Elginconnects
Community Network Development

Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Program of Industry Canada

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Issue Date: May 9, 2003
Closing Date & Time: May 28, 2003/ 4:30 pm EST

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1.0   Project Overview

1.1 Project Description

Elginconnects has been working toward an Internet Communications Technology Strategy for St. Thomas and Elgin County in achieving fast, secure, and reliable connectivity to the Internet, to promote and foster electronic commerce, and in general to improve the economic well-being of the area in a sustainable manner.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from Vendors to provide broadband infrastructure and services to the underserviced areas in St. Thomas and Elgin County.   Vendors will be expected to provide complete solutions that provide residential, business, and public sector users with access to current and future broadband services and applications.

The goal of the project is to have reliable, affordable high speed, broadband Internet access available to every business and residence in Elgin county. The second goal is to provide the capability for local government, institutions, businesses, and community organizations to extend and enhance their services through adopting leading edge information and communications technology (ICT).

The specific objectives of this project include:

▪   the provision of reliable, affordable broadband connectivity to the residences, businesses and public sector institutions that are currently underserved

▪   the provision of customer specific telecommunication connectivity to the businesses and institutions

▪   the provision of backbone infrastructure connected to the national telecommunication network.

▪   the provision of a range of Internet and telecommunication services to the clients

▪   the provision of infrastructure and services that is scaleable in support of current and evolving applications.

The major problems and challenges that must be overcome in providing broadband connectivity in our community are:
-    the low population density that contributes to the high cost of building infrastructure
-    topography of the southern border of the County which is the coastline of Lake Erie
-    the configuration of the County – the long length from East to West borders.

Vendors should be aware of the existing communications infrastructure and services in the area.   It is not the intent of this project to develop infrastructure with the intent of displacing current services.

1.2 Definitions

BRAND   The Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Pilot Program created by Industry Canada.

Proposal (or Bid)   The Vendor's response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) including furnishing any goods and services at the prices offered within the proposal or bid document.

Request for Proposal   The document issued in response to which Vendors are invited to propose solutions that will result in the satisfaction of our objectives in a cost effective manner.

Subcontractor   A company, organization or individual providing specific goods and or services as part of the bid under agreement to the Vendor.

Vendor   A company, organization or individual invited to submit a bid in response to this Request for Proposal.

COBRA   Connect Ontario: Broadband Regional Access

1.3 Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Program

Industry Canada has undertaken a Broadband Commitment as articulated by Minister of Industry Allan Rock at an Innovation Strategy Launch February 12, 2002.

"We will ensure that high-speed broadband access is available to Canadian communities from coast to coast to coast by 2005."

A pilot program called Broadband for Rural and Northern Development (BRAND) has been introduced to assist underserved communities in acquiring broadband connectivity with a priority given to First Nations, northern, rural and remote communities.

The Program Objectives are as follows:

- To demonstrate and validate the benefits of broadband in unleashing the full innovative potential of communities across Canada
- To provide funding to underserved communities to prepare business plans that detail the need for broadband services in their communities
- To implement broadband services that will address the needs of these communities in the areas of education, health and governance
- To create opportunities for learning by sharing best practices among communities
- To create new business opportunities, domestically and globally, for Canadian ICT companies

Applicant communities requesting funds must present business plan to the BRAND program for the implementation of this project which must include:

- Community engagement
- Needs assessment
- Analysis of served and underserved communities (municipalities)
- Selection of services provider(s) through a competitive and open RFP process
- Technical plan
- Financial plan
- Sustainability plan
- Writing and submission of the business plan

All vendors are encouraged to visit the Industry Canada web site www.broadband.gc.ca for full details of the program.

1.4 Project Administration

BRAND defines a community champion as a legally incorporated not-for-profit Canadian organization that has committed itself to act on behalf of the eligible community.   The program calls for the commitment of a community champion to represent the stakeholders of the community in an aggregated demand model approach to acquiring connectivity for underserved subscribers.

The Elgin Community Futures Development Corporation (ECFDC) has been the community champion for ICT strategies in Elgin sponsoring 15 CAP sites and Elginconnects.   The ECFDC's mandate is "To provide human and financial resources to new and existing small businesses in Elgin County and to act as a catalyst for community and economic development in our community".

Elginconnects has submitted a successful business case to Connect Ontario and is awaiting positive approval from the provincial Cabinet for the implementation proposal for their portal.   A Canadian Agricultural and Rural Communities Initiative has also approved Elginconnects to gather geo-spatial data information for farm and rural businesses.   The Business Case for COBRA has also been submitted and awaiting imminent approval.

Elginconnects is a stakeholder consortium of public and private sector organizations in Elgin County. Our goal is to develop a community-based network, which will enable businesses, institutions, and community organizations to expand and enhance the delivery of their services in an efficient and economical manner using leading edge information and communications technology.

Elginconnect's Mission Statement is - To promote and enhance our quality of life and opportunities for development through partnerships and information communications technology within the City of St.Thomas and the County of Elgin.

Our objectives are:
1   to support a positive environment for businesses by facilitating private-public sector partnerships and building technology awareness levels within the region

2   to act as a gateway for ICT development resulting in considerable economies of scale, achieved through aggregation of demand, reduced service duplication, and regional coordination of studies and projects.

