

Investing in Resilient Infrastructure:

Development and Management of a Resilient Open Access Underground Conduit System

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
Application Webinar
October 15, 2024



Agenda

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Conduit Project Status

Overview

The program's objective is to improve connectivity, resiliency, and redundancy around Puerto Rico. Buried conduit is one of the most reliable solutions to Puerto Rico's exposure to natural threats such as tropical storms and hurricanes and will provide the resiliency needed. With efforts led by the PRBP identifying and selecting routes that will best impact jurisdictions, community anchor institutions, and government agencies, ISPs will be able to serve these locations with much-needed reliable, symmetrical data connection.

The new underground conduit routes will increase the hardening infrastructure within the island, especially in the mountains and mostly underserved areas. With the completion of these conduit routes, the island should be able to withstand and minimize the effect of any future weather-related impact, ensuring continuity of the telecommunication infrastructure.

Talking Points

IPV2 Approved by NTIA

PRBP has been working closely with the NTIA Federal Project Officer on approach for implementation of Conduit System

Where we are:

- NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability)

- Published on October 7 on Smart Island Transparency Portal.
- NOFA is intended for neutral carrier/partner who may be selected to:
 - Design and Engineer Conduit Network and Regional Strategy
 - Oversee and Facilitate Construction of Conduit Network
 - Own, Operate and Maintain Conduit Network

- Expression of Interest (EOI) and Request for Information (RFI)

- Published on October 15
- PR Broadband is explicitly looking for ISPs to participate in EOI/RFI
- ISP participation will help facilitate better planning, meaningful input to NOFA process and avoid potential conflicts with existing commercial interests

Comments : Regional Division of Construction - Segment the construction phase into 3-4 distinct regions to enhance project management and efficiency



Timeline

Date	Component	Activity
October 7	NOFA	Conduit NOFA Published
October 15	NOFA	Conduit NOFA Webinar 1
October 15	EOI	Conduit EOI Published
October 18	NOFA	Conduit Webinar 2
October 25	NOFA	Conduit NOFA Question Submission Deadline
October 25	EOI	Conduit EOI Submission Deadline
November 1	NOFA	Conduit NOFA PRBP Response to Questions
November 1	RFI	RFI Responses Due
November 15	NOFA	NOFA Application Submission Deadline
November 29	NOFA	Application Review Period
December 13	NOFA	Requests for Clarification
December 20	NOFA	Notice of Provisional Award Pending NTIA Approval





NOFA Intent

From NOFA, page 3

The Government Entities are seeking responses from Qualified Entities (Applicant(s)) who are capable of undertaking the complex tasks of comprehensively **planning, designing, constructing, managing, and providing long-term maintenance and support of a buried conduit system** for the Smart Island Broadband Network.

An essential **function of the conduit system is serving** the unserved and **underserved areas, including Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs)** across the island, ensuring reliable service through long-term resilient infrastructure.

As potential routes are explored for the fiber optic conduit system, through strategic planning, the design must be capable of interconnecting as many of Puerto Rico's municipalities as possible to accomplish the intended aims of the NOFA. The design shall consider including up to three (3) planned and one (1) existing subsea landing station.

Applicants will conduct discovery during the plan and design phase in coordination with the Government Entities to ensure a resilient infrastructure for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and connectivity for all customers within their service offering. The comprehensive approach described in this NOFA requires the applicant to demonstrate extensive knowledge of and a strong desire to partner with Puerto Rico and its residents.



NOFA Requirements

Open Access Conduit System

- Neutral Operations

High Density Conduit System

- Allowing for multiple users

Route Selection

- In cooperation with PRBP

Competitive Bidding Process

- Selection of a single or multiple awardees

Financial Stability

- 2 years audited financials
- 5 year financial pro-forma

Coordination with other projects



NOFA Elements

01

Phase I – Plan, Design & Engineering

Applicant will be tasked with designing a strategic buried, fiber conduit route, and deployment blueprint for the Smart Island Broadband Network

02

Phase 2 – Construction & Management

Applicant will be tasked with constructing a strategic buried, fiber conduit route, based on the blueprint for the Smart Island Broadband Network

03

Phase 3 – Management, Operation & Maintenance

Applicant will be responsible for all operation, management, and maintenance of the network, including, but not limited to, negotiating usage contracts, billing, marketing availability, and ongoing maintenance and repairs of the network





NOFA Phases – Design, Construction, Operations

01

Phase I – Plan, Design & Engineering

Planning

- Working closely with the PRPB, develop conceptual conduit routes that will address the priorities of the PRPB program including enabling service to unserved jurisdictions, CAI's and government institutions.

