A. Program Overview

Under the Next Generation Network Program (NGNP), CENGN, Canada’s Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks, is looking to fund innovative projects across rural Ontario that demonstrate technology solutions that offer flexible, lower cost, higher performance residential broadband access for rural Ontario communities. This program is designed to prove new technology approaches that can significantly improve business cases or new business models, be used to promote new field-proven innovations from technology applicants, offer an improved level of broadband access to unserved communities, develop new residential broadband ecosystems, and to share technical solutions with other rural Ontario communities looking for access or improvements to residential broadband solutions in their community.

CENGN will be providing funding for individual projects from its Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Program as part of the NGNP. CENGN is seeking technologies that address the requirement for specific technical problem statements that make it challenging to get broadband access to residences within rural Ontario communities. With the increasing demand for on-line municipal services, email communications, on-line cultural development, social media, distance learning, tele-medicine, remote medical monitoring, on-line homework/assignment submission for students, support for on-line business, and in creasing need for on-line options to work from home, there is urgent need for high-performance, low-latency residential broadband access in rural Ontario communities.

In order to provide an environment to demonstrate the effectiveness of new residential broadband technology solutions, CENGN will be encouraging community Expression of Interest (EOI) responses from rural Ontario communities who are interested in hosting a technology project in their community. From the Community EOI responses, at least one community will be selected for this project. The project will be designed to prove that a technology solution can be installed and commercially deployed while demonstrating a significantly improved level of residential broadband service to the community. This project will also seek to demonstrate a marked improvement in the business case for residential broadband access improvements for the community.

CENGN will also be encouraging EOI responses from technology company applicants who are interested in providing equipment, technology, and support services to be operational within a 3 - 6 month period. From the Technology EOI responses, a number of candidate technology companies will be selected for each Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Project to propose a technology solution that can be installed and proven to provide a significantly improved level of residential broadband service for the selected host community.
The purpose of the project will not only be to demonstrate a significant performance level improvement in residential broadband access in residences, but also to provide a well-tested, monitored, and documented implementation, that can be promoted and shared with other communities by the technology applicant(s), the community, and CENGN. It is key that the proposed project infrastructure will be scalable, and that the technology applicant is willing to work with the host community, and any necessary local partners, to come up with a plan to extend or expand the project infrastructure to completely meet the wider residential broadband needs of the community following the project’s successful completion.

In order to ensure the network is operational within the 3 – 6 month period, technology EOI applicants must be ready to:

- Provide all necessary infrastructure equipment, including hardware, software, and supporting materials, to install in a selected rural Ontario community.
- Provide necessary labour and/or support to install the equipment in a pre-defined number of residences in the community.
- Fully commission the technical solution in the community.
- Provide ongoing support to maintain the system at an optimum level of operation for at least 12 months after commissioning.
- Provide access to the infrastructure that will allow CENGN or the community to assess performance levels during the project.
- Demonstrate compliance to all regulatory requirements to ensure the technology is safe in accordance with operating internet access solutions in Canada.

Both Community and Technology EOI responses will be evaluated by an independent External Review Panel (ERP), selected from technology experts, academia, and other sectors. The ERP will make recommendations to the CENGN Internal Review Panel (IRP), who will then decide which community will be selected, and which technology applicants will qualify to respond to the subsequent call for a Request for Solution (RFS). The RFS will be a detailed technical response, which is fine-tuned to provide a solution for the specific rural Ontario community selected from the Community EOI evaluation process.

**B. How the Funding Works**

This is a reimbursement program. Through the NGNP, CENGN will contribute 50 percent of eligible project costs for an approved project to a maximum CENGN contribution of $500,000 per project, with the successful technology applicant matching or exceeding the CENGN contribution to the project. The project is intended to be operational within 3 – 6 months. The total number of funded projects will be dependent upon funding allocated to each project.

No direct funding is expected from the host community for the project, however the community may need to work with the selected technology applicant(s) to provide or arrange one or more of the following, depending on the technology solution selected:

- Access to one or two secure, climate-controlled rooms or buildings for equipment racks and required equipment.
- Additional power or air-conditioning upgrades for existing secure, climate-controlled rooms/buildings for equipment racks and equipment.
- One or two temporary secure, climate-controlled buildings or trailers to house equipment racks and equipment.
- One or two serviced lots with power and possibly water/sewer for equipment buildings, trailers or towers.
• Administrative assistance in getting right of way permits, building permits, regulatory clearance, pole or tower access, or other municipal waivers to support the technical project.
• Administrative assistance in identifying all anticipated municipal costs to be expensed by the technology applicant or agreed to be absorbed by the community prior to submitting the RFS submission.
• Tree clearing to ensure unobstructed line of sight for fixed wireless links between sites.

