

RFP Questions and Answers

This document contains all questions so far and replaces all previous Q&A documents. Please address questions and comments to rfp@nunavut-broadband.ca. The source of questions or comments will not be identified.

Please note that this document is in date order; in some cases later answers may amend or clarify earlier answers.

Please note that questions received after 5:00 pm, Eastern Daylight Time on April 28, 2003 will not be answered. The final Q&A document will be posted on the web site before 8:00 am April 29, 2003. This ensures that all vendors have at least 2 full business days before the May 1 closing date to review and incorporate the final Q&A document in their response.

Posted as of March 31, 2003

Question 1

Appendix K – Functional Specifications, Page 61 includes a reference to “... a single satellite hop...”. Is this a requirement in every Nunavut community?

Answer 1

The NBDC goal is single hop video conferencing to provide the most flexibility between any combination of communities and to minimize the delay that results from multiple hops. It is also our goal that similar services be provided in every Nunavut community. NBDC recognizes that this single hop requirement may increase the cost of satellite services. If appropriate, bidders may provide costs for services with and without this capability for some or all of the communities.

Question 2

Is a bidder required to meet every aspect of the Functional Specifications at the starting point of the contract or may some functions be added over the life of the contract?

Answer 2

An overall goal of NBDC is to provide similar services in every Nunavut community. However, it is recognized that implementation cannot be achieved simultaneously in every community. It is also recognized that the total amount of funds being requested by NBDC may not be awarded as soon as we would like. If time or budget does not permit the immediate implementation in all locations, bidders should propose how more limited plans could be rolled out so that eventually all services are available in all communities.

Posted as of April 3, 2003

Question 3 (Clarification)

The following clarifies the date, time and procedure for delivering proposals to NBDC.

Answer 3.1

The original closing date of April 21, 2003 is Easter Monday. The RFP closing date is extended to **Wednesday, April 23, 2003** to accommodate the long weekend.

Answer 3.2

The NBDC address on the front sheet of the RFP as amended as follows:

Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation
c/o Baffin Business Development Centre
Igluvut Building, **2nd floor**
PO Box 1480
Iqaluit, NU
X0A 0H0

Answer 3.3

Section 2.2 (a) in Appendix B – Proposal Submission Process is amended as follows:

- a) For Bidders in Iqaluit, proposals must be delivered at the expense and the risk of the Bidder to the location contained in Page 1 of this RFP (not the P.O. Box) **on or before 3:00pm on the closing date of the RFP, April 23, 2003**. For Bidders outside Iqaluit, proposals must be delivered at the expense and the risk of the Bidder to the address contained in Page 1 of this RFP (as amended above) under a **Canada Post**

Xpresspost or courier waybill with the waybill dated and faxed to NBDC on or before 3:00pm on the closing date of the RFP to the following fax number:

Fax 867-979-1508 (for assistance call 867-979-1303).

Posted as of April 4, 2003

Question 4

Section 4.2 -- Categories of Goods and Services of the RFP requests Satellite Services to connect Nunavut communities to each other and to the Internet. Are Satellite Services the only technology solution available to Bidders to connect communities?

Answer 4

Under the Industry Canada BRAND program, NBDC is required to prepare and administer a technically and vendor neutral RFP and we plan to fully meet that requirement.

Bidders should note that all possible technologies were requested in the RFP and will be considered by NBDC to distribute broadband services **within** Nunavut communities. The above question relates specifically to the technology to connect communities to each other and to the Internet.

Nunavut would welcome almost any other technology solution to connect communities rather than satellite services if alternative technology is possible. Bidders are **encouraged** to consider optical fibre on the ground, undersea cable (all Nunavut communities have access to the Arctic Ocean or a waterway leading to the Arctic Ocean), microwave or other wireless solutions to connect any Nunavut community to each other and/or to the Internet.

Bidders should assume that any available technology can be substituted in the RFP for Satellite Services and the RFP is hereby amended by this answer to allow any other technology.

