complete and submit their Application Form, update contact information, monitor application status, and upload and track documents submitted to the CCBC.

Application Form: The web-based form to be filled by the Applicant containing Project information and eligibility criteria that is required to be submitted for each Project for which funding is requested under the Program.

Availability Map: Refers to ISED's National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map. ISED makes broadband Coverage information available along road segments. This information is based on information provided by Service Providers and census data.

Backbone Infrastructure: The components used to construct major data routes that connect different Networks. Backbone Infrastructure is often made of fibre optic lines, however, can also consist of microwave or satellite technologies.

Backhaul/Backbone Access Points: The part of the Network between the backbone and access edge where access points are located. The backhaul itself may be either wireless or fibre.

Band Council: Refers to a council of a band as defined in the [Indian Act](#).

Band Council Resolution: Means a motion, as recorded in the minutes of a Band Council meeting and approved at a duly convened meeting of the Band Council pursuant to the consent of a majority of the quorum of the councillors of the band.

Bandwidth: The capacity for transferring data over a Network as measured in bits per second (bps), kilobits per second (Kbps) or megabits per second (Mbps). Bandwidth and speed(s) may be used interchangeably.

Business BCeID or Basic BCeID account: Provides secure access to online government services. The type of BCeID depends on the service you want to use. More information can be found here: [BCeID - Home](#).

Broadband Infrastructure: Refers to either Last-Mile Infrastructure or Backbone Infrastructure or both.

Broadband Service(s): Means the Residential Broadband Service or Dedicated Broadband Service.

CCBC Identification Number: The application number assigned in the Application Portal at the time of application submission. This number should be used to reference the application in all enquiries and correspondence.

Central Office: A building structure in a locality to which subscriber home and business lines are connected on what is called a “local loop”. The term is also known as an “end office” or “exchange”.

Communications Materials, Products and Promotion: Means any public communications regarding the Program, and any public announcement or distribution of outputs or results flowing from a Project, including media relations (including news conferences, news releases and other media products), information/advertising campaigns, print/audio-visual/electronic materials, websites and exhibits.

Confidential: means keeping private or secret, safe from access, use or disclosure by people who are not authorized to handle the personal or business information.

Council Resolution: Means a record of decisions or wishes of a council and often expresses a municipality’s or a regional district’s position, such as authorizing support for a project.

Coverage: Means the number of Underserved Households to be provided with access to Broadband Service within a specific Coverage Area.

Coverage Area: Means the area in which the Applicant will make Residential Broadband Service available to Underserved Households.

CRTC: Is the acronym for the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. It is a public organization in Canada with a mandate as a regulatory agency for telecommunications and broadcasting.

Customer Premise Equipment: Refers to any telecommunications equipment located at a subscriber's premises that is connected to a Service Provider's telecommunications Network at a Demarcation Point. Examples include wiring, modems (DSL, cable, wireless) as well as antennae or other wireless equipment.

Dedicated Broadband Service: Means a dedicated, symmetrical, and never oversubscribed internet service provided at or from a Point-of-Presence without a monthly data cap in Download or Upload, and without traffic shaping such as Bandwidth throttling. If the Backbone Infrastructure of a Point-of-Presence uses satellite technology, the service is not required to be dedicated and symmetrical.

Demarcation Point: A point that separates the Customer Premise Equipment from the Service Provider's Network infrastructure equipment. In other words, a Demarcation Point is the point where the local loop (the Network transmission equipment) ends and the inside wire (which is the responsibility of the customer) begins.

Dig-once Policy: A policy that mandates the installation of conduit for fiber optic cables when other construction projects are undertaken to reduce the cost of installing new telecommunication infrastructure in the future. A Dig-once Policy involves the construction of conduits only. The actual fiber optic cable may not be deployed in the conduits during construction.

Download: Data traffic travelling from the internet to the end user.

Download Speed: Means the speed at which data is transferred from the internet to a user's computer or device. For example, the speed at which a large file can be downloaded from a website.