Every effort will be made to ensure any costs to the community are minimized, and clearly identified prior to approval, and selection of the final technology solution for the project. Any expenses to the community will need to be clearly identified in the RFS responses by the technology applicant and must have been discussed with and agreed to by the host community as part of the RFS response.

Flow of Funds: CENGN funds flow only to the technology applicant. The technology applicant is responsible to reimburse partners if applicable.
• Reimbursements are triggered by the submission and approval of claims and reports.
• Reimbursement claims from applicant to CENGN can be made when submitting interim and final reports.
• Reimbursement claims and reports are submitted monthly.
• Applicants should refer to the Eligible Expenses Guide for complete details of eligible expenses.

Payment Terms: Details of the claim submission process will be made available to the successful applicants.
• Monthly interim payments (based on submitted and approved reimbursement claims and reports).
• 10 percent final payment (based on submitted and approved reimbursement claim and final report)
• Payments are based on the total funded project value.
• Only eligible expenses incurred after the awarding of the contract to the successful RFS technology applicant will be allowed.

C. EOI Eligibility

Eligible Community: For a rural Ontario community to participate in the Community EOI process for this project, the community must:
• Be defined by CENGN to be a Rural Ontario District#4 community. The CENGN definition of a Rural Ontario District#4 community, is any community that is within the geographic boundries of any of the following 12 regions/counties within Southern Ontario:
  
  Frontenac County  
Haliburton County  
Hastings County  
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  
Lennox and Addington County  
United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry  
  
Municipality of the District of Muskoka  
City of Ottawa  
United Counties of Prescott and Russell  
Prince Edward County  
Renfrew County  
Lanark County  

• Be willing to produce a written response to the CENGN Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Community EOI for Project #4.
• Have a matching problem statement to that defined in the Community EOI.
Be willing to work with and support the selected technology applicants from the Technology EOI process for Project#4, to complete site surveys, understand location, access, and addresses of points of presence (POPs), secure buildings, equipment rooms, or equipment installation sites in the community, required for project equipment.

Provide information on potential tower or equipment sites required in the community, help assess need for permits, right-of-ways, etc. to allow technology applicants to prepare and submit a formal response to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS for Project#4.

**Eligible technology applicants and partners:** For an equipment/technology applicant to be eligible to participate in the Technology EOI process, the technology applicant must:

- Have a Canadian presence.
- Have a technology solution that addresses all or part of the problem statement defined in the call for Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Technology EOI document.
- Be prepared to submit a written response to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Technology EOI for Project#4.
- Be committed to submit a formal response to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS for Project#4 if selected as a candidate RFS technology applicant as part of the Technology EOI evaluation process.
- Be willing to work with the selected community from the Community EOI evaluation process for Project#4, to complete site surveys, understand location and addresses of each participating residence in the community, access existing and needed equipment rooms or buildings required for project equipment, provide information on potential tower or equipment sites required in the community, help assess need for permits, right-of-ways, etc. to prepare and submit a formal response to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS for Project#4.

**Eligible technology applicants** could be any of the following:

- Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs).
- National and Multi-National Enterprises (NEs and MNEs).
- Telephone companies, service providers, cable companies, ISPs, or WISPs.
- System integrators, installation, or support contractors.

**Eligible technology applicants** must:

- Carry out their technology project in the Community EOI selected rural Ontario community.
- Be for-profit and have operations (manufacturing, R&D, etc.) in Canada.
- Produce proposals and plans to install, demonstrate, and/or implement the results of the project in Ontario and for the benefit of Ontario.
- Be an innovation-driven business developing products or services addressing residential and middle kilometer broadband challenges or services accessed via the improved and cost-reduced residential broadband solution.
- Have sound business plans and secure financial backing.
- Be in good financial and reporting standing with CENGN.
- Demonstrate the capacity to conduct contracted project activities.

CENGN reserves the right to limit the number of submissions from companies already benefiting from, or applying for, other CENGN program funding.

**Eligible partners** can be any of the following:

- SMEs.
- NEs and MNEs.
- Publicly-funded post-secondary academic institutions.
• Municipalities.
• Indigenous communities.
• Not-for-profit organizations.
• Telephone companies, service providers, cable companies, ISPs, or WISPs.
• System integrators, installation, or support contractors.
• Economic development corporations.