3   to coordinate a big-picture, strategic planning approach to ICT development in the region to make the best use of private and public sector resources

4   to provide a unified approach to funding agencies by aggregating the needs of Elgin / St. Thomas into cost-effective proposals

5   to develop the ICT culture within the region, promoting and equalizing access to critical economic development tools

elginconnects has chosen an approach that engages, organizes and aggregates the broad needs of the community. Along with the advantage of aggregating demand that comes with bringing together diversified participants comes the disadvantage of complexity that is associated with gaining consensus, recognizing diversity, establishing priorities and confirming commitments. These are difficult tasks but *elginconnects* can demonstrate that when the resources available in the whole community are channeled and engaged in a common purpose, the benefit of size can help accomplish tasks that were not possible in the past.

Through the coordination and partnerships fostered by this initiative, Elgin / St. Thomas will avoid costly, sporadic and fragmented investment in technology.   The region will be equipped to attract investment, develop new business opportunities, provide superior services to residents and compete in the global economy.

These developments will create the opportunity for tremendous economic development, and at the same time will enhance the quality of life of our communities. That potential, of course, will depend on the degree to which we make use of these new capabilities.

Elginconnects partners who provided cash and in-kind to the Connect Ontario Portal Implementation Plan include:
The County of Elgin
The City of St. Thomas
St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital
Fanshawe College
Elgin Association for Community Living
St. Thomas Energy Services Inc.
Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford Local Training Board
Bell Ontario
Amtelecom Communications
St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce
Elgin Federation of Agriculture
Elgin-St. Thomas Health Unit
Kettle Creek Conservation Authority
LargNet
Employment Services Elgin
St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation
Foundation Networks

Supporting Community Partners Include:

Elgin County Libraries
St. Thomas Public Library
St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce
Aylmer Chamber of Commerce
Port Stanley Business Association
Dutton Chamber of Commerce
Belmont Business Association
Bayham Economic Business Association
West Elgin Community Health Centre
Catfish Creek Conservation Authority
Longpoint Conservation Authority
Lower Thames Conservation Authority

2.0   COMMUNITY PROFILE

The County of Elgin, located in South Western Ontario, covers an area 1160 square kilometres   (725 square miles) and its entire south border is the coastline of Lake Erie. Elgin County is known for its unique geographical profile as it is approximately 65 miles long and 35 miles wide. The County, restructured in 1997, is composed of seven area municipalities.   The areas range in characteristics of agricultural, rural hamlets, international harbour ports, and one large town.   The separated City of St. Thomas is located near the geographical centre of Elgin County.

Elgin County naturally divides itself into 3 regions - East, Central and West.   East Elgin is heavily influenced by the agricultural industry. Tobacco is a major crop and has driven the industry to invest heavily in East Elgin where Imperial Tobacco provides a tobacco warehouse, auction and processing plant providing major employment opportunities year round.   The Town of Aylmer is the focal point for shopping, recreation, health, and education in East Elgin.

The City of St. Thomas, is situated in the middle of Central Elgin, where employment, shopping, health and education, recreation and administration offices offer service to the County as well as providing for the City.   St. Thomas is home to many branch plants for the automotive industry.   The industrial sections of Central Elgin and St. Thomas is an attractive site for large companies. The large natural attractions of the lakeshore also provide commerce and tourism as London and Middlesex people congregate to the major bird watching sites.

West Elgin small towns tend to be of more equal size to each other, however agriculture is the most visible and dominant presence.

Agricultural is a key economic driver as there are 7,753 jobs, 19.7% of the County's total, tied to agriculture in Elgin County and almost $558 million in sales from farms and businesses that buy from and sell to farms per annum.   The $262.5 million in farm gate sales produced another $295.5 million in Ag-related sales.   Just over $216 million was spent locally on-farm expenses.

Area	Population	# of households	Geographical Area (square km)
Elgin County	**81 553**	**30 170**	1 880.83
City of St.Thomas	**33 236**	**13 792**	32.24
Town of Aylmer	7 126	2 655	6.05
Southwold	4 487	1 535	301.71
West Elgin	5 464	2 060	322.52
Municipality of Bayham	4 945	1 595	243.67
Central Elgin	12 360	4 475	283.45
Malahide	6 290	1 810	261.65
Dutton/Dunwich	3 696	1 360	294.46
Dutton	1 374	510	2.02
Dunwich	2 322	850	292.44
Belmont	1 819	610	5.91
Springfield	708	225	1.48
Port Burwell	864	330	1.57
Vienna	566	185	2.83
South Dorchester	1 816	625	131.57
Port Stanley	2 385	1 040	3.79
Yarmouth	7 024	2 430	275.48
West Lorne	1 419	570	2.13
Aldborough	4 045	1 495	321.41

2.1 Community Engagement

During the past 2 years, Elginconnects has conducted an extensive community consultation and met with many community organizations in the fields of health, education, business (chambers of commerce and business associations), private business, manufacturing, municipal government, agricultural businesses as well as community organizations.   Without exception they have indicated strong support for our efforts to achieve a better ICT infrastructure explained why this need is crucial to their achievement of their goals.

Presentations were made in every village across the County and surveys, both qualitative and quantitative, were tabulated which illustrated statistical reliance on the information gathered.   The eMIT study is available at the www.elginconnects.ca website.

After this initial study, we concentrated on knowing the assets and challenges our community has in order to respond with a comprehensive appropriate solution.   Further activities included**:**
- a Market Analysis Study for Businesses

- workshops for:
  - *Community information,*
  - *Tourism,*
  - *Agriculture, and*
  - *Municipal Government*
- completed an Inventory of organizations' *'internal' IT* survey of equipment for all agencies having databases
- *Training needs survey* completed
- *workshop for GIS needs* - 4 Conservation Authorities, Municipalities, Land Stewardship Council, Federation of Agriculture, OPP and the Emergency Council.
- Municipal government meeting with Municipal World to talk about *e-govt applications*
- *Connect Ontario / Geosmart Phase III proposal*

All studies available on the www.elginconnects.ca website.

