

# Telecommunications Policy to Support Remote Indigenous Communities

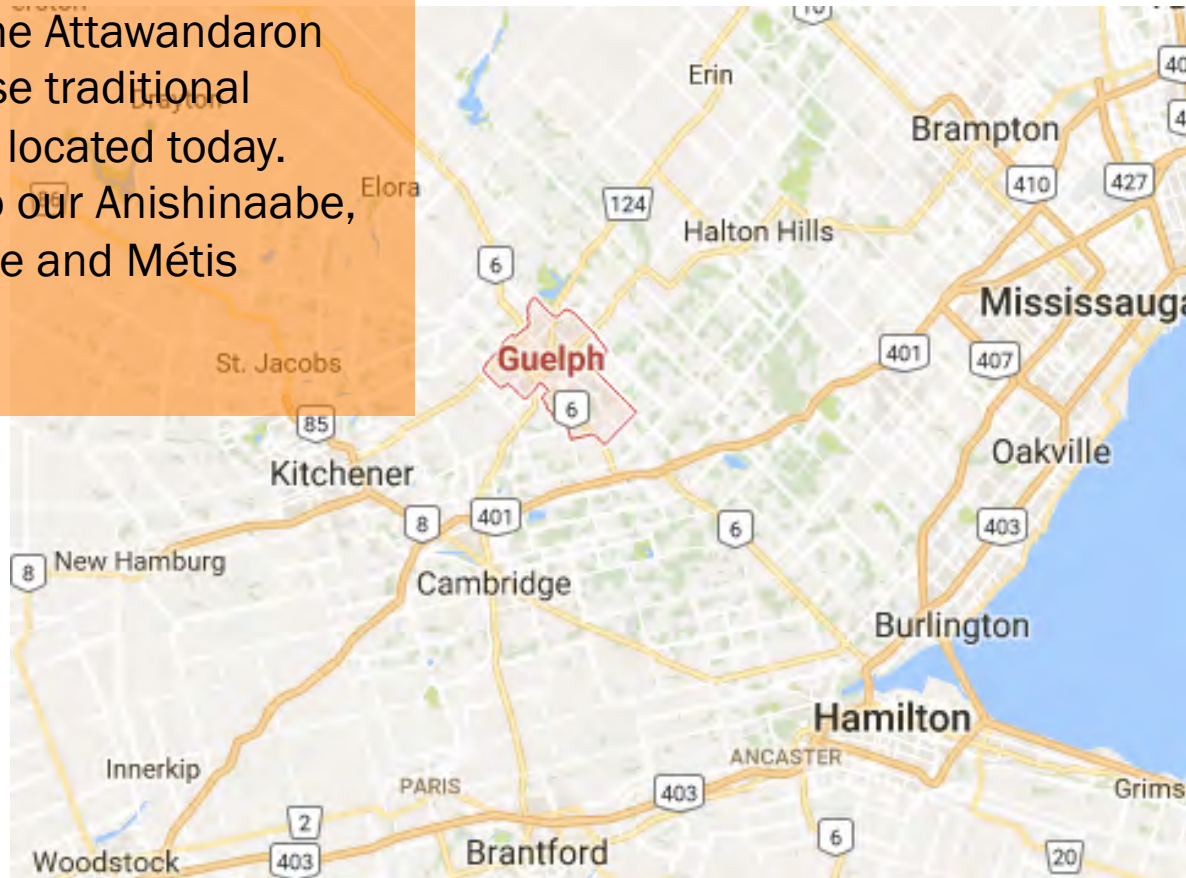
October 12, 2016

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation  
Rural Policy Learning Commons  
Conference  
Guelph, Ontario

Susan O'Donnell  
University of New Brunswick  
Department of Sociology

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledge the Attawandaron people on whose traditional territory we are located today. Offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours.