D. RFS Eligibility

Eligible Community
For a rural Ontario community to participate in the RFS process, the community must:
• Previously have submitted a response to the CENGN Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Community EOI for Project #4.
• Have been selected and notified by CENGN as a selected rural Ontario community as part of the Community EOI response evaluation process for Project #4.
• Actively work with and support the selected technology applicants from the Technology EOI evaluation process for Project #4, to complete site surveys, understand location and addresses of each participating residence in the community, access existing and needed equipment rooms or buildings required for project equipment, provide information on potential tower or equipment sites required in the community, help access need for permits, right-of-ways, etc. to prepare and submit a formal response to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS for Project #4.

Eligible technology applicants and partners
For an equipment/technology applicant to participate in the RFS process, the technology applicant must:
• Previously have submitted a response to the CENGN Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Technology EOI for Project #4.
• Have been selected and notified by CENGN as an eligible RFS technology applicant as part of the Technology EOI response evaluation process for Project #4.
• Prepare and submit a formal response to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS for Project #4.

Eligible technology applicants could be any of the following:
• SMEs.
• NEs and MNEs.
• Telephone companies, service providers, cable companies, ISPs, or WISPs.
• System integrators, installation, or support contractors.

Eligible technology and partner applicants must:
• Carry out their technology project in the Community EOI selected rural Ontario community
• Be for-profit and have operations (manufacturing, R&D, sales etc.) in Canada.
• Be willing to install, commission and provide a commercial internet service offering in Ontario and for the benefit of Ontario.
• Be an innovation-driven business developing products or services addressing residential broadband challenges or services accessed via the improved and cost-reduced residential or middle kilometer broadband solution.
• Have sound business plans and secure financial backing.
• Be in good financial and reporting standing with CENGN.
• Demonstrate the capacity to conduct contracted project activities.
CENGN reserves the right to limit the number of submissions from companies already benefiting from, or applying for other CENGN program funding.

**Eligible partners** can be any of the following:
- SMEs.
- NEs and MNEs.
- Publicly-funded post-secondary academic institutions.
- Municipalities.
- Indigenous communities.
- Not-for-profit organizations.
- Telephone companies, service providers, cable companies, ISPs, or WISPs.
- System integrators, installation, or support contractors.
- Economic development corporations.

**Eligible Technology Project Support Expectations:**
- Applicant may not submit multiple responses to the call for RFS - Project#4.
- Applicants and partners are required to have operations in Canada and carry out their projects in Ontario.
- Minimum 1:1 cash match to CENGN contribution by technology applicants.
- This project should be operational within 3 to 6 months and the performance will be monitored for at least 12 months.
- This project is not intended for research to prove feasibility or basic technology research. Proposed products or technology for the project should be at Technology Readiness Level Scale 7 - 9 (7: operational environment functional demonstration, 9: Technology proven through successful deployment in an operational setting).
- Typical project activities include: installation, demonstration, commissioning, and service validation.
- Applicants and/or partners should demonstrate close collaboration and strong project commitment to ensure project start and completion target dates are achieved.
- Eligible product equipment or technologies MUST include installation and demonstration of actual products that can be showcased in promotional material based on the successful execution of the project with demonstrable cost savings and significant performance improvement for residential broadband deployment within the selected community.

**Eligible Expenses**
- All project activities must be performed within Ontario, unless written approval has been obtained from CENGN before submission.
- CENGN may only reimburse approved expenses that occurred after the funding agreement is signed. The funding agreement must be executed and signed off by relevant parties before a project is activated. Unless activation is complete, project expenses are incurred at the risk of the participants.
- Applicants must refer to the “Eligible Expenses Document for Project#4” for full details.

**E. Project Submissions and Evaluations**

The CENGN Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Program is a discretionary, non-entitlement program with limited funding. CENGN will fund qualified projects with potential for the greatest economic benefits and contribution towards rural Ontario residential broadband improvements. Not all eligible applicants may be funded.

All submissions to the call for RFS by eligible applicants will be assessed on their merit and undergo a review process, where the submissions are assessed against program objectives and evaluation criteria. In order to ensure
that all submissions are evaluated in a fair and comprehensive manner, CENGN will utilize the following review entities in the process:

- CENGN Review Committee made up of CENGN staff and management.
- CENGN IRP made up of CENGN senior management.
- ERP made up of independent reviewers with domain and sector expertise.

The EOI and RFS responses will be assessed based on the criteria shown in ‘Evaluation Criteria’ section later in the document.

**Recommended Host Community Process**

The CENGN independent ERP can recommend either one or two communities per rural Ontario Residential Broadband Project. Generally two communities would only be recommended as host communities if there are highly qualifying communities that have put forward submissions that closely match the problem statement for the project, and there are a sufficient number of highly qualifying technology applicant that can match the needs of the prospective host communities with strong technology solutions.