Drop Point: Is the final drop-off location in a Last-Mile Infrastructure build. Typically, it's a personal residence.

Effective Date: Means the earliest date for which Eligible Costs may be reimbursed. This date is found in the Funding Agreement.

Eligible Costs: Means those Project Costs that meet the criteria set out in this Guide.

Eligible Areas: Eligible Areas are those identified by the Province as having inconsistent 50/10 Mbps service, or those areas identified by ISED's [Availability Map](#) as having less than 50/10 Mbps Broadband Service.

Eligibility Mapping Tool: Means the tool that enables an Applicant to overlay or draw proposed Coverage on top of ISED's [Availability Map](#), activate the various information layers available and better target projects to close the remaining Broadband Services gap.

Federal Contribution: Means the funding provided by the Government of Canada pursuant to the terms and conditions of a federal funding agreement.

Fiscal Year: Means the period beginning April 1st in any year and ending March 31st of the following year.

Funding Agreement: Means an agreed-upon document between the Ministry and the Recipient that outlines the terms and conditions of the transfer of fund(s). Once a Project is approved under the Program, a Funding Agreement between the Recipient and the Ministry must be entered into in order for Eligible Costs to be reimbursed. It is also a document that identifies the respective interests and expectations of the parties related to the Project.

Gantt: Means a chart in which a series of horizontal lines shows the amount of work done or production completed in certain periods of time in relation to the amount planned for those periods.

Indefeasible Right of Use (IRU): Means the exclusive, unrestricted and indefeasible right to use strands of fibre for any legal purpose. With an IRU contractual arrangement the buyer of the IRU can unconditionally, and exclusively, use the fibres of an IRU for several years.

Ineligible Areas: Ineligible Areas are those identified by the Province as having consistent 50/10 Mbps or faster service, or those areas identified by ISED's [Availability Map](#) as having 50/10 Mbps or faster Broadband Service.

Ineligible Costs: Means those costs relating to the Project that are not Eligible Costs, as described in this guide.

Internet Gateway: A Network connection that provides access to the internet for the Service Provider's Last-Mile Infrastructure distribution system.

ISED: Means the federal department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

Jitter: Refers to small intermittent delays during data transfers. It can be caused by many factors including Network congestion and signal interference.

Large-scale Projects: Are Projects that covers many communities and have co-funding from the Canadian Infrastructure Bank.

Last-Mile Broadband Service: Refers to the final leg of the Network that delivers Broadband Services to customers.

Last-Mile Infrastructure: The components used to connect homes and businesses to the Service Provider's Point-of-Presence. This may include routers, towers, antennae, fibre optical, cable, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) equipment, cable modems, wireless radios and so on.

Logical Network Diagram(s): A Logical Network Diagram is a pictorial representation of how the various components of a Network are connected with each other in a physical location.

Long Term Evolution (LTE): Is a standard for wireless communications for smartphones and other devices. LTE is commonly referred to as 4G (fourth generation) cellular technology.

Milestones: Significant stages of completion for the Project(s).

Minister: Means the Minister of Citizens' Services and any other person, duly authorized to act on their behalf.

Ministry: Means the provincial Ministry of Citizens' Services, which administers the CCBC.

Network: Is a collection of transmitters, receivers and communications channels that enable the exchange of information over large distances. Networks can contain one or more routers that work together to transmit information to the correct user.

Optical Network Terminal: A network interface device used with fibre-optic systems and is usually the Demarcation Point between the fibre-optic Network and the Customer Premises Equipment. It is usually located on the outside of a home or in the garage.

Overbuild: Refers to building duplicative services or infrastructure within areas that have similar or better existing services or infrastructure.

Open Access: A policy requiring owners of Broadband Infrastructure to provide access to their Network to Service Providers for a fee.

Passive Infrastructure: Means existing civil infrastructure needed for Network deployment. It can include any structure where cables and antennas can be attached. Utility poles, underground conduits and wireless towers are common examples.