Bidders should note that there are no roads between Nunavut communities and no power except within communities. All related costs to provide technology alternatives must be reflected in the various Tables outlined in the RFP.

Posted as of April 11, 2003

Question 5 (Extension of Closing Date)

Given that Industry Canada has extended the submission date for the BRAND Business Plan for two weeks, has the closing date for this RFP been extended?

Answer 5

Industry Canada has extended the Business Plan submission date two weeks and they suggest a period of at least 4 weeks for vendors to prepare and submit a proposal.

NBDC was already offering 4 weeks to respond to the RFP with the following 4 weeks for NBDC to evaluate the bids and write the Business Plan. Given the two extra weeks from Industry Canada, NBDC is extending the RFP closing date 8 days to May 1 leaving one extra week for NBDC to evaluate the proposals.

In summary, the new closing date for the RFP is 3:00pm, May 1, 2003 with procedures as described in Question 3 above.

Posted as of April 21, 2003

Question 6

Can you clarify the date, time and process for delivering proposals to NBDC?

Answer 6

For clarity, the description below replaces Section 2.2 (a) in Appendix B – Proposal Submission Process and any answers related to the closing date previously provided above:

- a) For Bidders in Iqaluit, proposals must be delivered at the expense and the risk of the Bidder on or before 3:00pm local Iqaluit (Eastern Daylight) time on the closing date of the RFP, May 1, 2003 to:

Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation
c/o Baffin Business Development Centre

Igluvut Building, **2nd floor**
Iqaluit, NU
X0A 0H0

- b) For Bidders outside Iqaluit, proposals must be delivered at the expense and the risk of the Bidder by either Canada Post Xpresspost or a courier to the following address:

Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation
c/o Baffin Business Development Centre
Igluvut Building, **2nd floor**
Iqaluit, NU
X0A 0H0

If delivering by Canada Post Xpresspost or a courier, bidders must prove that the proposal was in the custody of Canada Post or the courier on or before the closing date and time by faxing a copy of the waybill (not the proposal) to NBDC on or before 3:00pm local Iqaluit (Eastern Daylight) time of the closing date of the RFP, May 1, 2003 to the following fax number:

Fax 867-979-1508 (for assistance call 867-979-1303)

Proposals received in packages through Canada Post or courier will not be evaluated unless a copy of the waybill for the package was received by fax as described above.

Question 7

Could you tell me what the bandwidth requirements are for the NBDC RFP?
Will it be the same for each town, or will they be different.

Answer 7

Appendix J – Projected Requirements, Page 59 of the RFP document dated March 21, 2003 contains the estimated bandwidth by community over the contract term.

Posted as of April 25, 2003

Question 8

Would you please provide further details on how the NBDC proposes that subsidies be divided to support delivery of Broadband Services?

Answer 8

Please refer to the RFP document on the web site www.nunavut-broadband.ca and more specifically Section 8 starting on Page 26 and Appendix D -- Evaluation Process starting on Page 40.

As outlined in the RFP document, NBDC will not be directly involved in allocating grants received from Industry Canada. Instead, vendors are asked to bid on supplying broadband services in Nunavut by responding to the RFP by May 1, 2003.

Using the process described in Section 8 and Appendix D, the bidder or bidders needing the smallest subsidy (plus the other factors outlined in Appendix D -- Evaluation Process) will be selected in just the same way as any competitive RFP. The costs quoted by the selected bidders will be assembled into a Nunavut Business Plan and submitted to Industry Canada for review and funding.

Industry Canada may or may not provide some or all of the funds requested as there are many other Business Plans competing for a limited pool of funds. If Nunavut is awarded less than the total funds requested, then the overall Nunavut Business Plan will be slowed down to reflect the limited funds available.

In summary, NBDC will not be dividing any subsidies. Instead, the bidders will be selected based on the RFP document and the selected bidder's proposals will determine the allocation of funds.

Question 9

In the RFP document, Appendix D, item 4.2(a) reads "All proposals will be evaluated for compliance. Proposals that do not meet mandatory requirements will be set aside and those bidders notified."