# WHY TELECOMMUNICATIONS?

The internet is a digital public sphere where news and information is shared and public opinions are formed

Being online allows many economic, social and cultural opportunities

Telecommunication (broadband) networks support a range of public and community services

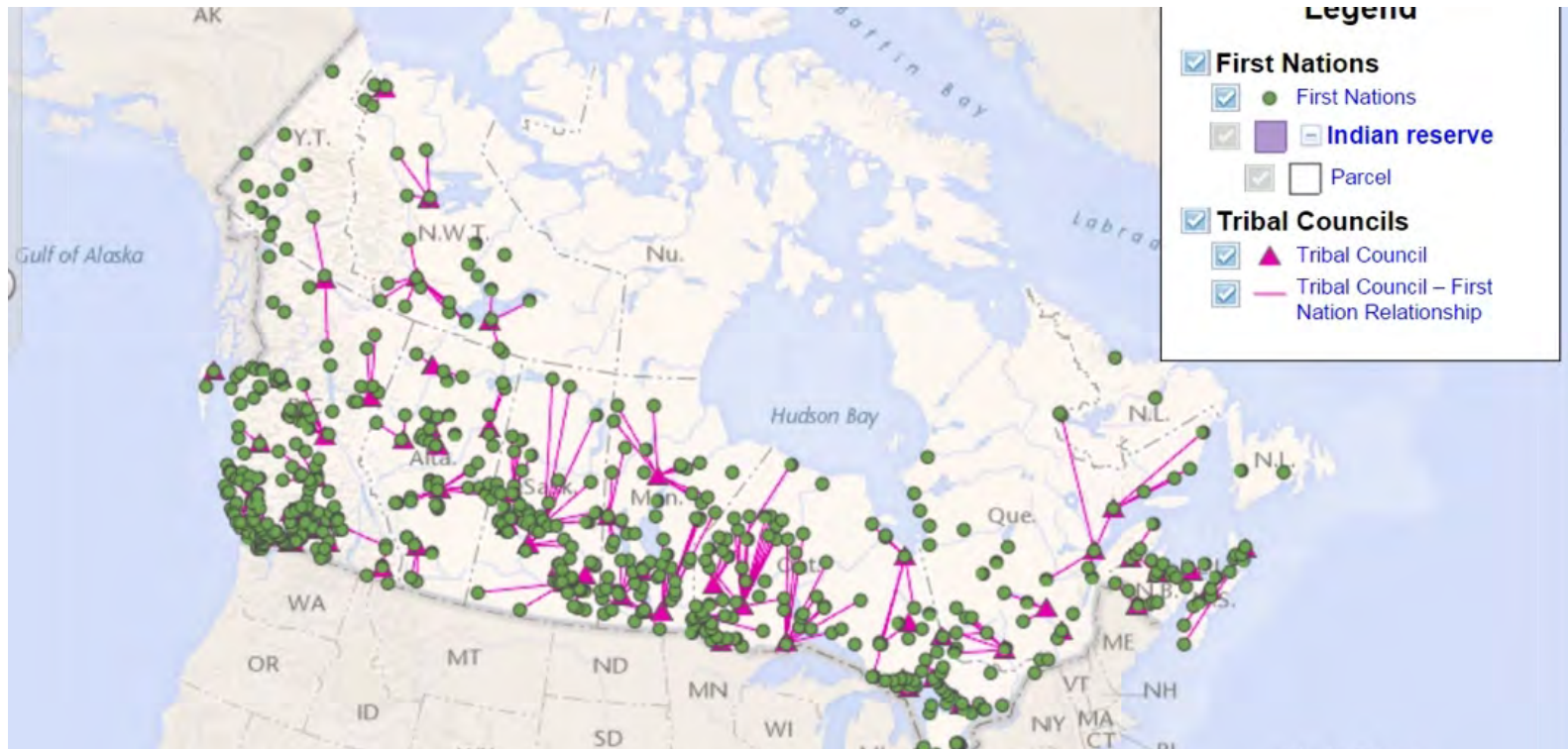
The basic requirement to participate in this digital space is digital technology and access to an affordable and reliable broadband network

