

- 1 **Q. Please provide a copy of the RFI issued to gather vendor capabilities/services for**
2 **high volume call overflow solutions.**
3
4 A. Please refer to response to Request for Information PUB-NP-122, Attachment A:
5 Newfoundland Power Inc. Alternatives for Power Outage Customer Communication
6 (Request for Information 14-009).

**Alternatives for Power Outage Customer Communication
Request for Information 14-009**

**Request for
Information
14-009**

Newfoundland Power Inc.

**Alternatives for Power Outage Customer
Communication**

Safety is our priority.
Make it yours too!



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1.0 Overview of Newfoundland Power

Newfoundland Power Inc. (“herein called the “Owner” or “Newfoundland Power””) operates an integrated generation, transmission and distribution (multi-grounded wye) system throughout the island portion of Newfoundland and Labrador.

For over 125 years, Newfoundland Power and its predecessors have provided customers with safe, reliable electricity in the most cost-efficient manner possible. Newfoundland Power serves over 244,000 customers, about 85% of all electricity consumers in the province.

Newfoundland Power’s vision is to be a leader among North American electric utilities in terms of safety, customer service, reliability and efficiency.

All the common shares of Newfoundland Power are owned by Fortis Inc. (TSX: FTS), the largest investor-owned distribution utility in Canada, which serves approximately 2,000,000 gas and electric customers, and has assets exceeding \$13 billion.

Newfoundland Power is regulated by the Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities, Newfoundland and Labrador which has jurisdiction over rates, policies, capital expenditures and the issue of securities.

More information on Newfoundland Power is available on the Internet at newfoundlandpower.com. Fortis information can be accessed at fortisinc.com.

2.0 Definitions

“RFI” means this Request for Information.

“Vendor” refers to any person or entity that is invited to participate in this RFI.

“Response” means the documentation submitted by a Vendor that incorporates all of the requirements outlined in this RFI.

3.0 RFI Process

3.1 Purpose and Guidelines

The purpose of this RFI is to identify qualified third parties to provide Newfoundland Power customers with outage information during large scale power outages. The Owner is looking for solutions that would extend the telephony capacity of Newfoundland Power’s outage communications infrastructure during outage events.

In addition to core requirements, Newfoundland Power will evaluate additional capabilities and/or alternatives recommended by the respondents to address the challenges described.

As part of the RFI response, Newfoundland Power will want to understand what incremental capacity and on-demand availability is part of the solution design. Depending on the size of the outage event, the requirements for capacity may vary widely. The Owner wishes to understand the scale of configuration and setup required.

Neither this RFI, nor anything contained in the RFI, shall constitute a legal offer and is not to be construed as an intent, commitment or agreement to purchase goods or services. This RFI is only an invitation for third party providers to submit information to Newfoundland Power.

Newfoundland Power shall not be bound to enter into any agreement with any third party provider submitting a response in relation to this RFI.

Any costs incurred by the Vendor in preparing a response will be at no cost to Newfoundland Power.

3.2 Submission of Responses

Responses will be received up to 3:00:00 p.m. Newfoundland Standard Time on March 6, 2014 (RFI Close) and may be submitted electronically or in printed form in accordance with the following:

Electronic submissions shall be by email in PDF format with the RFI number and name in the subject line, at the following email address:

tenders@newfoundlandpower.com

Hardcopy submissions shall be by mail or courier in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the RFI number and name followed by the name and address of the Vendor, at one of the following addresses:

Mail:

Newfoundland Power Inc.
P.O. Box 8910
St. John's, NL A1B 3P6
Attention: Materials Management

Courier:

Newfoundland Power Inc.
50 Duffy Place (Receptionist)
St. John's, NL A1B 4M5
Attention: Materials Management

Newfoundland Power cannot ensure the confidentiality or error free receipt of electronic submissions and cannot guarantee its ability to receive email at all times up to the RFI Close. Vendors submitting RFIs' electronically do so at their own risk.

3.3 Questions and Inquiries

Vendors may submit questions and inquiries regarding this RFI to Newfoundland Power by email at tenders@newfoundlandpower.com.

3.4 Confidentiality of Information

Newfoundland Power reserves the right to use any or all concepts presented in any Response, whether the Response is accepted or rejected.