Please clarify "mandatory requirements" and what aspect(s) of the response it refers to.

Answer 9

The mandatory requirements include the following:

- a) The bidder's proposal must be received on time and in the form outlined in the RFP and in the latest question and answer document.
- b) Tables in the Sample Proposal must be completed so that the bidder's proposal can be evaluated from a financial perspective and compared to other bidders as outlined in Appendix D - Evaluation Process.
- c) Items in Appendix E - Contract and Certification Issues must be addressed by the bidder entering "Yes" in every row of Table 3 included in the Sample Proposal.

Question 10

Section 7.3 (Financial Proposal/Community Broadband Services) provides sample tables for financial projections, including operating costs. Bidders are asked to provide a "reasonable level of detail", and to provide costs by community and by quarter. Assuming a bidder proposes to serve 25 villages, provides expenses in 5 categories, and cover 20 quarters (i.e. a 5-year business plan), the expenses table would have 2,500 values to it. This would be difficult to prepare and would appear to be equally difficult for NBDC to evaluate. Is this really how you want the information presented? Or would a different, i.e. simpler format be acceptable?

Answer 10

The RFP allows bidders to propose services that cover all or a subset of Nunavut communities. As a result, NBDC has to roll up and evaluate costs on a community by community basis to fairly compare proposals.

We also have to review proposals on a quarter by quarter basis to ensure that we have the appropriate data to build the cash flow portion of the Business Plan required by Industry Canada. We recognize that together these two requirements will result in a large number of figures to be prepared, captured and evaluated.

To simplify the bidder's task and to reduce the volume of numbers, bidders may wish to classify communities into a few categories (perhaps by population size) and to submit financial numbers that apply to an entire category of communities provided that the communities in each category are clearly identified.

NBDC recommends that the soft copy of the proposal include the tables in the form of spread sheets or Word tables that can be converted to spread sheets but this is not a mandatory requirement.

Question 11

Would an extension of one week in the closing date be possible?

Answer 11

Unfortunately, NBDC has a firm date of June 6 (less than 5 weeks after the current closing date) to evaluate the RFP responses, prepare a 5 year financial strategy and complete the Business Plan for submission to Industry Canada. Please note that bidders must submit their response to a courier by May 1 but NBDC may not receive proposals from remote communities for several days. Failure to meet the June 6 Business Plan date would mean no funds for Nunavut and we simply could not do the required work on time if we extended the RFP closing date.

In summary, we recognize the pressure the bidders are under but it is not feasible to extend the closing date of the RFP.

Posted as of April 26, 2003

Question 12

Do you envisage that the connectivity to the Internet backbone will be the responsibility of the Satellite Service provider? And if not, who would provide this connectivity?

Answer 12

Connectivity to the Internet backbone will be the responsibility of the Satellite Services supplier as noted in the first row of the table in Section 4.2 Categories of Goods and Services and subsequent parts of this section.

Question 13

The RFP refers to the provider of the Community Broadband Services. Do you envisage that this organization will provide the full suite of ISP services, including deploying and operating the local transport network, marketing

and sales, customer hookups, billing, ongoing customer technical support, etc.? Or, do you envisage that other organizations would be involved in the provision of some of these ISP services? Does NBDC itself plan to be involved in the delivery of any aspect(s) of the ISP service?

Answer 13

The Industry Canada BRAND program requires that the Satellite Services vendor provide third party access at a community point of presence as outlined in Section 4.2.1.3. To accomplish this requirement the Satellite Services provider must propose a price for third party access at the community point of presence and must assume responsibility for marketing, sales, billing and ongoing support to the point of presence as outlined in Section 4.2.1.11.

One or more community providers in each community (perhaps including the same vendor that supplies Satellite Services) may then attach to the community point of presence (purchasing services at the published price) and may offer what ever local services they wish including local sales, installation, on-going support, etc. all as outlined in Section 4.2.2.8.

NBDC does not plan to deliver operational services at either the satellite services level or at the community level.