The **Community EOI submission and evaluation process** has the following steps:

- The Community EOI must be submitted by **5:00pm (EST) February 19, 2021**.
- The Community EOI responses are validated by the CENGN Review Committee for:
  - Eligibility - see ‘Section C – EOI Eligibility’.
  - Completeness – all sections of the Community EOI are completed
  - Ability – to host project and work with technology applicants.

![Diagram of Community EOI Process]

The diagrams show the process for **Single Community Selected** and **Two Communities Selected**.
Based on the CENGN Review Committee validation, the Community EOI is either accepted or rejected. Applicants with rejected submissions will be notified.

Upon acceptance of the EOI by the CENGN Review Committee, the Community EOI submission will be provided to both the CENGN Review Committee, and the ERP for detailed review.

Following completion of their review of the Community EOI submissions, the CENGN Review Committee will provide their input for consideration by the CENGN IRP in evaluating the viability and merit of the individual submissions.

The ERP will evaluate each Community EOI response based on the criteria as shown below in ‘Evaluation Criteria’. All ERP members execute Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA) prior to the EOI review.

The ERP will independently make each community selection recommendation to the CENGN IRP.

The CENGN IRP makes the final community selection decision(s) on or before:

**Host Community selection - Wednesday March 24, 2021.**

The successful community applicant will be notified by CENGN, and informed that they will need to support, and work with, the technology applicant candidates that have been selected to respond to a subsequent call for a RFS. The community will also be informed who the selected technology applicant(s) are. Technology applicants contact information will be provided, so the community can be ready to work closely with the selected technology applicants when the RFS is published.

If more than one host community is selected for a project, technology applicants will be asked to confirm to CENGN by **Wednesday April 7, 2021**, if they plan on submitting an RFS response for just their assigned community, or both host communities selected for this project.

Community applicants who are NOT selected will be notified by CENGN. Feedback can be provided by a CENGN Senior Manager if requested.

Community applicants who are NOT selected for this project, may apply for subsequent CENGN Rural Ontario Residential Broadband projects as they are announced.
The Technology EOI submission and evaluation process has the following steps:

- The Technology EOI must be submitted by **5:00PM (EST) February 19, 2021**.
- The Technology EOI responses are validated by the CENGN Review Committee for:
  - Eligibility - see ‘Section C – EOI Eligibility’
  - Completeness – all sections of the Technology EOI response are completed
  - Financial compliance - funding ask does not exceed CENGN maximum of $500,000 per project
- Based on the CENGN Review Committee validation, the Technology EOI response is either accepted or rejected. Applicants with rejected submissions will be notified.
- Upon acceptance of the EOI submission by the CENGN Review Committee, the Technology EOI response will be provided to both the CENGN Review Committee, and the External Review Panel (ERP) for review.
- The ERP will evaluate the EOI response based on the criteria as shown below in ‘Evaluation Criteria’. ERP members execute Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA) prior to the EOI review.
- Following completion of their review of the Technology EOI submissions, the CENGN Review Committee will provide their input for consideration by the CENGN IRP in evaluating the viability and merit of the individual submissions.
- The ERP will independently make a selection recommendation for technology applicants who should be offered a chance to respond to the Call for RFS for Project#4 to the CENGN Internal Review Panel (IRP).
• If the ERP recommends 2 host communities for the project, then the ERP will also independently assess and make recommendations on which of the host communities each technology applicant will be assigned to as a “primary” submission community.

• Each technology applicant will be required to provide an RFS submission to the “primary” community that they have been assigned, but can also submit an RFS response to the other host community or “second” host community if they wish.

• Eligible technology applicants can choose to only respond with a submission for their assigned “primary” host community if they wish.

• If more than one host community is selected for a project, technology applicants will be asked to confirm to CENGN by **Wednesday April 7, 2021**, if they plan on submitting an RFS response for just their assigned community, or both host communities selected for this project.

• The CENGN Internal Review Panel (IRP), makes the final technology applicant RFS eligibility decisions.

• Successful technology applicants will be notified by CENGN, and informed that they will be eligible to respond to a subsequent call for Request for Solution (RFS). They will also be informed who the selected host community is for the project, and will be provided contact information for the community, so the technology applicant can be ready to work closely with the selected community when the RFS is published.

• Technology Applicants who are NOT selected will be notified by CENGN. Feedback can be provided by a CENGN Senior Manager if requested.

