

Community Network Services (CNS)

1 Aim

Develop and promote a high speed broadband network to support and enhance urban/rural communities in economically and socially disadvantaged areas and to support and enhance the existing community projects in the border areas between Donegal/Derry/Tyrone.

2 Objective

- ✓ Implement affordable wireless telecommunications as a means to provide high-speed broadband infrastructure to dispersed communities.
- ✓ Provide the capacity to deliver content-rich distance training and education to local communities and enterprises, thus enabling communities to preserve and enrich their way of life.
- ✓ Fully exploit the advantages that a knowledge economy system can bring by adopting a working model that can support a better lifestyle, increase productivity and support new job opportunities.

3 Budget

CNS comprises of representation from the community sector in Donegal, Derry and Tyrone as well as local representatives, Councils and development agencies

Project management for the initiative is being carried out by ERNACT, a cross-border initiative between Derry City and Donegal County Councils to promote the development of the internet economy and services within the North West Cross-border Area. The bulk of the funding is being provided by IFI (€500,000) followed by INTERREG (€250,000). It is also being supported by the Dept. of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Donegal County Council, Udaras na Gaeltachta and Donegal County Enterprise Board.

4 Approach

1. CNS has appointed a company to design, build and manage the network, and will make sure that the operational targets and customer service aspects of the solution will fully meet the needs of the local communities and businesses.
2. CNS recognises the importance of community ownership in the drive to generate demand for broadband and it is committed to play a critical role in the development of a strong, indigenous, self sustainable local economy for the North West cross-border region.
3. CNS will attempt to bring the supply of broadband to those areas that cannot hope to be served by the private sector over the next few years. By involving the local communities on both sides of the border in the process from the start, CNS believes that such communities will be in the best position for identifying, understanding and exploiting the full benefits of broadband access. Also enabling them to share experience and to collaborate and cooperate on a wide range of issues.
4. The sustainability, accessibility and affordability of the services delivered over the network will be the true measure of the success of the CNS initiative. CNS has already identified a number of services that can be rolled out on completion of the broadband infrastructure. These will have a major influence on:
 - Job Creation
 - Training & Education
 - Public Services

Such services will be available to the community organisations long after the completion of the project, thereby meaning cross-border co-operation and the development of cross-border relationships will continue to be fostered in the North West cross-border Area.

5 Current status

A service provider has now been appointed to roll out the high-speed network. This is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Phase 1 will involve the construction of a high-speed microwave backbone network linking towns in west and north Donegal to Northern Ireland and to the MAN (Metropolitan Area Network) system in East Donegal being developed by Donegal County Council with financial assistance from the DCMNR.(Dept of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources).

In parallel, Towns communities and rural areas mainly in Donegal will be provided with high-speed services by connecting to this backbone.

6 Main Outputs

The CNS Project key outputs will be:

1. A network infrastructure that will satisfactorily meet the customer demand for broadband in the target geographic area
2. A detailed programme of work that will support service providers to test, promote and exploit the benefit of broadband Access
3. By putting the infrastructure in place the following services will be enabled:
 - Cross-border Call Centres:
 - Upgrading Enterprise Centres for the Knowledge Economy
 - Tourism Related SMEs:
 - On-line Supported Learning:
 - Interactive Audio/Visual Services:
 - On-line Interactive Wireless Gaming for Schools:
 - ECONET
 - Cross-border Planning/Building Control
 - Cross-border Patient Care

7 Time Scale

February 2007- Dec 2007

8 Graphics



9 Project Key Words

Broadband

Broadband comes from the words "broad bandwidth" and is used to describe a high-capacity, two-way link between an end user and access network suppliers capable of supporting full-motion, interactive video applications.

Wireless

Radio-based systems that allow transmission of information without a physical connection, opposed to transmission systems, that require a physical connection, such as copper wire or optical fibre.

WI-FI

Wireless Fidelity; Wireless Ethernet Compatibility Alliance's (WECA) brand identity for the IEEE 802.11b standard; WECA certification that ensures products' compatibility.

SME'S

Small to Medium sized Enterprises.

ERNACT

The European Regions Network for the Application of Communications Technology. A publicly owned organisation based in Lifford, County Donegal, Ireland.

INTERREG

A European Community programme aiming to stimulate interregional cooperation in the European Union. It is financed under the European Regional Development Fund.

IFI

The International Fund for Ireland was established as an independent, international organisation by the British and Irish Governments in 1986.