2.2 Existing Connectivity and Services

Elgin County is serviced by two telecos - Bell and Amtelecom.   Essentially, Amtelecom covers the East End of Elgin and Bell services the Central and West areas of Elgin. Both companies have been able to take advantage of the DSIP upgrade program to the switching boxes and Elgin now has available FT 1 and T1 lines.   Accessing the Internet is accomplished largely by dial-up through 56 K modem over the phone lines. Both companies still have party lines in some areas.

The Elgin County School Board had connected all its schools prior to the re-structuring which amalgamated Oxford County, Middlesex County, Elgin County and City of London school boards under the name Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB).   In 1996 a wide area network developed in partnership with the TVDSB and the London and District Catholic School Board and Bell Canada resulted in a shared licensed wireless network throughout rural areas and fibre delivery within the City of St. Thomas.   Bell owns and operates the network for the school boards.

2.2.1 Current Infrastructure and Service Environment

The following is a list of service providers within the community that provide Internet access and telecommunication infrastructure. The current services include dial access, DSL, cable modems, and extremely limited wireless.   Details of each vendor's specific service offerings can be found on their web site.

Amtelecom Communications 18 Sydenham Street East, Aylmer, ON N5H 3E7 Phone: (519) 773-8441 Fax: (519) 765-3265 Email: info@amtelecom.ca Web: http://www.amtelecom.ca	AT&T Canada Corp. 2300 - 255 Queens Avenue, One London Place, London, ON N6A 5R8 Phone: (519) 963-3214 1-877-963-3214 Fax: (519) 963-3223 Email: timothy.beaman@attcanada.com Web: http://www.attcanada.com
Bell Canada 100 Dundas – Talbot Sq. London, ON N6A 4L6 Phone: (519) 633-6147 Fax: (519) 679-8652 Web: www.bell.ca	Cogeco Cable Inc. 950 Syscon Rd, PO Box 5076, Stn. Main, Burlington, ON L7R 4S6 Phone: 1-866-427-7451 1-866-264-3262 Web: http://www.cogeco.ca

Execulink Group Inc.
594676 Highway 59 South,
Woodstock, ON N4S 7V8
Phone: (519) 456-7222
      1-877-393-2854
Fax: 1-877-354-3844
Email: mailbox@execulink.com
Web: http://www.execulink.com
	Primus Canada
	252 Pall Mall Street, Suite 101,
	London, ON N6A 5P6
	Phone: (519) 434-9850
	      1-877-495-3770
	Fax: 1-866-252-9889
	Email: dhill@primustel.ca
	Web: http://www.primustel.ca

Rogers Cable Phone: (519)633-2180 1-800-848-8128 Fax: Web: www.rogers.com	

2.2.2 Stakeholder and Community Requirements:

The following is a table of the population centers or exchanges in Elgin, identified by service providers and Industry Canada, where broadband services have been reported.. The Vendor is asked to propose how to extend service in those communities beyond the current coverage area to provide service to the rural areas surrounding these population centers. Note: Vendors should take notice of the specifications for Broadband Connectivity, as identified by Industry Canada in the BRAND guidelines (www.broadband.gc.ca) and found in the Technical Solution section of this document. Elginconnects has included wireless broadband access to this specification.
This table includes communities where no broadband service has been reported. The vendor is asked to propose reliable and affordable broadband services to these population centers as well as the rural areas surrounding them.

Elginconnects
BRAND Network Development RFP

Community	Area	Pop	Pop served	Dwellings	DSL	Wireless	Cable
Avon							
Aylmer	274.09	7423		4764			Yes
Aylmer west	44.081	1072	851	340			Yes
Belmont	5.67	1819	1819	630			Yes
Calton							Yes
Candyville							Yes
Clachan							
Copenhagen							Yes
Corinth							Yes
Dexter							
Dunboyne							
Dutton	135.792	2389		918			
Eagle							
Eden							
Fingal	97.186	679		276			
Frome							
Grovesend							
Iona							
Iona Station	80.784	805		287			
Jaffa							
Lakeview							
Lawrence							
Luton							Yes
Lyons							Yes
Middlemarch							
Mount Salem							Yes
Mount Vernon							
New Glasgow							
New Sarum							
North Hall							
Orwell							Yes
Paynes Mills							
Port Bruce							Yes
Port Burwell	67.13	935		311			Yes
Port Glasgow							
Port Stanley	136.76	4865	3477	2248			Yes
Richmond							
Rodney	84.042	1729		740			
Shedden	57.61	625		218			
Sparta							
Springfield	92.338	1808	1808	621			Yes
St. Thomas	358.781	41969	37660	16822	Yes		Yes
Straffordville	83.36	1984	1275	639			Yes
Summers Corners							Yes
Talbotville							
Tyrconnel							
Union							
Vienna	5.144	1430	1430	667			Yes
Wallacetown	61.65	628	0	268			
West Lorne	91.908	2836	0	1159			
Yarmouth Centre							