The **RFS submission and evaluation process** has the following steps:
The **RFS Submission Process** has the following steps:

- The Technology EOI response must be submitted by the Technology EOI submission deadline of:
  - **5:00pm (EST) February 19, 2021.**
- The Technology EOIs are reviewed by the CENGN Review Committee.
- Following review and evaluation of the Technology EOI submissions, the selected technology applicant is invited to submit an RFS response. Applicants that are selected to be eligible to respond will receive:
  - **RFS Eligibility Notification - on or before March 26, 2021.**
- If 2 host communities were selected for the project, each Technology Applicant must notify CENGN of whether they plan on providing a RFS submission for just their primary assigned community, or for both host communities by the deadline of:
  - **Wednesday April 7, 2021.**
- An RFS response must be submitted by eligible technology applicants by the following deadline:
  - **5:00 pm (EST) April 30, 2021.**
- The RFS responses are validated by the CENGN Review Committee for:
  - Eligibility - see ‘Section D – RFS Eligibility’
  - Completeness – all sections of the RFS are completed
  - Financial compliance - funding ask does not exceed CENGN maximum ask limit
- Based on the CENGN Review Committee validation, the RFS response is either accepted or rejected. Applicants with rejected submissions will be notified.
- Upon acceptance of the RFS response by the CENGN Review Committee, the RFS response will be provided to the ERP for detailed review.
- The ERP will evaluate the RFS response based on the criteria as shown below in ‘Evaluation Criteria’. All ERP members execute NDAs prior to the RFS review.
- Those qualified RFS technology applicants and their partners (as previously determined by the CENGN Review Committee) will be invited to present their proposals by webinar to members of the following committees and panels:
  - CENGN Review Committee.
  - CENGN Internal Review Panel (IRP).
  - External Review Panel (ERP).
- Following the presentation by the applicant and their partners, the CENGN Review Committee and the ERP will provide their input for consideration by the CENGN IRP in evaluating the viability and merit of the individual submissions.
- The ERP will independently make a funding recommendation and technology applicant rating/evaluation to the CENGN IRP.
- The CENGN IRP makes the final funding decision(s).
  - **On or before Friday June 4, 2021.**
- Successful technology applicant(s) will be notified by CENGN and provided an outline of conditions and additional information to activate the project.
- Applicants who are NOT selected will be notified by CENGN. Feedback can be provided by a CENGN Senior Manager if requested.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Program will use a dual EOI evaluation approach:

- **Community EOI** – Invites any rural Ontario community to apply with a Community EOI response to be considered as a host community for a project designed to address, or reduce the impact of a pre-defined problem statement that the host community is facing which prevents or limits broadband residential access.
• **Technology EOI** – Invites any eligible equipment/technology applicant to respond with a Technology EOI proposal to be considered as a candidate to supply equipment, support, and significant funding for a project designed to address, or reduce the impact of a pre-defined problem statement that a rural Ontario community is facing which prevents or limits broadband residential access.

### The Community EOI

A Community EOI will be sent to a wide range of rural Ontario communities to offer them the opportunity to respond and express their interest in being a host community for this Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Project.

This Community EOI process will primarily assess the needs of the community, how well their needs match the proposed problem statement, how able the community will be to work with the selected equipment/technology applicant(s), and what the community is able to do to support installation of infrastructure. The host community will also need to be able to provide approval of, and provide access to sites within the community where they are willing to have equipment installed and operational as part of a commercial internet access service offering.

#### Community EOI Evaluation Criteria

The Community EOI submissions are assessed on merit. They are evaluated based on program objectives as well as assessment criteria, which include but are not limited to:

- How closely the defined problem statement of the Community EOI matches the situation in the community.
- Ability of the community to identify staffing within the community that can help selected technology applicants get all the consenting residences identified and located within the community.
- Expertise and experience of the team members, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and evidence of collaboration with technology applicants and partners who work with rural Ontario communities.
- Willingness and ability to supply space within existing or planned secure, climate-controlled rooms or buildings.
- Clear indication and knowledge of potential regulatory, bylaws, or right of way restrictions that would delay the project, and ability to clear the issues or be able to get temporary waivers.
- Strong willingness and plan, to work with a number of equipment/technology applicants
- Overall quality and completeness of the submission
- Demonstrated experience working with technology applicants or local partners on residential broadband projects

In order to assist in the assessment of the Community EOIs, a pre-defined CENGN evaluation scoring system will be used by all reviewers.

