



Request for Information

– *Last Mile Broadband
Technology and Solutions*

Prepared by:
BC3 – British Columbia Community
Connectivity Co-operative

FNTC – First Nations
Technology Council

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Version 1.0

Confidential

Information contained within this document is confidential and is provided only to give vendors a sufficient understanding of the requirements of the of the British Columbia Community Connectivity Co-operative and the First Nations Technology Council.

Under no circumstances should information be disclosed to any third parties without written permission.

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Introduction

The BC Community Connectivity Co-operative (BC3) in partnership with the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC) has prepared this Request for Information (RFI) document to assist member communities in evaluating 'last mile' broadband Internet technologies and solutions.

Organization members include remote communities across British Columbia working to deliver community-based broadband Internet to homes, businesses and governmental agencies within their currently un-serviced and under-serviced communities.

Many of the members of the sponsor organizations represent the 151 communities recently identified by the Province of British Columbia as being on the other side of the digital divide. As such, many BC3 members and many First Nations are currently eligible to apply for a capital expenditure grant of up to \$20,000 through the Community Infrastructure Networking Grant Program.

To assist vendors in the preparation of responses to this RFI, details are provided regarding BC3 and FNTC, the nature of this project, and the requirements of vendors responding to this Request for Information.

RFI Sponsors

First Nations Technology Council (FNTC)

The FNTC was created by the First Nations Summit Resolution to work on behalf of all First Nations in BC to develop a Provincial Technology Plan that will address technology issues, including access to high speed internet, technical skills to support their own technical environment, garner the technical capacity to benefit from any and all applications, and to promote the use of technology to revitalize culture and language.

FNTC helps First Nations throughout BC with planning and implementing technology solutions in their respective communities. FNTC brings small communities together to share their successes and learn from their mistakes, and provides resources that help communities understand the opportunities that technology can provide and how to access those technologies.

BC Community Connectivity Co-operative (BC3)

The mission of the BC3 is to stimulate and support the creation of sustainable broadband networks in under-served communities throughout British Columbia. BC3 believes that robust access to the Information Highway is critical for any community to remain economically and socially viable.

BC3 was formed in March 2004, with over 50 member community networking groups and is the first organization of its kind in Canada dedicated to promoting the development, implementation and sustainable operation of community-based broadband networks.

BC3 is resolute in the vision that every rural and remote community in British Columbia must be provided with the skills, support and opportunity to allow the community to develop and maintain the necessary information and communications technology (ICT) capacity – including

infrastructure, applications, and user skills – such that the community will remain viable in both socio-cultural and economic terms.

BC3 is committed to:

- *Consulting with under-served communities to identify opportunities to support community efforts to establish a broadband network.*
- *Nurturing Community Champions to be the leaders of broadband network initiatives in their communities;*
- *Offering education and support to Community Champions, to community network allies and to network users, at each stage of the network planning, development and implementation process;*
- *Being a ready and accessible information resource for the planning, implementing and operating of community broadband networks;*
- *Advocating to government, to industry and to the public on behalf of the community networks of British Columbia.*

BC3 will measure success firstly in the number of sustainable community networks created in under-served communities across British Columbia; and secondly in the measurement of the economic and social benefits to the community from the rollout of a community broadband network.

It is in line with these goals and success metrics that BC3 partnered with FNTC to lobby the federal and provincial governments to create the Community Infrastructure Networking Grant and to provide funding for capital expenditures within the digital divide communities.

BC3 and FNTC are the administrators of the Community Networking Infrastructure Grant program.

Community Networking Infrastructure Grant

The driving force behind the timing of this RFI is the recent availability of the \$600,000 in funding through a program known as the Community Networking Infrastructure Grant.

The grant is provided through NetWorkBC (Province of BC Ministry of Management Services).

The grant is designed to assist underserved communities to bring broadband Internet to their homes, businesses and government agencies such as health care facilities and First Nations schools.