## MOST REMOTE COMMUNITIES ARE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



## Map from INAC

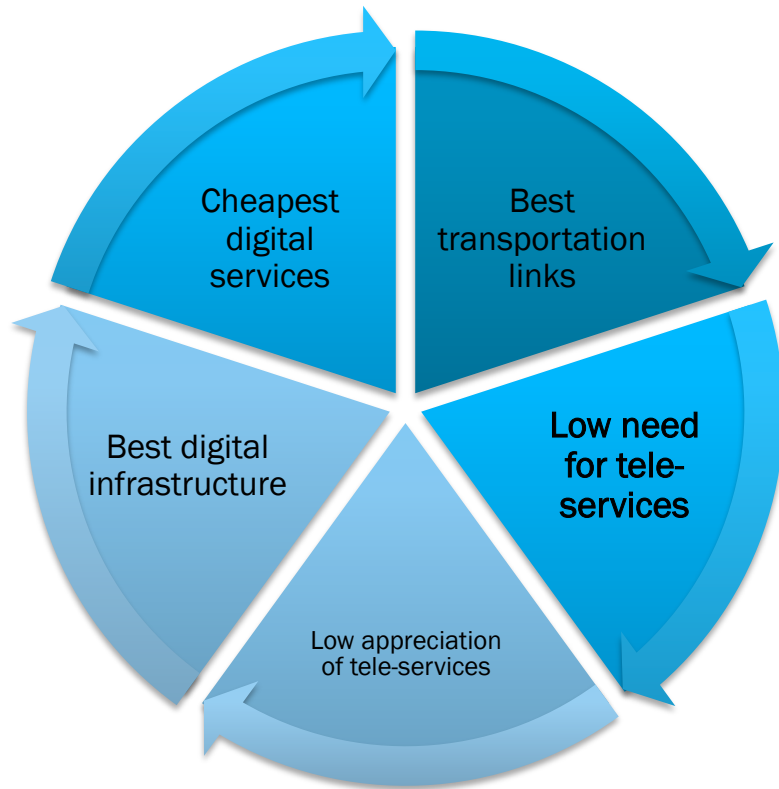
# FIRST NATIONS



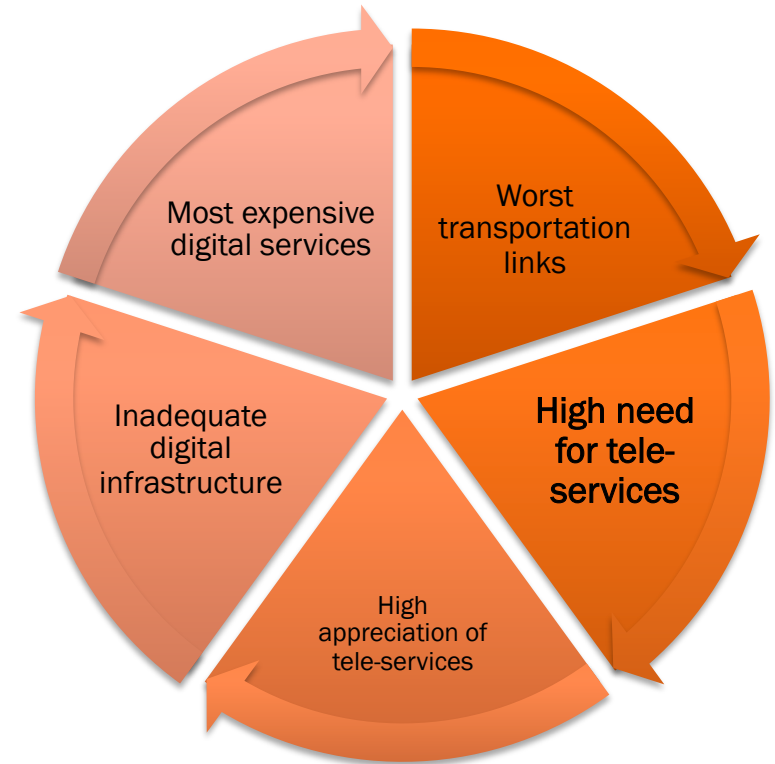
Map from INAC

# GEOGRAPHICAL PARADOX OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

## URBAN COMMUNITIES



## REMOTE COMMUNITIES





# WHY THE DISPARITIES BETWEEN URBAN AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES?

## Easier to build on existing subsidized urban development

- Roads and other public utility infrastructure have been highly subsidized in urban areas
- Public health, education, social services infrastructure already exists in urban centres