### The Technology EOI

A call for Technology EOI responses will be sent to a wide range of equipment/technology applicants to offer them the opportunity to respond and show an EOI in proposing a technology solution to a host community for a residential middle kilometer broadband technology project. This Technology EOI evaluation process will primarily assess how the technical solution proposed matches and addresses the defined rural Ontario community problem statement, the level of residential broadband performance offered, the cost reduction in equipment, installation, support, and/or operations costs of the proposed technology, and how well the technology applicant is prepared to work with the host community to prepare a high quality RFS response that will meet or exceed the needs of the host community selected. The technology applicant will also need to be able to minimize or reduce the expense to the community in order to host the project.
Technology EOI Evaluation Criteria

The Technology EOI submissions are assessed on merit. They are evaluated based on program objectives as well as assessment criteria, which include but are not limited to:

- Clarity of the challenges, merits of the proposed technical solution, and potential benefit/contribution to significantly improving business cases for residential broadband installations and upgrades for rural Ontario communities.
- Ability of the technology solution proposed to address residential broadband access challenges, significantly improve the business case through reduced equipment, installation, support and operations costs, while significantly improving broadband performance through a cost-effective highly resilient, high performance solution extending broadband access service distances up to 20 km from a broadband POP to the underserved residences. The solution must meet or exceed broadband performance targets of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload per residence, through technical merit and innovation.
- Expertise and experience of the team members, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and evidence of collaboration with their partners and other rural Ontario communities.
- Clarity, feasibility and appropriateness of the project plan and budget estimates.
- A clear strategy and capacity to implement the proposed solution and bring the results to a host community.
- Strong willingness and plan to work with the project host community.
- Overall quality and completeness of the submission.
- Demonstrated experience providing residential broadband solutions in rural Ontario communities.
- Complete and well documented identification of the potential issues including regulatory, bylaw, right-of-way, or safety issues that need to be addressed to complete the project on time.

In order to assist in the assessment of the Technology EOI responses, a pre-defined CENGN evaluation scoring system will be used by all reviewers.

Following a CENGN decision on the EOI technology applicant selections, the applicant and partners (if contributing), will be informed of their approval to qualify as a candidate technology applicant to respond to the subsequent call for an RFS, which will be published following the announcements of the Community and Technology EOI decisions.

RFS Evaluation Criteria

The full RFS submissions are assessed on merit. They are evaluated based on program objectives as well as assessment criteria, which include but are not limited to:

- Definition of the challenges, merits of the designed technical solution, and expected benefit/contribution to significantly improving business cases for residential broadband middle kilometer installations and upgrades for rural Ontario communities in general, and the host community in particular.
- Clearly showing the expected and documented cost savings of the solution designed for the host community.
- Demonstrating a high level of willingness to work closely with the host community.
- Ability of the technology solution defined to address the specific middle kilometer residential broadband access challenges defined in the RFS, and showing the improved business case through reduced equipment, installation, support and operations costs, while significantly improving broadband performance to meet or exceed the 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload target broadband internet performance per residence through technical merit and innovation.
- Expertise and experience of the technology applicant team members, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and evidence of collaboration with their partners and other rural Ontario communities.
- Clarity, feasibility, and appropriateness of the project plan and budget costing.
- Willingness to establish relationships with local partners to reduce installation/support costs and improve on-site support/response time.
• A clear strategy and capacity to implement the proposed solution and promote the results with CENGN and the host community.
• Demonstrated ability to work closely with the project host community during the preparation of the RFS response.
• Overall quality and completeness of the RFS submission.
• Demonstrated experience providing residential broadband solutions in rural Ontario communities.
• Complete and well documented identification of actual issues in the host community including regulatory, bylaw, right-of-way, or safety issues that need to be addressed to complete the project on time.
• Clear identification of new infrastructure requirements (including cost estimates) required in the community and a defined way to get them built either by the technology applicant or by the community.

In order to assist in the assessment of the RFS responses, a pre-defined CENGN evaluation scoring system will be used by all reviewers.

Upon approval, the technology applicant and partners (if contributing) must execute a CENGN Funding Agreement and fulfill all requested reporting requirements within 30 days of approval of the award.

F. Reporting and Expense Claims

Interim Progress and Claims Report(s)
Monthly reports, including progress, project metrics, data and information requirements, proof of expenditures and partnership contributions, financial attestation, and a request for reimbursement must be submitted by the selected RFS technology applicant(s).

RFS Final Results and Claims Report
A final report, including progress, project metrics, data and information requirements, proof of expenditures and partnership contributions, financial attestation, and a request for reimbursement, is required at the end of the project. Thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled completion date, the applicant and all contributing partners will receive an email notification of the project end date from CENGN with a link to the Final Progress and Claim Report template document, should the parties wish to begin writing the final report and entering expense claim data.

Copies of detailed reporting instructions and templates will be sent to successful parties at the time of contracting. The report must be received and approved by CENGN prior to release of funds for eligible claims.

Note: Applicants MUST retain all proof of purchases, receipts, and other relevant documentation relating to eligible expenses. These should be included in all reporting.

