NSRBN Project Overview

Presentation to the
Internet Society of Canada - Indigenous Connectivity Summit
September 17, 2020

Presented by:
Melanie Pilon – NSRBN Project Lead
Contents

- NSRBN Background
- NSRBN Member Communities
- NSRBN Project Phases Overview
- NSRBN Project Timeline
- Lessons Learned
- Considerations
- Resources
NSRBN Background

CDEC initiated the project in 2017.

Project was developed after a failed Connect to Innovate (CTI) application:

- Needed to do research first;
- Sourced subject matter expertise.

Recognized that success would also be predicated on a more regional scope:

- Scope of Work (SOW) was broadened to include 8 other communities;
- One other community joined a full year later.
Original NSRBN Member Communities

- Brunswick House FN
- Chapleau
- Chapleau Cree FN
- Dubreuilville
- Hornepayne
- Michipicoten FN
- Missanabie FN
- Pic Mobert FN
- Wawa
- White River
Project Phases Overview

- Phase 1 A&B - COMPLETED: Desktop & Detailed Analysis
- Phase 2 - COMPLETED: Secure Vendor Partners
- Phase 3 – IN PROGRESS: Secure Funding
- Phase 4: Project Implementation
• Researched the current broadband infrastructure in the region:
  • Performed a “desktop” gap and needs analysis using publicly available resources and data.
  • Conducted a ground-truthing of participating communities and area.
• Researched available funding sources for broadband services.
• Provided a summary of governments’ roles and responsibilities with regards to broadband targets, relevant proceedings and decisions, and related regulations.
• Prepared community-based surveys and speed test analysis.
• Prepared a high-level project budget based on the recommended methodologies.
• Prepared a consolidated report detailing the current status of connectivity, regional needs, infrastructure gaps, risk matrix and recommendations.
Gap Analysis
Ground Truthing
• EOI was posted on MERX and via communities
• Formed a review team and created an assessment matrix
  • Melanie Pilon – CDEC
  • Joe Moses – Pic Mobert FN
  • Matthew Dupius – Chapleau Cree FN
  • Jason Morrison – Wawa
  • Amedeo Bernardi – ABC
• Received 8 parties interested in submitting
• Final packages received from 3 groups
  • Several joined together to submit
• Vendor Partner was selected
  • Group included interested parties from process including; an engineering firm, national software provider and registered service provider (this was a requirement of the CRTC funding application).
• Executed a non-binding MOU
EOI Considerations

1. Combine Phases 2 & 3
   • Timing of potential new Federal and Provincial funding,
   • Importance of selecting the optimal vendor with potential funding models,
   • Keep momentum going on the project.

2. Develop preferred vendor partner profile
   • Min/max size,
   • Location,
   • Experience working with First Nations communities including training, employment and use of local resources,
   • Contribution and revenue sharing,
   • Possibly include other telecom services (i.e.: telephone, cellular, TV).

3. Consider Regional ISP options
   • Vendor partner(s) could white-label ISP service,
   • Member community could become an ISP,
   • Possibly include other telecom services (i.e: telephone, cellular, TV).
• The NSRBN has been aggressive in applying for funding:
  • Connect to Innovate (CTI);
  • Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA);
  • Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp (NOHFC) Strategic Economic Infrastructure Fund;
  • Superior East Community Futures Development Corp. (CFDC);
  • Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commissions (CRTC) Broadband Fund;
  • Improving Connectivity in Ontario (ICON) - in progress;
  • Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) - once released;
  • Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) - declined and
  • Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks (CENGN) - declined.
Taking the project through its lifecycle including:

• initiation,
• planning,
• execution,
• performance/monitoring, and
• project close.
Lessons Learned

• Appoint a Broadband Champion.

• Do the research:
  • Define your need,
  • Assess the gap,
  • Take an inventory (desktop and ground-truthing),
  • Prepare a budget, and
  • Look at options (third-party, P3, other).

• Prepare a roadmap.

• Assemble the Team:
  • Project Lead (Broadband Champion)
  • Indigenous and Municipal Community Liaisons
  • Project Manager & Advisor (subject matter expert)
  • Financial Advisor
  • Legal Counsel

• Be flexible within the plan (keep the objective in sight).
Considerations

• Allocation of Resources;
• Communication;
• Engagement;
• Prepare a collaboration agreement, outline items such as:
  • Membership clause;
  • On & off-ramps mechanisms;
  • Good faith & best efforts clause;
  • Decision making model, and
  • Dispute resolution.
• Sustainability of Community Networks;

The time for action is now.
Resources

1. Northeast Superior Regional Broadband Network Collaboration Agreement – v. October 3, 2018
2. #Next150Challenge – Indian Horse
   • https://next150.indianhorse.ca/challenges/digital-equity
Chi-Miigwetch-Thank You!