Proprietary information identified as such by the Vendor will be reasonably safeguarded from copy. However, Newfoundland Power accepts no responsibility for exposure of proprietary information.

This RFI is a confidential document and will remain the property of Newfoundland Power while in the hands of the Vendor.

4.0 Scope of Work

4.1 Background

Newfoundland Power's outage reporting system utilizes an Intermedia appliance located at the Owner's telecomm provider (Telco). The appliance provides a recorded power outage message to a high volume of customers who call Newfoundland Power's Outage Information and Reporting Service.

The Intermedia appliance connects directly to the Telco's voice switch (DMS) via eight message ports. Each port on the Intermedia is associated with a corresponding pre-recorded message. These messages are recorded by Newfoundland Power's Outage Application and are immediately uploaded to the appliance. The message relays current power outage information to customers calling the Outage Reporting Service. The province is divided into eight regions, allowing Newfoundland Power to target outage messages to individual regions as follows:

1. St. John's
2. Avalon Peninsula excluding St. John's
3. Burin Peninsula
4. Bonavista Peninsula
5. Gander
6. Grand Falls
7. Stephenville
8. Corner Brook

After hearing the outage message, should customers require further assistance they are requested to remain on the call. In doing so, they are forwarded to the Newfoundland Power's Contact Center. The Owner's on-premise, Aspect Call Center IVR will provide the following options: to replay the outage announcement; to report an emergency or public hazard; or hold and wait to speak with a Customer Account Representative.

If all capacity is in use at Newfoundland Power's Contact Center, the customer will be presented with an overflow menu provided by the Telco. This menu will ask the customer to confirm if the call is a public hazard. If public hazard is selected, the customer is given priority access to reserved capacity at Newfoundland Power's Contact Center. If this is not an emergency, the customer is provided with information directing them to Newfoundland Power's website. The website will provide up to date Outage Information and the ability to report an outage online.

It has been Newfoundland Power's experience that the overflow call handling can become heavily used during power outages that impact a large number of customers. Rather than redirect customers to another medium, without first providing up to date outage information, Newfoundland Power would like to investigate options that make use of technology and automation to help increase the level of service provided.

4.2 Requirements and Capabilities

The proposed solution should meet or exceed the capabilities of Newfoundland Power's current outage reporting system. In addition, Newfoundland Power requests information on the following capabilities to assist in the evaluation of alternatives and assess functionality requirements:

- Provide technology and automation options to further enhance Newfoundland Power's communication capabilities during power outages that impact a large number of customers. One of the specific areas Newfoundland Power is investigating, are what alternatives can be offered to satisfy a customer power outage call which is currently overflowing to a pre-recorded courtesy response.
- For any customer calling Newfoundland Power's Outage and Customer Service lines, eliminate the possibility of receiving a busy signal.
- Provide ability to measure and report the number of customers placing calls to any of Newfoundland Power's Outage and Customer Service Lines and show the success or failure rate (busy) of the call attempts.

- Demonstrate or stress test the solution, keeping the eight geographic regions of the province in mind for such tests. Newfoundland Power also wants assurance that solutions using off island telephony capacity are not adversely impacted by our geographic location.
- Highlight any potential concerns with capacity, congestion and availability that may impact the feasibility or delivery of the solution proposed.
- Demonstrate or highlight components of the solution that show resilience, fault tolerance and ability to perform effectively during a large power outage event.

5.0 RFI Response

5.1 Overview

Vendors are requested to provide the information outlined below together with any additional information that may be helpful to Newfoundland Power in assessing the Vendors' ability to perform the scope of work anticipated by this RFI. Responses must demonstrate how Newfoundland Power can extend the telephone capacity of outage communications infrastructure during outage events.

5.2 Vendor Organization

Vendors are requested to provide background information as follows:

- Ownership Company profile including legal name and location of main office.
- Brief description of organization.
- Contact information.
- Unique qualities versus competitors.
- Corporate and product development roadmap.

5.3 Technology

Vendors are requested to provide information on their ability to meet Newfoundland Power's technology requirements as follows:

- Recommended system integrations.
- Licensing options.
- Warranty.
- Annual maintenance and support.

5.4 Experience

Vendors are requested to provide information on experience within the industry as follows:

- Knowledge of industry best practices and available consulting services.
- Installations at North American utilities of similar size.
- Installations at organizations within the Island of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Scale of expected implementation cost.