Existing and desired connectivity

Organization	Current Connectivity	Desired
Aylmer Arena (new site)	N/A	10 Mb
Aylmer Fire Dept. Aylmer Ontario	56 K dial-up	10 Mb
Aylmer Library	3 Mb cable modem	10 Mb
Aylmer Medical Building	56 k dial-up	10 Mb
Aylmer Museum	3 M cable modem	10 Mb
Aylmer Police Dept	3 M cable modem	10 Mb
Balaclava Public School	10Mb Fibre	100 Mb
Bayham Medical Office 9279 Plank Rd, Straffordville	3 Mb cable modem	10 Mb
Bayham Municipal office	3 Mb cable modem	10 Mb
Bayham Public Library	3 Mb cable modem	10 Mb
Belmont Public Library		
Bobier Villa Home for the Aged Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5Mb
Catfish Creek Conservation Authority Central Elgin	56K Dial-Up	5 Mb
Central Elgin Fire Hall Belmont, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	512K
Central Elgin Fire Hall Yarmouth Centre (N of Hwy 3)	56K Dial-Up	512K
Central Elgin Fire Hall Union, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	512K
Central Elgin Fire Hall Port Stanley, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	512K
Central Elgin Works Yard/Garage Fruit Ridge Line	None	512K
City of St. Thomas 545 Talbot St, St. Thomas	10Mb Wireless	10Mb
St. Thomas Police Service St. Catherine Street, St. Thomas	100Mbit Fibre to City Hall	N/A
St. Thomas Public Library Curtis St., St. Thomas	100Mbit Fibre to City Hall	N/A
St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works Talbot St, St. Thomas	3Mb HDSL to City Hall	10Mb
St. Thomas Fire Dept. Wellington Street, St. Thomas	1Mb HDSL to City Hall	10Mb
St. Thomas Municipal Airport Hwy 3, St. Thomas	56K Dial-Up	1Mb
St. Thomas Pollution Control Plant Sunset Drive, St. Thomas	256K HDSL to City Hall	5Mb
Valleyview Home for the Aged Elysian St, St. Thomas	2Mb HDSL to City Hall	10Mb
St. Thomas Public Works Yard 100 Burwell Road, St. Thomas	10Mb Wireless	10Mb
Pinafore Park, St. Thomas	56K Dial-Up	5Mb

Comfort Inn	56K Dial-Up	10Mb
County of Elgin Administration 450 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas, Ontario	1.5Mb DSL	5Mb
Dutton Community Health Centre Currie Road, Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5Mb
Dutton Co-Operative Child Care Centre Inc Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5Mb
Dutton EACL/Shenanigans Currie Road, Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5Mb
Dutton Public Library Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5Mb
Dutton/Dunwich Community Centre Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	512K
Dutton/Dunwich Fire Hall Dutton, Ontario	None	512K
Dutton/Dunwich Municipal Garage Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	512K
Eden Community Centre , Eden Line	N/a	5 Mb
Elgin Community Care Access Center		
Elgin Manor Home for the Aged Fingal Line	56K Dial-Up	5Mb
Elgin Middlesex Oxford Local Training Board	56K Dial-Up	10 Mb
Elmdale Public School	10Mb Fibre	100 Mb
Fanshawe College- St. Thomas Campus	10 Mb fibre-leased	20 Mb
Green Lane Group		
Kettle Creek Conservation Authority	56 K dial-up	5 Mb
Malahide Fire Station Lyons, Ontario	3 Mb Cable	5 Mb
Malahide Fire Station Springfield, Ontario	3 Mb Cable	5 Mb
Malahide Fire Station Summer's Corners	3 Mb Cable	5 Mb
Malahide Fire Station South of Mount Salem	56 K Dial-Up	5 Mb
Malahide Works Yard/Garage Hwy 73 & Cty Rd 45	3 Mb Cable	5 Mb
Malahide Works Yard/Garage Lyons, Ontario	3 Mb Cable	5 Mb
Ministry of Natural Resources office Aylmer Ont.	1.5 Mb	3 Mb
Munc. Of West Elgin	56K Dial-Up	5 Mb
Municipality of Central Elgin Administration 450 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas, Ontario	1.5Mb DSL	10Mb
Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich Dutton, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	1.5Mb
Municipality of Southwold Fingal, Ontario	56K	1.5Mb
Municipality of West Elgin Rodney, Ontario	56K Dial-Up	1.5Mb

Ontario Flue Cured (Imperial Leaf Aylmer Ont.		
Ontario Police College	4.5 Mb	10 Mb
Port Burwell Post Office	56K Dial-Up	3 M
Port Burwell Fire Hall	56K Dial-Up	5 M
Port Burwell Provincial Park Pt. Burwell Ont.	56K Dial-Up	3 M
Port Burwell Public Library	3 M cable modem	10 Mb
Port Stanley Public Library Port Stanley, Ontario	Cable modem	1.5Mb
Pt. Burwell Fire Hall Pt. Burwell Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5 Mb
Rodney Community Centre/Arena Queens Line Rodney, Ontario	None	512K
Rodney Public Library	56K Dial-Up	1.5Mb
Shedden Fire Hall	None	512K
Shedden Public Library		
Shedden Public Library Shedden, Ontario	Cable Modem	1.5Mb
Sparta Community Centre	1.5 cable modem	3 Mb
Springfield Fire Hall Springfield Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5 Mb
Springfield Public Library	3 M cable modem	10 Mb
St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce	1.5Mb DSL	1.5Mb
St. Thomas Energy	3Mb DSL	10Mb
Straffordville Fire Hall Straffordville Ontario	56K Dial-Up	5 Mb
Straffordville Community Hall	3 Mb cable modem	3 M
Straffordville Library	3 Mb cable modem	10 Mb
Straffordville Post Office Plank Rd		
Town of Aylmer	3 M cable modem	10 Mb
Township of Malahide Administration Aylmer, Ontario	3 Mb Cable	10 Mb
Township of Southold	56K Dial-Up	10 Mb
Thames Valley District School Board - City of St. Thomas elementary schools - City of St. Thomas secondary schools - County of Elgin elementary schools - County of Elgin secondary schools	10 M fibre 100 M fibre 10 Mb wireless 100 Mb wireless	100 Mb fibre
United Way of Elgin-St. Thomas	1.5 DSL	3 M
Vienna Community Centre 26 Fulton Street, Vienna	56 k dial-up	3 M
Vienna Public Library	3 M cable modem	10 Mb
West Elgin Community Health Centre West Lorne, Ontario	N/A	1.5Mb
West Elgin Mutual Insurance	56 k dial-up	15 Mb
West Lorne Community Centre/Arena	N/A	512K