• Applicant MUST request project extensions in writing to CENGN. Extension requests must be made before the project end date.
• Applicant can request early reporting by emailing your assigned CENGN project manager.
• On the scheduled project completion date, the applicant and all contributing partners will receive another notification to complete the Final Project Progress and Claim Report from their assigned CENGN project manager.
• Applicants and contributing partners must submit their Final Project and Claim Report within 30 days of project completion to be reimbursed for eligible expenses and maintain good financial standing with CENGN.

Project Change Requests
For any variances to the CENGN budget of $5,000 or greater (with no increase to overall budget), or extensions...
to the project end date, the applicant must submit a change request in writing to CENGN, prior to the project end date, that will be subject to CENGN approval.

G. How to Provide Submissions

Community EOI Submissions
For a rural Ontario community to participate in the Community EOI process for this project, the community must:

- Be defined by CENGN to be a Rural Ontario District #4 community. The CENGN definition of a Rural Ontario District #4 community, is any community that is within the geographic boundaries of any of the following 12 regions/counties within southern Ontario:

  Frontenac County  Municipality of the District of Muskoka
  Haliburton County  City of Ottawa
  Hastings County  United Counties of Prescott and Russell
  United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  Prince Edward County
  Lennox and Addington County  Renfrew County
  United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry  Lanark County

Submissions to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Project #4 for a community contains two stages of activity and commitment:

Stage 1: Submit the Community EOI submission and then after being selected as the host community for the technology project, proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2: A commitment by the community to closely work with a number of candidate equipment/technology applicants (previously selected through the Technology EOI process) to support each individual technology applicant’s RFS submission.

Following the selection of the technology applicant(s) by the CENGN IRP, the community will be notified which technology applicant(s) and applicable partner(s), if any, will be moving forward to the RFS process.

The RFS response will be focused to specifically address the selected host community’s residential broadband requirements.

The host community will need to commit to providing assistance to the RFS candidate technology applicant(s) including the assistance items listed below (but not limited to):

- Information on the specific number of residences requiring broadband access or upgrades to broadband access.
- Locations and addresses of specific sites available for use in the project.
- Availability of existing secure, climate-controlled equipment rooms or buildings for broadband project equipment.
- Availability of serviced property for tower or new secure, climate-controlled equipment rooms or buildings.
- Help in identifying zoning, bylaw, or right-of-way issues the community may face and may be able to help address to support the project.
Discussions on technology applicant/community cost-sharing options for the project or following successful completion of the project.

Helping technology applicants connect with local installation or support partners in the community or nearby in the region.

Helping technology applicants connect with local service providers who may be interested in partnering during or following the project.

To discuss potential submissions to this Community EOI program, please contact:

**Kirby Koster**
Senior Manager, Broadband Programs
1-613-291-0707
kirby.koster@cengn.ca

**Tolu Olutade**
Broadband Innovation Specialist
1-613-323-3997
tolu.olutade@cengn.ca

**Technology EOI Submissions**

Only technology applicants that have a Canadian presence are eligible to respond to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Technology EOI. Partners can also be part of the submission, but all funding and communications will be directly between CENGN and the technology applicant.

Submission to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Program for a technology applicant contains two stages of activity and commitment:

**Stage 1:** Submit the Technology EOI Submission

To provide a quality Technology EOI submission, the candidate technology applicant must show a strong commitment and plans on how they will work closely with the selected host community (selected through the Community EOI process).

It is important for the technology applicant to show how they plan to work with the host community to clearly identify needs which must include, but not limited to the following:

- Requesting information on the specific number of residences requiring broadband access or upgrades to broadband access.
- Determining approximate locations and addresses of expected residences willing to participate in the project.
- Knowledge of the location and type of existing broadband POP in the community.
- Which existing secure, climate-controlled equipment rooms or buildings for broadband project equipment may be available for use during the project.
- Availability of serviced property for a tower or other outdoor installation, or new secure, climate-controlled equipment rooms or buildings that could be considered for the project.
- Identification of potential zoning, bylaw, or right-of-way issues the technology applicant and community may need to address to support the project.
- Proposed optional phases after successful completion of the CENGN project that may involve cost sharing with the community.
- Identifying any local installation or support partners in the community, or nearby in the region, that the technology applicant could work with for the project or following successful completion of the project.
- Identifying any local service providers, ISPs, or WISPs who may be interested in partnering during or following the project.
- Identifying value-added partners that could be part of the proposed technology solution during or following the project.
Proposed options for expanding upon the project technology configuration following successful completion of the project.

Technology EOI applicants must submit responses by email no later than: 5:00pm (EST) February 19, 2021.

Ultimately based on Technology EOI evaluations, technology candidates are selected by the CENGN IRP using input from the CENGN Review Committee, and the recommendations of the ERP. If the technology applicant is selected and notified by CENGN as an eligible RFS applicant, they would proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2: Submit an RFS Submission for Project#4.

