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The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project United Kingdom

Avanti Communications

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Ministry of
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The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP)



Case Study of Satellite Broadband Aggregation Scheme and Lessons Learned

The aim of this presentation is to capture the experiences of implementing satellite broadband schemes from regions which have already implemented such schemes, identifying good approaches that worked well, poor approaches that didn't work well and identifying the lessons that can be learned.

Presentations may be posted of the EC Broadband Portal





Objective of the Scheme

What was the objective of the scheme?

DETI, The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment wanted to ensure that all those who were not able to obtain a broadband service from *any* service provider, should be able to do so at a reasonable cost.

Who were the target end-users?

The scheme was particularly aimed at users in remote and rural locations. Three offerings were available:

- A Consumer Service;
- A Small Business Service;
- A Small & Medium Business offering.





Funding of the Scheme

How was the scheme funded?

Northern Ireland Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)

What was funded?

The one-off set up/Installation Fee (inclusive of surveys, quotations, activations, customer premises equipment, and all other once-off charges and other costs of connection of the customer) was subsidized to keep the fee at around €100.

What was the approximate cost to the government?

DETI made £1.1m available to contract for the delivery of these broadband services to the remotest areas of Northern Ireland.





Project Timescales & Take-up

What were the dates for the scheme?

The Scheme was started in April 2009 and ran for approximately one year.

How many end-users actually participated?

2000 people applied to DETI Northern Ireland in response to the scheme.

Was the Scheme Specifically for Satellite or did it Include Other Forms of Broadband?

The Invitation to Tender for the scheme was technology neutral and invited tenderers to offer services by the method they considered most appropriate both for the users and themselves.





The End-User Service

What service was provided to the end-user?

A minimum connection speed of 2Mbps, in accordance with the Universal Service Commitment.

What was the cost to the end-user?

The installation of the system was capped at €100 excluding VAT and the monthly service fee was under €40 pm, with a 1Gb monthly download allowance.





The Approach to Aggregation

Who were the operators involved?

Satellite operator, service provider, system integrator

What did they provide?

The bandwidth was provided by the satellite operator and the terrestrial infrastructure was the responsibility of the ISP, who also provided system integration, installation and maintenance.

Were there others involved in the overall project?

Local Installers.





Key Lessons Learned

What was most successful about the scheme?

194 new customers were connected with the scheme.

What was least successful about the scheme?

However 80% of users took alternative technologies such as Fixed Wireless. Part of the reason was that customers had an expectation that the government would subsidise the scheme to a greater extent.

The information given to customers at the start of a project must be correct in order to be able to meet their expectations.





Key Lessons Learned

What were the most important lessons learnt from the case study?

The contract winner, Irish Company *Q Sat Broadband*, thought that they would be in a strong position to gain a large percentage of customers and invested heavily in marketing, material and postage. However they received a poor response at circa 10% of the total – significantly lower than the expected uptake.

Would you recommend any changes in future schemes?

Some sort of value needs to be given to the customers participating in the scheme.

Product Offerings need to be tailored around what technologies customers can access in their area – one size does not fit all.





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Thank You