West Lorne, Ontario		
West Lorne Fire Hall	None	512K
West Lorne Library	56K Dial-Up	1.5Mb

3.0   Technical Solution

The locations of the communities where new or extended broadband services are required are contained in the table above. Details on proposed points of presence, and methods of interconnecting them, as well as interconnection to other networks will be required. In addition, description of local access solutions (DSL, cable modems, wireless solutions) will be required. It is not the intent of the RFP to place any limits or constraints on vendors. The information that follows is primarily provided as guidelines with minimum requirements being identified where appropriate.

Technical Specifications

The vendor will provide a complete description including network architecture diagrams and maps for how the local broadband network will connect to each of the POP's as well as other regional, or other systems or networks.   As well, the proposal should include local access details often referred to as the "last mile" such as DSL, cable modems, etc.

It must include:

- A description of how existing infrastructure will be utilized in conjunction with newly constructed or proposed new network infrastructure.

- A description of what design factors will be used to ensure survivability of the backbone network.

- A description of the proposed hardware, complete with details on maintenance requirements and technical support provided in the event of outage. This should include details on vendor technical support as well as hardware vendor support, service response times, and availability of support in off hours.

- A description of how the network is flexible and scalable to respond to varying service requirements over time. This should include large increases in requirements for existing customers and ability to add new customers to the network.

- A description of network security measures incorporated into the design which will address physical security of the network infrastructure as well as software and data security.

The Vendor should be prepared to offer the following services either directly or through its partners or subcontractors:
1. physical infrastructure design and construction (eg. Wireless towers, poles, conduits, etc.)
2. Network infrastructure design and implementation (eg. Cabling, antennas, switches, "last mile" wiring, etc)
3. Broadband services deployment and support (eg. Customer equipment,

Internet access, technical support, etc.)
4. Commercial services (eg. Customer billing, marketing, customer service, accounting, etc.)

Elginconnects will review the proposals to determine the following performance and operational characteristics of the vendor's service and therefore requests details on:
- Maintenance, service and support
- Performance and reliability of the network
- Mean time to failure
- Mean time to repair
- Customer compensation for extended service outages
- Customer account management and billing

The vendor is required to submit a sample of the Service Level Agreement that will be in effect for the proposed network.

4.0   Proposal Submission Process

This Request for Proposals is an open and competitive process, open to all qualified providers of the necessary telecommunications and technology solutions meeting the needs expressed herein. This RFP document has been provided to current service providers in the area as well as posted on http://www.elginconnects.ca and Industry Canada's website.   As a recipient of this RFP you are included as a ptential vendor partner in the project.

4.1   Key Criteria and Principles

The following points concerning the BRAND program and the community should be considered by the proponent in developing a response to this RFP:
1. As defined by Industry Canada, for a community to be considered eligible under the Broadband Pilot Program, it currently must have no publicly available broadband infrastructure that is capable of meeting its broadband needs. Typically, these are communities where Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) or cable modem access is not already available to the public. Elginconnects has included wireless broadband access to this definition.

2. The BRAND program criteria require that the vendor partner and the community contribute a total of 50% of the cost of the project.

3. The vendor partner will design, own and operate the infrastructure and be responsible for ongoing sustainability.

4. In the RFP you will note that Elginconnects has identified the underserved areas of the community as being eligible for inclusion in the project. Some of these underserved areas are immediately adjacent to those with existing broadband services. The provision of broadband services to these adjacent areas are eligible for this project and vendors should consider extending these existing services to meet our objectives.

5. It is a principle of Elginconnects and the project to extend and enhance reliable and cost effective services that are currently being provided.

6. The objective is to provide broadband connectivity to all business, residences and public sector organizations in Elgin. Elginconnects recognizes that with the current technology, DSL has distance limitations, and wireless requires line of sight whereas cable modem delivery is currently limited to areas serviced by cable TV. Therefore hybrid solutions that involve a mix and overlapping of DSL, cable and wireless services should be considered in addressing the goal of connectivity in Elgin.

4.2   Submission Requirements

1. The proposal, excluding costs, shall be submitted in one (1) envelope, containing five (5) hard copies of the proposal as well as one electronic copy of the file in Adobe Acrobat format by the May 28th, 2003 closing date. Proposal to include the County maps supplied with the RFP depicting the Vendor's proposed service coverage areas.

2. All costs shall be submitted in a separate envelope (Envelope 2) containing five (5) copies of the cost information, also by the May 28th, 2003 closing date.

3. Envelopes shall be sealed and clearly marked as to contents (Envelope 1 or Envelope 2) and identity of proponent, and bear the following notation:

    Elginconnects
    Request for Proposals – **Broadband for Rural and Northern Development**
    Attn: Donna Lunn, Project Manager
    C/O Elgin Community Futures Development Corporation
    300 south Edgeware Road
    St. Thomas, ON N5P 4L1

4. Responses will be accepted up to **4:30 pm EST May 28, 2003**. Responses received after this time will not be accepted, and will be returned unopened. No faxes accepted.

5. No alteration, amendment or requests for withdrawal will be accepted after the specified closing time. The bidder may make alterations or request to withdraw his/her bid anytime before the closing time.

