



Management Response and Action Plan

The findings and recommendations of the Evaluation of ISED Support to Extending Broadband Access to Rural and Remote Communities were provided to the Connected Canadians Branch of the Spectrum and Telecommunications Sector at ISED. Management has been consulted and agrees with the findings included in this report and will take action to address all applicable recommendations by November 30, 2020.

| Recommendation | Planned Action on the Recommendation | Responsible Official (position) | Target completion date |
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| ISED should examine its processes for application intake and review, project selection and approval, and negotiations of contributions to identify opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further streamline processes and improve the timeliness of project approval and implementation; and• Allow more flexibility for small ISPs and non-ISPs to demonstrate eligibility and meet technical requirements. | Connected Canada Branch (CCB) is assessing lessons learned from the Connect to Innovate program and undertaking internal discussion sessions on various aspects of program design for the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), as well as engagement with past recipients, partners and stakeholders to obtain feedback. This work should identify opportunities to provide guidance and streamline program requirements to better support future applicants, including small internet service providers (ISPs) and non-ISPs, during the application phase | Director General, Connected Canada Branch | March 31, 2020 |

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| | and later during project implementation (e.g., flexibility to submit claims more frequently). | | |
| | The new UBF program will have terms and conditions that outline program eligibility requirements, an application guide and communicate online information on project requirements, selection criteria and approval processes. Communication material will incorporate stakeholder input and include guidance to small ISPs and non-ISPs. | Director General, Connected Canada Branch | May 31, 2020 |
| | To assist staff, for UBF, CCB will prepare tools (e.g., due diligence checklist), similar to Connect to Innovate (CTI), that reflect streamlined processes. For selected UBF applications, particularly small ISPs and non-ISPs, CCB will prepare short communication material | Director General, Connected Canada Branch | October 31, 2020 Due diligence material November 30, 2020 Communication material for selected applicants |

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| | to communicate in a user-friendly way to help them understand how the program works and provide guidance on information needed to put in place and manage a contribution agreement. | | |
| ISED, in consultation with key federal partners, should clarify and communicate to stakeholders the federal roles and responsibilities related to broadband programming and examine the feasibility of an enhanced coordination role, including the establishment of a “single window” for stakeholder inquiries and interactions regarding projects and funding. | In October 2018, federal, provincial and territorial Ministers issued a joint statement that agreed to collaborate with each other, the private, municipal and public institutions and Indigenous communities. On June 27, 2019, the federal government, working with an FPT committee on connectivity, released a national broadband strategy focused on three pillars: high-speed access for all, investing for impact, and partnering for progress. | | |

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| | <p>In addition, ISED is working with federal broadband partners, including the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Infrastructure Canada (INFC), Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), to develop a coordination framework that outlines roles and responsibilities related to broadband and coordination strategies. The framework will outline common targets, conditions for sharing of broadband data, the adoption of a federal mapping platform to assess overbuild, and areas for harmonization (e.g., common forms, assessment tools). The framework will help facilitate inquiries and interaction with ISPs and other stakeholders.</p> | <p>Director General, Telecommunication and Internet Policy Branch</p> | <p>March 31, 2020</p> |

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| | <p>Furthermore, to inform program design, given each jurisdiction has different approaches to support broadband infrastructure, ISED will establish 13 ongoing bi-lateral tables with provinces and territories. After policy design decisions are made, throughout program delivery, CCB will hold ongoing bilateral meetings to discuss areas of common interest, including: sharing of mapping data, opportunities to work with the CRTC, co-funding possibilities, refreshing the maps and website portal with information of interest, and resolutions to challenges in completing broadband infrastructure projects, e.g., accessing passive infrastructure. CCB will launch initial bilateral FPT meetings prior to fiscal year end.</p> | <p>Director General, Connected Canada Branch</p> | <p>March 31, 2020 Meetings with all jurisdictions launched.</p> |

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| | <p>On June 27, 2019, ISED launched a website on connectivity serving as a central portal single window to help future applicants navigate programs and provide the latest news on government funding. ISED developed the portal in conjunction with OGD partners. The site also includes the National Broadband Availability Map and allows Canadians to take a speed-test and provide feedback on Internet service in their area. Prior to the launch of the UBF, ISED will undertake a refresh of the National Broadband Availability Map and update the website with information for applicants. Updates to the map and website will be ongoing.</p> | <p>Director General, Connected Canada Branch</p> | <p>April 30, 2020 National Broadband Availability Map connectivity map refresh</p> |

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| <p>ISED should continue to work with the CRTC and ISPs to enhance the level of precision of publicly available mapping data (while considering confidentiality of data).</p> | <p>ISED has worked with the CRTC to consult with ISPs regarding confidentiality considerations necessary to increase the precision of the available data. In December 2019, ISED publically released more precise mapping data on the Open Government portal.</p> <p>Over the past year, ISED has also made improvements to the National Broadband Availability Map published online. The updated maps show greater precision.</p> <p>Finally, ISED has developed the necessary capability and will be publishing maps that reflect the most precise coverage information available – reflecting coverage along individual 250-metre road segments throughout Canada. This level of granularity will provide applicants even greater knowledge of where current connectivity service</p> | <p>Director General, Connected Canada Branch</p> | <p>March 31, 2020 Mapping by road segments</p> |

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| | exists and enable them in the future to submit more targeted proposals to serve underserved areas. | | |