Grants can be made up to \$20,000 in support of "Last-Mile" infrastructure to communities on NetworkBC's Provincial Digital Divide list available from <http://www.network.gov.bc.ca>.

The funding is to purchase equipment to connect from a local broadband point of presence (POP) already existing in the community to other community buildings. These broadband points of presence locations may be provided by Telus or through the National Satellite Initiative.

Interested communities were to deliver a letter of intent to apply for the grant by April 29, 2005. Next, the community organizations will complete development of their community technology

plans, source vendor bids and propose a formal application for the grant funding.

This RFI is expected to assist those communities in short-listing vendors and identifying the information they require to deliver a solid and sustainable business plan.

Projects will be funded by August 31, 2005 and must be completed and funds disbursed by March 31, 2006.

Instructions for Vendors

Terms and Timing

This document will be distributed to potential vendors on or about May 5, 2005. Responses to this document must be received by close of business Wednesday, May 18, 2005.

Submission Process:

- FAX to 604-648-8205 Attention: Community Networking Infrastructure Grants
- MAIL (postmarked no later than April 29th) to BC3/FNTC
c/o the BC3
Suite 308-611 Alexander Street
Vancouver, BC, V6A 1E1
- EMAIL to grant@fntc.info

To assist in the management of the RFI, please note whether your organization is interested in responding formally ASAP.

All vendors must fill out Section 1.0 of the Response. Other sections are only required depending on the solution components your organization is interested in supplying.

This document is not a formal Request for Proposal.

- Vendor selection processes will be carried out by the individual member communities and not by BC3 or FNTC directly
- Any costs associated with responding to this RFI are the sole responsibility of the vendor.

Neither BC3 nor FNTC will endorse or recommend a particular vendor or solution at this time.

Both organizations reserve the right to be engaged in the future to assist or develop a more formal procurement process on behalf of their membership either jointly, or separately.

Use of RFI Responses

The RFI responses and corresponding attachments will be compiled and forwarded by FNTC and BC3 to their member organizations starting with those that have filed a letter of intent for the Community Infrastructure Networking Grant.

Owing to the relatively wide distribution of the responses, information provided should be considered publicly available information.

For further information, please contact

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Formal Response:

Please answer the following questions or provide the requested information to the best of your ability. Please avoid the use of jargon and technical terms unless they are clearly defined.

Requested Information	Response
1.0 Corporate Information	
1.1 Company name 1.2 Company address Phone number Fax number E-mail address Web site URL	
1.3 Name of the person responsible for the information contained in this RFI	
1.4 What components of an overall solution can your company provide? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Facility Hardware • Central Facility Software • Customer Premise Equipment • Value-Added Services • Installation • Operational Support Please indicate the type of system you provide components for" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wireless • Cable • Broadband-over-Power 	
1.5 Describe ownership and/or strategic partnerships of your company	
1.6 Company location(s)	
1.7 Total number of employees	
1.8 When was your company's initial year of operation? How long have you been providing these types of products or solutions?	
1.9 How many installations of the proposed system do you currently have installed? Have you supplied this product to customers in a similar situation that would act as a reference site for your product? If so, provide contact information for these references or any testimonial information available.	
1.10 Does your organization have any third-party relationships/alliances? Describe these.	

Requested Information	Response
2.0 Technical Components	
<p>2.1 General Description</p> <p>Please provide a detailed description of your proposed technology or solution.</p>	

2.2 Wireless Last Mile Solution			
<p>Instructions: Please complete the Sections below that apply to your specific technology or solution.</p> <p>Please note by placing a mark (X) in the appropriate column which components you deliver through your organization (R – Respondent) and which you deliver through partners (P - Partner).</p> <p>Where possible, please list the partners you would normally engage.</p>			
	R	P	Comments
<p>2.2.1 Central Facility Components</p> <p>Please describe the standard components of your central facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Server Hardware/Software • Operating System • Racks • Cabling • Firewalls • Operations Management tools (local, remote) • Bandwidth Management tools • Accounting/Billing Systems 			
<p>2.2.2 Wireless Network Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towers • Antennae • Cabling • Other hardware 			
<p>2.2.3 Customer Premise Equipment</p> <p>What hardware and software is required for end-users?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modems • Antennae • Software <p>Do you supply the CPE equipment or should it be sourced additionally?</p> <p>Please describe the customer</p>			

premise installation process.			
2.2.4 Scalability and Performance Describe your solution's scalability and performance features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalability • Range (km's) • Number of Users Supported • Failover Capability 			
2.2.5 Any other relevant features Please describe any other features you feel are relevant			