6. Requests to withdraw bids must be made in writing by the bidder or an authorized representative of the bidder.

7. The right is reserved to expand or shorten the closing date, or to cancel this request without penalty.

8. Addenda issued shall be incorporated into and become part of the proposal. Interested vendors should register for update email notification to Donna Lunn at donna@elgincfdc.ca

9. There will not be a public opening of the proposal.

10. Should the proponent make the short list, they will be officially notified on Thursday, May 29, 2003 and may be required to make a presentation to the selection committee on Friday May 30, 2003.

11. All expenses involved with the preparation and submission of proposals, presentations, or any work performed in connection therewith shall be borne by the Vendor(s).   No payment will be made for any proposals received, or for any other effort required of or made by the Vendor(s) prior to commencement of work approved in a subsequent agreement with Elginconnects.

12. This RFP is seeking to determine network deployment costs as well as establish the standard cost of the various broadband service offerings being proposed by the vendor. Until such time as individual stakeholders requirements are confirmed, it is not the intention of this RFP to request that vendors provide details of costing for service to individual customer locations.

4.3   Contact Information

For further information, contact:
Donna Lunn, Community Development Officer
Elgin Community Futures Development Corporation
300 South Edgeware Road
St. Thomas, ON N5P 4L1
Phone: 519-633-7597 ext 27
Email: donna@elgincfdc.ca

Respondents, who have any doubt as to the meaning or intent of any part of this request, shall advise the above via e-mail. Respondents are requested not to contact any other person associated with Elginconnects regarding this RFP.

It is the responsibility of each Vendor to understand all aspects of the technology required and the requirements of the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development program: www.broadband.gc.ca

A copy of this RFP and documents providing further background information related to the Elginconnects organization and project may be found at http://www.elginconnects.ca

Elginconnects reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate changes in any proposal.

4.4   Terms and Conditions

1. By inviting a proposal, Elginconnects makes no commitment or obligation to the Proponent, and shall not be responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of a proposal.

2. The lowest priced proposal will not necessarily be accepted.

3. Elginconnects reserves the right to refuse any or all proposals submitted.

4. Elginconnects reserves the right to issue addenda, supplements, and amendments to the RFP.

5. Quantities set forth on the RFP represent requirements at the time of issuance and are subject to change.

6. Proposals shall be valid one hundred and twenty (120) days after the closing date.

7. Elginconnects will consider all proposals to be confidential, and will not release proposals to any persons, other than Elginconnects project staff and advisors, without first obtaining permission.

8. Elginconnects reserves the right to accept only portions of a proposal. If a proposal can only be accepted in its entirety, this must be specified in the proposal.

9. Descriptive literature and specifications for any products or services described in the RFP should accompany the proposal.

10. Proposals shall be prepared in accordance with the format and requirements of this RFP.

11. The Proponent warrants that it has the necessary corporate power and authority to execute and deliver its obligations, as proposed.

12. Skilled and competent personnel, in accordance with standards generally accepted in the industry, shall perform proposed services in a proper and professional manner.

13. Products proposed will have received all applicable approvals from appropriate governing agencies, institutions and/or organizations.

14. The successful Proponent shall not assign, subcontract or transfer any agreement or any part thereof without the prior written consent of Elginconnects.

15. All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the Elginconnects. Proposals and supporting materials will not be returned to vendors.

16. The signing of an agreement between the issuer and the successful vendor is dependent on the receipt of a one-time government subsidy by the issuer.

17. Elginconnects will require the successful proponent to produce the following:
    - Liability insurance
    - Maintenance and performance bond for 50% of the value of the contract
    - Insurance certificate to the satisfaction of the Project Manager
    - Financial and corporate information.
    - Additional assurances or protections deemed necessary by Elginconnects.

4.5   Form of Response

Your response must conform to the following:

Understanding of the Scope of Work– articulate your understanding of this project in terms of community, Elginconnects, broadband requirements and the BRAND program.

Solution Overview - provide an overview of how your company would approach the project, work with the Elginconnects Team, and help implement our vision. Identify staff expertise, project management methodology and client(s) currently operating similar solutions. Explain how this project fits into your company's objectives and strategic direction.

Description of Proposed Broadband Services – include detailed plotting of proposed services on maps provided and forming part of this RFP.

Note: The base maps for Elgin and St. Thomas are included in the electronic version of the RFP.   Please ensure that the returned size is an 11" x17" size.   They can be provided in hard copy to potential vendors and are available from:

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Company Profile – include complete contact coordinates for the company and contact individual for this proposal.

Project Management and Project Plan – see details required in this document

Vendor Qualifications and References -provide detailed profiles and references for your company, project managers and other personnel determined necessary for this project. The reliability of the Respondents' claims must be demonstrated by their track record and client references

Timeline - Provide assurances that your team will be able to complete the proposed work in an efficient manner.

Pricing – provide rates and costs for all services and costs deemed necessary for this project in templates supplied, includes sustainability plan and partnership proposition

4.6   Company Profile

Please provide a brief company profile, including the following:
1. Full legal name of firm and parent company, if applicable
2. Head office address, telephone, fax numbers and e-mail
3. Names, titles, phone, fax numbers of principals to be contacted for further information

4. Number of years in business
5. Products and services sold
6. An outline of the relationship between the vendor and the product manufacturers that supply the vendor, in order to ensure availability of product.
7. A description of the qualifications, experience, capability and/or capacity of the vendor to successfully provide the broadband service and complete the project in a timely manner.
8. Information on current broadband clients including
    -   Total number of current clients
    -   A list of broadband services provided to similar communities
    -   Evidence of successful completion of a project of a similar size and complexity

9. References: Contact information for three references from projects similar in size, application and scope and a brief description of telecommunications infrastructure solutions implemented and managed by your company

    (We will be contacting these references and requesting information about their level of satisfaction with the solution, working relationship with your company and other relevant project information.