## Policy-makers lack knowledge about remote environments

- Choosing build options that are high-cost and unsustainable in the long-term
- Systemically privileging urban perspectives

## Corporations (incumbent telcos) wield enormous power

- Corporate political lobbying (evidence at CRTC BSO hearings)
- Most subsidies only available to incumbent telcos
- Lack of “business case” to build and maintain in remote regions

# REGIONAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY INTERMEDIARY TECHNOLOGY ORGANIZATIONS





# ROLES OF REGIONAL COMMUNITY INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Advocate for and administer digital infrastructures and services on behalf of their Indigenous member communities

Represent and are governed by groups of local communities, allowing residents to access services and benefit from economies of scale otherwise unavailable

Use digital technologies to deliver public services and economic development opportunities to the residents of member communities

Act as mediators between local, place-based communities and external entities like government funders or corporations

Engage in both social and technical activities associated with the effective use of digital technologies

# FIRST MILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Regional and local digital networks designed and built with region / community needs as the starting point

Regional and local ownership and control of digital infrastructure

Operating costs for **anchor tenants** support regional and community connectivity

Regional and community training, local support staff, community jobs

Sustainable digital technologies to meet regional and community needs

# HISTORY OF RESEARCH & PARTNERSHIPS

## 1) PRE-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH AFN AND REGIONAL INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

## 2) RESEARCH, OUTREACH, AND KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS

2005: Research on ICT with Aboriginal Communities (UNB / KO / other partners)

2006 - ongoing: First Nations Innovation (UNB / KO / ACFNHD / FNEC / Laval / U of Alberta)

2010 - 2013: First Mile (Simon Fraser U / UNB / KO / ACFNHD / FNEC)

2016: Digital Technologies for Indigenous Resurgence (UNB / MWC)

2005 - ongoing: funded by grants from Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

## 3) FIRST MILE CONNECTIVITY CONSORTIUM

2012: CRTC Intervention, Northwestel's Modernization Plan

2014: FMCC Incorporated as a national non-profit organization (KO / FNEC / ACFNHD)

2014 – 2016: More partners added (AMC / FNHSSC / FNTSAG / FNTC / WJBTN)

2014 - ongoing: funded by work contracts and projects, contributions from members, cost claims received from the CRTC to support participation in public hearings

2015: CIRA .CA Community Investment grant, ISED contract

# FIRST MILE CONNECTIVITY CONSORTIUM (FMCC) MEMBERS



**Atlantic Canada's First  
Nation Help Desk**



**First Nations  
Education Council**



**Keewaytinook  
Okimakanak KNET  
Services**



**Western James Bay  
Telecom Network**



**Assembly of Manitoba  
Chiefs**



**First Nations Health  
and Social  
Secretariat of  
Manitoba**



**First Nations  
Technical Services  
Advisory Group, INC.**



**First Nations  
Technology Council**

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## FMCC BOARD and MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES:

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Denise Williams, FNTC Representative