Requested Information	Response		
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2.3 Wired Last Mile Solution

Instructions: Please complete the Sections below that apply to your specific technology or solution.

Please note by placing a mark (X) in the appropriate column which components you deliver through your organization (R – Respondent) and which you deliver through partners (P - Partner).

Where possible, please list the partners you would normally engage.

	R	P	Comments
2.3.1 Central Facility Components Please describe the standard components of your central facility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Server Hardware/Software • Operating System • Racks • Cabling • Firewalls • Operations Management tools (local, remote) • Bandwidth Management tools • Accounting/Billing Systems 			
2.3.2 Wired Network Components Please describe the components required to deliver the Broadband service from the Central Facility to the end-users.			
2.3.3 Customer Premise Equipment What hardware and software is required for end-users? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modems • Antennae • Software Do you supply the CPE equipment or should it be sourced additionally? Please describe the customer premise installation process.			

<p>2.3.4 Scalability and Performance</p> <p>Describe your solution's scalability and performance features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalability • Range (km's) • Number of Users Supported • Failover Capability 			
<p>2.2.5 Any other relevant features</p> <p>Please describe any other features you feel are relevant</p>			

Requested Information	Response		
3.0 Value-Added Services			
	R	P	Comments
<p>Please provide a brief description of any value-added services that you can also provide to increase the value of the service and potentially provide additional revenue streams.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web page Hosting • Email • Anti-Spam • Anti-Virus • Firewall • VoIP • WLAN devices 			

Requested Information	Response		
4.0 Centralized Services			
	Comments		
<p>Should two or more communities join together to purchase your solution, can the system be architected such that they can share common services? i.e billing services, value-add services, remote management, etc.</p> <p>If so, please describe what kinds of services could be shared.</p>			

Requested Information	Response		
5.0 Implementation, Training & Support			
	R	P	Comments
<p>Please describe your standard technology or solution's implementation process.</p> <p>Is your presence on-site required to complete an installation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration 			

<p>What training is required?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For deployment • For ongoing operation <p>Do you offer formal user training?</p> <p>What type of courses do you offer and what is their duration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Location <p>Do you provide training materials? Describe them.</p>			
<p>What levels of support are available? Define each level.</p> <p>Where are your support services located?</p> <p>What are the hours of operation and response times of support services?</p> <p>Does support include product updates, as well as bug fixes?</p> <p>How often are major software upgrades available?</p> <p>How are software updates transmitted to customers?</p> <p>If you have a helpdesk, what is its escalation procedure?</p>			

Requested Information	Response		
6.0 Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)			
	R	P	Comments
<p>Please provide a detailed breakdown of the one time and ongoing costs of your solution.</p> <p>If the cost is based on the number of users, what is the rate?</p> <p>Describe any discounts that you offer (if any) for volume purchasing?</p>			
<p>What are the licensing costs of the solution?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One time • Annual 			
<p>What costs are charged for implementation?</p> <p>What is the charge for training and training materials?</p> <p>What are the maintenance and support costs? Please give a detailed breakdown.</p> <p>Are there any other costs that would contribute to the total cost of ownership of your product?</p>			

Requested Information	Response
7.0 Attachments	
	Comments
<p>Please provide any of the following documents that are available to describe your solution.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product sheets • Architecture diagrams • Sample ROI or business case models • Sample training material 	
<p>As communities may not have the full knowledge of your solution, please provide a glossary of terms and acronyms you have used to describe your solution.</p>	