Point-of-Presence (PoP): A facility where Service Providers house servers, routers, switches and other communications equipment. A PoP is where a Service Provider's Last-mile Infrastructure connects to an Internet Gateway. A PoP site in a Network is also an interconnection point to a backbone Network from where a Service Provider either connects to its local Last-mile Infrastructure or connects to another Network, including Third Party Networks.

Point-to-Point Microwave link(s): An alternative to fibre optic cabling for interconnecting the network of two sites. Point-to-Point (PTP) microwave distances can range from a few hundred meters to over 50 kilometers with an unobstructed line of sight.

Program: Means the Connecting Communities BC Program. The terms "**Program**" or "**CCBC**" may be used interchangeably.

Project: Means the activities described in the application for which Program funding is being requested.

Project Budget: Means the Applicant's financial plan for the Project, as set out in Template 2: Detailed budget, which includes all Project Costs and all other sources of funding received or expected to be received by the Applicant for the Project.

Project Completion: Means the point at which all components of the Project are completed, and the resulting Broadband Infrastructure is implemented and available to provide Broadband Service.

Project Completion Date: Means the date on or before which Project Completion must occur.

Project Costs: Means the aggregate of all Eligible and Ineligible Costs for the Project, as set out in the Project Budget.

Project Start Date: Means the date specified in the application, which is the latest date by which the Project must commence.

Project Zones: Represent conceptual boundaries in the province within which there are Underserved Households and communities for connectivity purposes.

Proprietary: Means information that a company wishes to keep Confidential or secret. Proprietary information can include everything from a design plan such as a logical Network plan to a company's salary structure, employment contracts, marketing plans and trade secrets.

Provincial Contribution(s): Means the funding provided by the Ministry pursuant to the terms and conditions of the provincial Funding Agreement.

Pseudo-Household Locations: A geospatial representative distribution of demographic data (households) derived from the Canadian Census from Statistics Canada. Pseudo-Household demographics are used to calculate Broadband Service availability.

Recipient: An organization that is in receipt of a government transfer of monetary assets under the Program for which there is a non-exchange transaction where the Province is not the direct beneficiary of any goods or services.

Residential Broadband Service: Means an internet service that supports data transmission at a minimum Download Speed of 50 Megabits per second (Mbps) and Upload Speed of 10 Mbps.

Satellite-dependent Area: As defined by CRTC. A satellite dependent community is a community that has no connection to terrestrially based telecommunications facilities for connection to the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and/or the Internet, and that relies on satellite transport to receive one or more telecommunications services (such as voice, wireless [both fixed and mobile], and Internet services).

Scalability: The ability of a Network to expand Broadband Service to a larger area around the vicinity of the existing connected locale and/or ability to expand service or evolve with changing technology.

Service Provider: An organization that offers its customers Broadband Services.

Spectrum: Spectrum are airwaves used to convey wireless signals in Networks. It is a critical resource for the telecommunications industry and for providing a variety of services to Canadians. ISED manages Spectrum in Canada.

Speed Test: An internet Speed Test is a website or web application that measures a user's internet connection speed. It reports on: Upload Speed, Download Speed, Bandwidth, among other items such as Jitter.

Third Party: Means any legal entity, partnership or organization, other than the eligible Applicant.

Tribal Council: Consists of a grouping of First Nations with common interests who voluntarily join together to provide programs/services to member First Nations.

Tribal Council Resolution: Means a motion, as recorded in the minutes of a Tribal Council meeting and approved at a duly convened meeting of the Tribal Council pursuant to the consent of a majority of the quorum of the councillors of the Tribal Council.

Underserved Household: Means households with no internet access or access to internet service that does not meet the definition of Residential Broadband Service.

Universal Broadband Fund (UBF): Means ISED's \$2.75-billion investment designed to help connect all Canadians to high-speed internet.

Upload: Data traffic travelling from the end user to the internet.

Upload Speed: The connection speed at which a user can send data to the internet. For example, the speed to upload a video to a social media website.

Very Remote Area: Very remote communities are those lacking year-round road access.