

# Connect to Innovate (Canada)

## Good practice: Improved high-speed Internet access to rural and remote communities through new backbone infrastructure

**Relevant DFI commitment:** Promote affordable, inclusive, and reliable access to the Internet for individuals and businesses where they need it and support efforts to close digital divides around the world to ensure all people of the world are able to benefit from the digital transformation.

**Type of the initiative:** Project

**Stakeholder Group:** Government

**Launch/adoption:** 2016 - Now

### Goals

The [Connect to Innovate](#) program aims to bridge the digital divide in Canada by bringing improved Internet speeds to rural and remote communities. Its primary objective is to provide high-speed Internet access to underserved areas, recognising that it is essential for citizens, businesses, and institutions to fully participate in the economy, democracy, and way of life. The program seeks to overcome the barriers of challenging geography and smaller populations that often deter private sector investment in rural and remote areas. By investing in new "backbone" infrastructure, Connect to Innovate strives to connect these communities to the global economy, like building roads in rural and remote regions.

### Description

[Connect to Innovate](#) is a \$585 million federal program launched to improve connectivity in over 975 rural and remote communities across Canada, including 190 Indigenous communities. The program primarily focuses on building new backbone infrastructure, which often consists of fibre optic technology but can also include microwave and satellite services. This backbone infrastructure is crucial for connecting institutions like schools and hospitals. Additionally, some funding is allocated for upgrading existing networks and providing "last-mile" infrastructure to households and businesses.

The project supports infrastructure improvements, including new backbone connections, backbone upgrades, network resiliency enhancements, and last-mile connectivity. As of March 2023, the program has exceeded its initial target, connecting 1,079 communities and impacting 285,652 households. The initiative collaborates with provinces, territories, municipalities, and Internet service providers to identify and address connectivity needs. Connect to Innovate aims to improve Internet access and foster economic growth, support entrepreneurship, enhance digital literacy, and facilitate access to government services in rural and remote areas across Canada.

*Disclaimer: This note was prepared by the GIFI team to illustrate certain good practices contributing to the implementation of the commitments contained in the Declaration on the Future of the Internet. The information provided in this note is based on the official documents and sources originating from donors or implementors and has not been verified for accuracy. Please see sources in the Internet Accountability Compass for additional*

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