Design

- The selected conceptual conduit route will be finalized
- Aerial routes will be allowed to address Highly Specialized Circumstances
- Multi-conduit banks and/or inner duct should be utilized
- One conduit or inner duct system reserved for future Government Use

Engineering

- Generate construction ready drawings
- Support construction operations

All engineering services **must** comply with Puerto Rico Law 173





NOFA Phases – Design, Construction, Operations

02

Phase 2 – Construction & Management

Planning

- Review Routes
- Identify permitting requirements
- Prepare for Make Ready
- Prepare schedule and phasing plan
- Prepare draw schedule based on quarterly reimbursement requests

Construction

- Commence construction in accordance with the prepared construction documents.
- Adhere to permitting requirements
- Monitor schedule and notify PRPB of deviations





NOFA Phases – Design, Construction, Operations

03

Phase 3 – Operation & Maintenance

Operation

- Minimum 10-year obligation
- Neutral treatment of Users
- Leasing of Conduit
- Ongoing communications with ISP's
- Reporting on usage and finances

Maintenance

- Repairs
- Upgrades





Key Requirements

Approach

- Concurrent construction through regional construction phasing
- Must have the legal capacity and authority to enter into contracts, and manage and operate the network
- Provide agreements with any partner

Applicant Requirements

- Be properly licensed and accredited
- Have adequate supplies and resources
- Prior record of performance
- Organization, Experience and Technical skills in Puerto Rico
- No adverse issues that might prevent an award
- Listing of any legal actions within 5 years
- Have a hiring plan



Key Requirements

Performance Goals

- Coordination and reporting to PRBP
- Submit deliverables, progress and performance reports by required deadlines
- Submit complete and correct reimbursement requests
- Demonstrate compliance with all local, state and federal laws
- Demonstrate compliance with local, state and federal engineering, environmental, code and safety laws
- Demonstrate compliance to BEAD program requirements

Other Requirements

- Project Term: Program will prioritize applications that show completion and start up by Summer 2026 or earlier
- Cost Sharing/Match
 - No match required
 - Leverage of sub-grantee's or other's resources encouraged





Key Requirements: Allowable Use of Funds

Capital Costs

- Only costs that can be capitalized based on GAAP accounting principals may be reimbursed
- The purchase of towers, land, or buildings are not eligible costs

Federal requirements

- All expenditures must comply with 2 CFR 200
- Federal Audit may be required





Key Requirements: Eligible/Ineligible Expenses

Allowable Expenses

- Necessary, reasonable, allocable
- Materials and labor necessary for the construction of the network
- Adequately documented
- Design and engineering
- Adequately documented

Ineligible Costs

- Duplication of existing network services
- Infrastructure that is not directly necessary for the network
- Operating costs
- Purchase of towers, land, or buildings





Key Requirements

Funding Disbursement

- Based on approved budget
- Anticipated Draw Schedule
- Quarterly requests
 - For actual costs incurred
 - All equipment must be installed and have associated labor for payment



Scoring Criteria

Scoring Criteria	Max Points
Minimal BEAD Program Outlay	60
Affordability	60
Experience	50
Open Access	50
Speed to Deployment	40
Local Coordination	40
Fair Labor Practices	40
Workforce Development and Job Quality	30
Technical Capabilities	30
Total	400





Applying: Work Plan

Applicants **must** provide a detailed Work Plan indicating how they plan to execute the Phasing Responsibilities and meet the objectives stated in this NOFA

- Primary workstreams and work phases
- Key deliverables for each phase
- Key activities for each phase
- Projected touch points for collaboration with the Government Entities and collaboration with key stakeholders such as CAIs and ISPs
- How you will comply with the Government Entities' design philosophy and leverage existing infrastructure, if applicable, to meet the specified priorities described in the NOFA
- Reference past experiences with similar large-scale projects and services that were provided and how they approach the Phasing Responsibilities.
- Provide a milestone schedule
- Discuss mobilization, workforce availability for all phases
- Discuss supply chain and BABA compliance
- Provide details on subcontractors and/or partners



Applying

Financial Sustainability

To ensure sustainability of the project, provide:

- 2 years of audited financial statements
- A 5 year financial pro-forma including a balance sheet, expected income, expenses and cash flow for the conduit network system

Engagement

Provide an engagement plan for communicating with:

- Local communities
- Internet Service Providers
- CAI's
- Others with a vested interest in the successful implementation of the project



Submission

Submission and Technical Assistance

Proposals must include all exhibits, appendices, and/or attachments to be deemed complete.