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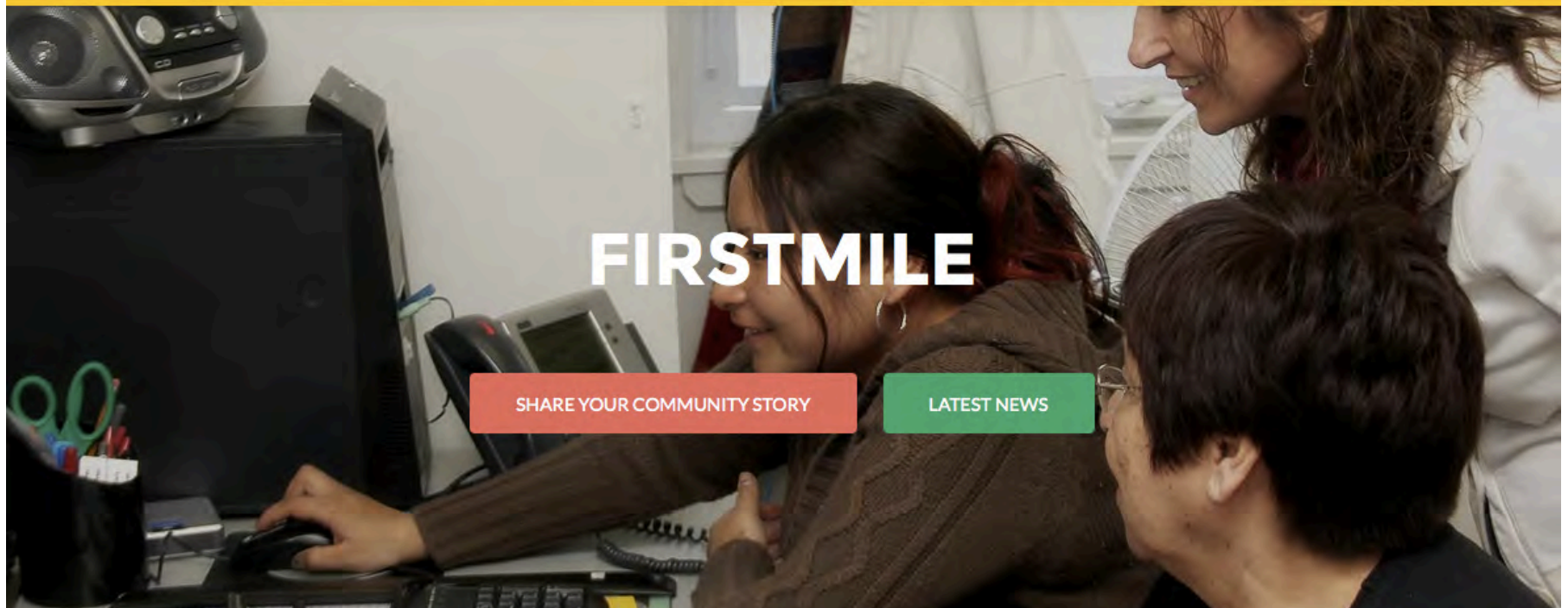
Ben Klass, Carleton University



# FIRST MILE WEBSITE

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# FMCC MISSION: EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY AND REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

## FMCC CONTRIBUTIONS TO EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY CONSULTATIONS:

2015-2016: Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada – Digital technology adoption in northern and remote Indigenous communities report

2014: Industry Canada – Two submissions on Spectrum Policy (3500 MHz and AWS)

2010: Industry Canada - Consultations contributions for a national digital strategy

## FMCC CONTRIBUTIONS TO EVIDENCE-BASED REGULATORY ACTIVITIES:

2015-2016: CRTC – Review of the Basic Service Objective (BSO)