To discuss potential submissions to this Technology EOI program, please contact:

Kirby Koster  
Senior Manager, Broadband Programs  
1-613-291-0707  
kirby.koster@cengn.ca

Tolu Olutade  
Broadband Innovation Specialist  
1-613-323-3997  
tolu.olutade@cengn.ca

RFS Submissions

Only those technology applicants that have a Canadian presence are eligible to respond to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS. Partners can also be part of the submission, but all funding and communications will be directly between CENGN and the technology applicant.

To be eligible to respond to the call for an RFS for Project#4, technology applicants must have:

- Previously submitted a valid on-time response to the call for a Technology EOI for the CENGN Rural Ontario Residential Broadband Program - Project#4.
- Been awarded by CENGN the right to respond to the Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS - Project#4.

Submission to the CENGN Rural Ontario Residential Broadband RFS contains two stages:

Stage 1: Submit the Technology EOI Submission for Project#4.

Once selected as a candidate RFS technology applicant as result of the Technology EOI for Project#4 evaluation process, by the CENGN IRP, the technology applicant needs to work with the selected host community (as announced by CENGN as a result of the Community EOI evaluation and selection process) to produce a quality RFS response tailored specifically to address the needs of the community. Proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2: Full RFS Submission as detailed below:

To provide a quality RFS submission, the candidate technology applicant must demonstrate a strong level of cooperation in working with the selected host community (previously selected through the Community EOI process) while putting together the full RFS response, which will include a technical network design specifically to address the community’s residential broadband requirements, including the following details delivered with help from the community but not limited to:

- Details on the specific number of residences requiring broadband access or upgrades to broadband access in the host community.
- Specific locations and addresses of consenting residences willing to participate in the project.
• Which existing secure, climate-controlled equipment rooms or buildings for broadband project equipment will be used in the project.
• Specific serviced properties that will be used for a tower or other outdoor installation, or new secure, climate-controlled equipment rooms or buildings that will be used for the project.
• Identification of, and a plan to address zoning, bylaw, or right-of-way issues the technology applicant and community will need to address to support the technology project.
• Agreed technology applicant/community cost sharing for the project or planned following successful completion of the project.
• Identifying local installation or support partners in the community, or nearby in the region, that the technology applicant will work with for the project or following successful completion of the project.
• Identifying any local service providers, ISPs, or WISPs who the technology applicant will be partnering with during or following the project.
• Identification of any value-added partners that will be part of the solution during or following the project.
• Detailed proposals for expanding upon the project technology configuration following successful completion of the project.

Once the candidate Technology RFS responses have been submitted, the responses will be reviewed by the CENGN Review Committee and the ERP, who will send their evaluation input for consideration to the CENGN IRP on the rating of the technology applicants for the project (see Section E for details on the evaluation process).

Following the selection of the technology applicant(s) by the CENGN IRP, the host community will be notified which technology applicant(s) and applicable partner(s) were selected that will be moving forward upon completion of the RFS evaluation process.

Technology applicants that have been selected through the Technology EOI evaluation process are invited by CENGN to submit an RFS response to CENGN. RFS submissions must be submitted to CENGN by the RFS submission deadline (Friday April 30, 2021). Submissions are only accepted by email.

Expected submission dates and times for these steps are outlined in Section H Timelines.

Successful applicants and their partners must sign CENGN's standard Funding Agreement within 30 days of notification of award.

To discuss potential submissions to this program, please contact:

**Kirby Koster**
Senior Manager, Broadband Programs
1-613-291-0707
kirby.koster@cengn.ca

**Tolu Olutade**
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**H. Timelines**

**EOI Submissions**
- EOI Submission Deadline: 5:00 PM EST – February 19, 2021
- EOI Decision Date: Wednesday March 24, 2021
- Invitation to respond to call for RFS: Friday March 26, 2021

**RFS Submissions**
- RFS Submission Deadline: 5:00 PM EST – April 30, 2021
- RFS Invitation for Presentation: Week of May 24-28, 2021
- RFS Decision Date: Friday June 4, 2021
1. Inquiries

Technology applicants that are awarded the project after the RFS Decision date will be supplied additional CENGN documents as listed below:

- CENGN Funding Agreement
- Eligible Expenditures Guide

For inquiries related to submission initiation, eligibility, contracting, and funding disbursement inquiries, please contact:

Kirby Koster  
Senior Manager, Broadband Programs  
1-613-291-0707  
kirby.koster@cengn.ca

For general inquiries about the website and access to the EOI or RFS submission documents, please contact: info@cengn.ca.