Clearly identify one point of contact for all NOFA correspondence, including email and phone number.

Applicants should submit their responses to the [smartisland.pr.gov](https://www.smartisland.pr.gov) website.

To be considered a Registered Applicant and receive technical assistance for this NOFA, the Applicant must email info@smartisland.pr.gov by **October 18, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.**

Any questions regarding this NOFA or the evaluation shall be submitted in writing via electronic mail only to the following address: FAQ@smartisland.pr.gov. Answers will be posted on PRBP's website at <https://www.smartisland.pr.gov>.

Questions must be submitted by **October 25, 2024, at 4.30 p.m.**; responses will be provided by **November 1, 2024, at 4.30 pm.**





EOI Intent

From Draft EOI/RFI:

To support the efficient use of BEAD funding for the conduit network, **the PRBP is soliciting interest from firms and broadband stakeholders in the use of the constructed infrastructure.** The PRBP has identified some priority areas and colocation centers but **welcomes input for route selection at this time, as the identification of routes will dictate future planning.** Prospective users will have the opportunity to utilize the network and are welcome to request routes and access points that support last-mile, middle-mile, and backhaul services throughout Puerto Rico. The PRBP is committed to designing a network that can support a large number of tenants and be transformative. The design will be shaped by coordination and input from prospective users to ensure it meets the need.





RFI Intent

From Draft EO/RFI:

The PRBP prefers to interconnect with existing facilities that offer open access interconnection and colocation on reasonable terms, rather than building new facilities along those same routes.

Identifying these existing facilities will allow the PRBP to enhance any existing infrastructure and integrate those facilities in the full conduit network. The PRBP is particularly interested in infrastructure that could reduce or eliminate the need for new construction.

Recognizing the sensitive nature of the information requested, PRBP has arranged for their consultant, Witt O'Brien's, LLC to collect and hold the data submitted. WOB will anonymize the data prior to providing it to PRBP.

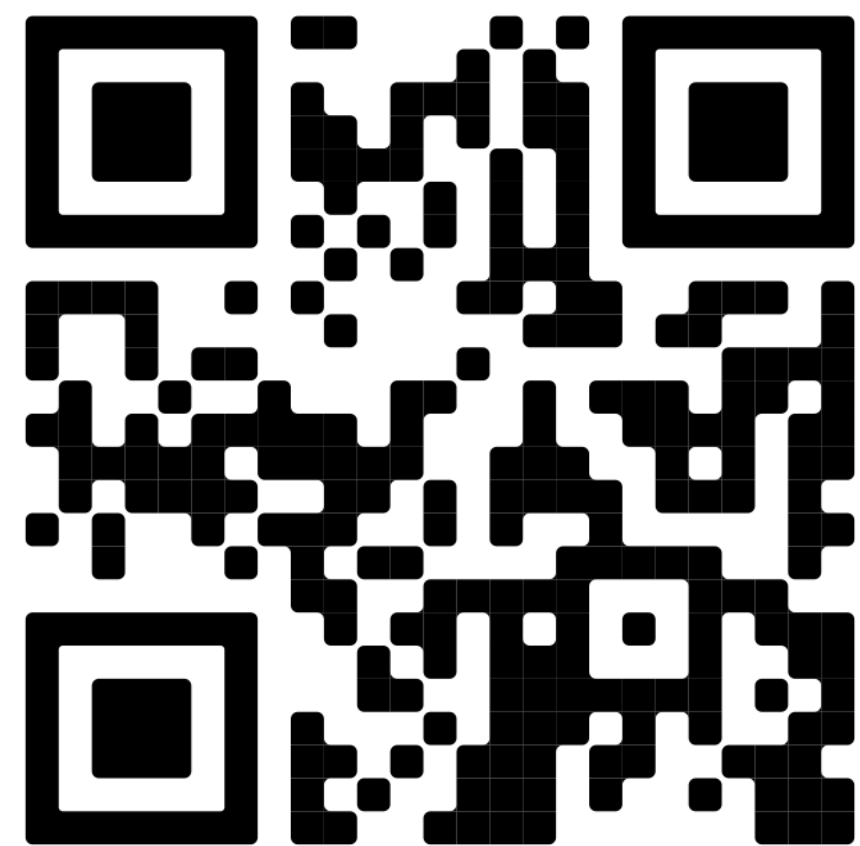


Forum / Discussion

Questions & Answers



MÁS INFORMACIÓN



GRACIAS