2015: CRTC – Review of Telesat's Pricing for Satellite Services

2014: CRTC – Let's Talk TV Consultations

2014: CRTC – Review of Satellite Services

2013: CRTC – Review of Northwestel's Modernization Plan

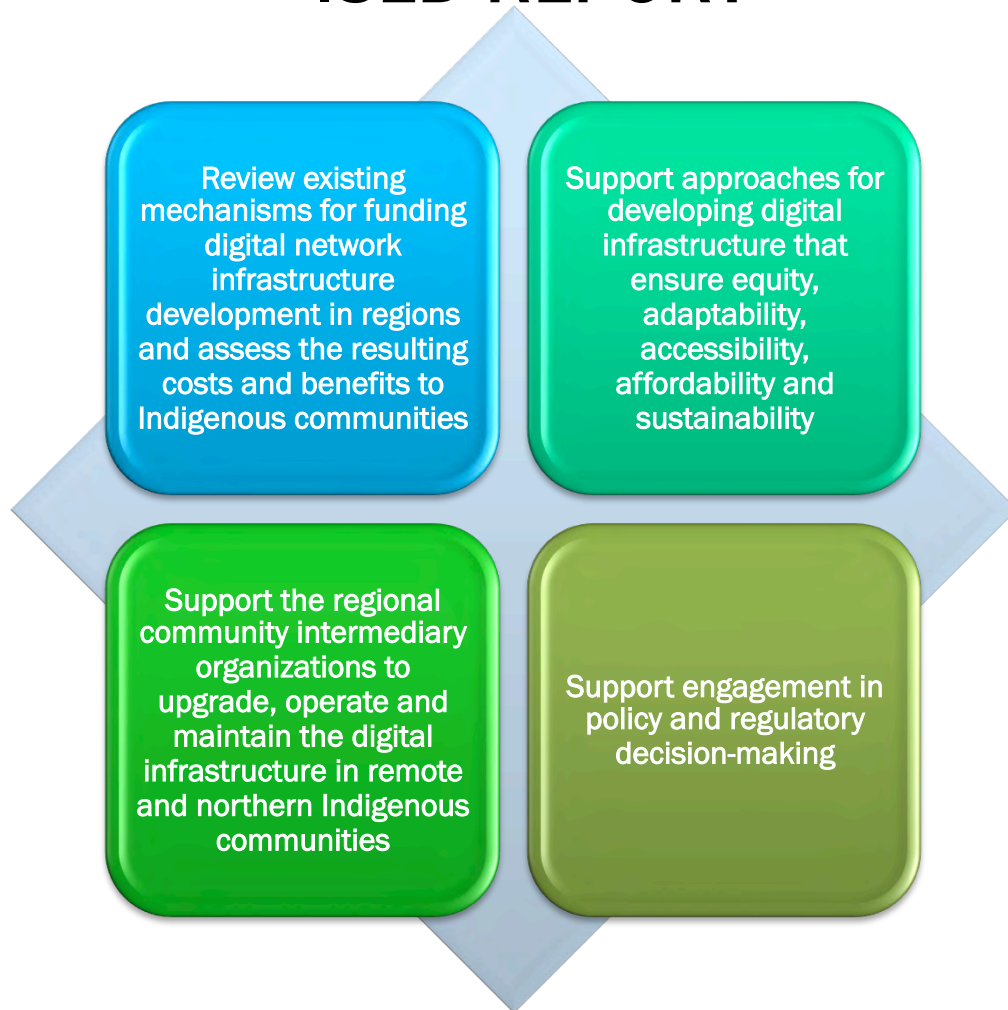
# FMCC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

## - ISED REPORT



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## - ISED REPORT



# FMCC TEAM AT CRTC – BSO HEARINGS – APR 2016





# FMCC PROPOSAL TO THE CRTC: THE NORTHERN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FUND (NISF)

Proposes a new fund to replace the Northern Connectivity Fund (only available to incumbent telecom providers)

Includes both capital (infrastructure) support and ongoing operational support

Recognizes some infrastructure support would also come from various government programs with CRTC in a coordinating role

NISF coordinates and supplements existing funding to support predictable, long-term supports

# NORTHERN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FUND (NISF)

Provide ongoing support to investments and build capacity in communities to support long-term community and economic development opportunities

Establish an accountable, administrative mechanism involving government, industry and members of affected regions and communities to review and monitor projects

Prioritize the unserved and under-served communities and regions across the country

# FMCC AWARD



## INCLUSIVE CANADA 2017 AND BEYOND

Canadian Race Relations Foundation  
**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

October 26 & 27, 2016

FEATURING THE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

# THANK YOU

Partners and  
collaborators

Social Sciences  
and Humanities  
Research Council  
of Canada

# FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ...

BACKGROUND PUBLICATIONS: <http://firstmile.ca>

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  - FMCC Treasurer: Brian Beaton at [Brian.Beaton@unb.ca](mailto:Brian.Beaton@unb.ca)
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  - Call toll-free at 877-737-5638 x 4522