    If sub-vendors are proposed, they must be identified and a brief history of the sub-vendor's company as well as three references including contact names and numbers must be provided.

5.0   Project Management and Project Plan

Emphasis will be placed on the logic, timeliness and feasibility of the vendor's proposed project plan and on their demonstration of project management methodologies and resources that will ensure its completion. This plan should include but not be limited to details on the design, implementation and operation/maintenance phases of this broadband infrastructure project. It should include all resources and major services identified in the vendor's proposal.

5.1   Assigned Personnel and Project Resources

For all key personnel resources proposed to work on this project, please provide:
1. Matrix of roles and responsibilities for all team members including and indicating supervisory and management personnel, staff, partners and subcontractors
2. Description of the team's organization and reporting structure
3. Expected percentage of total project time that each individual is proposed to work on the project
4. Personal profiles for each team member, indicating his or her qualifications, experience and areas of expertise for the specified roles in the project (Note: It is recommended that the Project Manager's experience be demonstrated through at least one of the references provided in Section 4.0 – Company Profile)

The vendor should also provide a list, description and estimated time requirements of resources that will be required from the Elginconnects Project Team.

5.2   Project Workplan

The Vendor must provide a detailed workplan that clearly demonstrates the sequence of phases and activities proposed to ensure project objectives are met within budget and in an efficient manner.

This workplan must indicate all major components of activity, effort and resources required and the resulting key deliverables for the project. Note: The identification and acceptance of deliverables may form the basis of developing a payment schedule with the successful Vendor.

5.3   Project Schedule

The Vendor is required to outline the proposed implementation schedule for the broadband services, including delivery dates, implementation milestones, task relationships and dependencies, and a timeline. Vendors should assume that under the current Industry Canada schedule, the Elginconnects implementation could begin in the fourth quarter of 2003. Timelines should be developed by the Vendor to allow for the most efficient and expedient implementation of the network.

5.4   System Design and Development

The Vendor is required to provide descriptions of how the broadband service(s) will be designed, including details of methodologies and experience with customer testing and final implementation. Vendors should provide details on the extent to which broadband connectivity to the community areas will be guaranteed and how the broadband service will deliver differentiated levels of service depending on the different bandwidth needs of the potential users.

5.4.1 Back-up and Recovery

Vendors should describe the proposed back-up and recovery capabilities for the various broadband service and applications.   In particular, a description of the approach to ensuring that customer data (eg. E-mails) is not lost or corrupted.   Additionally Vendors should identify any operational redundancy :built-in" to the solution to prevent loss-of-service to customers.

5.4.2 Security and Access

The Vendor should describe the security of the communications infrastructure and the operational safeguards against unauthorized access either through physical or electronic means.   The Vendors should describe the security measures in place to prevent malicious access to the communications systems, user accounts and network traffic.

5.5   Training

The Vendor should provide detailed descriptions of all training that is required for this project, the type of individuals that should be trained and how and when this will be accomplished.

5.6 Risk Management

The Vendor should identify any major assumptions made in the development of this proposal, and any related risks or issues that may relate to them. The Vendor should identify any further risks to the development, implementation and management of this project, and their proposed strategies to mitigate these risks.

5.7 Quality Assurance

The Vendor must provide a plan that will ensure:
- The delivery of proposed solutions that meet the stated needs of the community
- Satisfaction of all specifications and requirements set out by Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Program and Elginconnects

Where the Vendor proposes specific technologies or solutions, they should provide evidence of related certifications or quality standards their firm or project team carries. counts and network traffic.

5.8 Project Management Methodology

The Project Manager and supervisor staff proposed for the Vendor team must demonstrate their understanding and experience in the use of reliable project management techniques & strategies to ensure the implementation of the products and services for this project within schedule, costs and specifications. Please describe the approach and methodologies to be applied to this project, indicating quality checkpoints and reporting.

5.9 Project Documentation

Please provide a listing of all documentation and reporting that will be developed during the implementation of this project. This list should include all technical documentation on proposed solutions, operating and training manuals, milestone and deliverable reporting as well as documentation relating to the project management and business aspects of the project.

5.10 Testing and Verification

Please describe testing procedures to be utilized during this project to ensure all required elements for service levels are achieved. Please indicate where standards are employed and how they relate to generally accepted industry standards.

6.0 Pricing Information

6.1 Estimated Revenue

It is the responsibility of the Vendor to apply the community profile information, statistics provided on serviced and under serviced areas and to use industry benchmarks in calculating customer uptake and anticipated annual revenue to implement and sustain the network solution(s) proposed.

Elginconnects will work with the successful vendor in the confirmation of specific customer requirements prior to contract finalization.

6.2   Costing

Vendors are asked to provide a detailed breakdown and summary of costs to provide broadband services to the areas and customers identified in this RFP.   Vendors are to complete the cost summary templates provided in Appendix B and C. Elginconnects commits to the maintenance of confidentiality in reviewing all pricing details of the proposals.

In preparing budgets and completing the costing templates, Vendors should be aware of the following guidelines:
- BRAND funding is only available to help pay for capital or one-time costs for this infrastructure project. These capital costs to design, build and implement the solution must be quoted separately from on-going operational, service and support costs.
- Costs relating to backbone infrastructure must be separate from those relating to local access infrastructure and Vendors should identify which under serviced areas are covered in each cost summaries completed for this project
- Within non-capital costs, Vendors are asked to provide annualized costs for operation, support and maintenance for both layers of infrastructure, and by service area

The templates provided will form the basis of cost review by Elginconnects, and should be adhered to as much as possible. Vendors may however, modify individual line items as long as the level of detail provided remains relatively unchanged. Each of the two template provided should be completed for the 2 (two) levels of infrastructure – backbone and local access by community covered.

Note: Vendors may find it useful to consult the BRAND Guidelines for Applicants to understand how communities will need to complete the financial requirements of the business plan and funding request. Applicant Guidelines can be accessed at www.broadband.gc.ca/

6.3   Detailed Revenue Projections

Vendors must provide details on revenue projections for services proposed for this project. These projections should reflect each community or service area to which they proposed to offer broadband connectivity. These projections should extend 5 years into the future.

6.4   Project Budget

Vendors should prepare a budget for the project that proposes how the various components of the network will be funded. This should reflect capital investments required by both the Vendor and Industry Canada, and anticipated revenue sources. The vendor should identify the amount of one–time funds required, if any, in order for the vendor to provide a particular service. The budget should span the time frame required to project the payback period, recognizing that Industry Canada funding is a one-time capital investment. The vendor should specify the amount by which the projected aggregate monthly revenue exceeds the expected monthly operating costs of the service.

6.5 Sustainability Plan

The Vendor must use figures developed in the previous sections to prepare a sustainability plan for the implementation and maintenance of the proposed network.

6.6 Partnership Proposition

Vendor proposals will be evaluated on the extent and value of a partnership proposition to Elginconnects. As indicated previously, government funding is only available to a maximum of 50% of eligible capital costs. Vendors are instructed to clearly identify their financial and operational partnership proposition for this project.

7.0 Evaluation of Proposals

The following evaluation criteria and scoring detail will be used to evaluate responses to this RFP.

CATEGORY	MAXIMUM POINTS
Elginconnects – Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Project a. Understanding of scope and objectives b. Feasibility of proposed solution, approach and methodology c. Recognition of problem and solutions proposed d. Adequacy of proposed work plan / deliverables	10
Proposed Solution a. Ability to meet stakeholder and community requirements b. Technical feasibility c. Reliability and redundancy d. Quality of documentation e. Scalability /ability to provide for future requirements f. Maintenance and service levels g. Warranty, service, support offerings h. Training availability i. Ownership and intellectual property right flexibility j. Guaranteed performance k. Product quality, stability, and system reliability l. Compliance with standards, and specifications m. Extent of coverage area proposed	25
Proposed Team / Personnel a. Relevant experience and qualifications b. Competence proven by similar and/or related work c. Project Manager's relevant experience and qualifications	15

CATEGORY	MAXIMUM POINTS

Company / Organization
 	
a. Proponent's capacity/ability to conduct the work with appropriate management controls and quality assurance procedures within the specified timeline
b. Proponents demonstrated experience with respect to
    ▪ Telecommunications infrastructure design, implementation and sustainability
    ▪ Community networks
c. Company viability
	20

Presentation	10
Price Proposal – including partnership proposition and long-term sustainability	20
Maximum Total Points	100

8.0 Contract and License Agreements

The successful Vendor will be subject to a holdback of 10% of the value of the contract until such time as the network and services proposed are deemed to be fully and successfully operational.

The successful proposal will be incorporated into the final business plan submitted to Industry Canada for funding. Vendor input to this incorporation will be required.

The successful vendor will be required to certify that in implementing their proposed deployment of infrastructure, they would comply with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act,* as amended.

Appendix A: Community Findings

- ***www.elginconnects.ca***

• *Appendix 'B' Infrastructure Implementation Cost Template*

Infrastructure Level (check one) and Solution Type (ie. DSL, Wireless, etc.)			
? Backbone Infrastructure Type:	**? Local Access Infrastructure Type:**		
Vendor Project Reference (noting relevant section in Vendor proposal)			
Communities Served			
Project Element	**Cost**	**Taxes**	**Total**
Network Build Include all costs relating to the design, build and testing of communications devices, switches to ensure full and complete access to all services.			
Equipment and Materials			
Labour			
Other costs			
Infrastructure Build Include all costs relating to the physical building of the non-communications infrastructure including both new construction and upgrades required as well as any costs to access 3rd party infrastructure.			
Products, materials and components			
Labour			
Equipment and supplies			
Other costs: please specify			
Project Management: Include all costs relating to management of this portion of the project.			
Labour			
Administration			
Documentation and Reporting			
Training			
Other costs: please specify			
	Total Costs		

Appendix 'C' Operation and Maintenance Cost Template

Infrastructure Level (check one) and Solution Type (ie. DSL, Wireless, etc.)			
? Backbone Infrastructure Type:	**? Local Access Infrastructure Type:**		
Vendor Project Reference (noting relevant section in Vendor proposal)			
Communities Served			
Project Element	**Cost**	**Taxes**	**Total**
Network Access and Management Include all costs on an annualized basis for continuation of access and maintenance of service levels, connecting to other networks, provisioning, service and system maintenance..			
Equipment and Materials			
Labour			
Software			
Other costs: please specify			
Community Stakeholder and Client Support Include all costs on an annualized basis relating to effective communications and technical support for all network clients.			
Communications			
Labour			
Software			
Other costs: please specify			
Administration Include all costs required on an annualized basis for administration and management of the network and its services.			
Management			
Administration			
Reporting			
Training			
Other staff- related costs			
Other costs: please specify			
Total Costs			

Appendix 'D' Map

To be used by Vendors in providing details of proposed service areas.