

National
Broadband
Network

NBN Co FAQ - Technology Choice Program



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Technology Choice – Questions and Answers

1. *What is NBN Co's Technology Choice Program?*

The Technology Choice program enables interested individuals, local governments and communities to apply for a change to the National Broadband Network infrastructure planned or built in their area. It provides eligible applicants with an opportunity to select an alternate technology solution to meet their specific broadband needs by paying the incremental cost of that change.

2. *I am interested in Technology Choice. Where can I get more information?*

Visit NBN Co's website for more information. It is also possible for interested parties such as local governments, individuals, community groups, businesses and bodies corporate to lodge an application for Technology Choice via this site. The address for the site is www.nbnco.com.au/technologychoice. Further inquiries can be made by calling the NBN Co contact centre on 1800 687 626 and speaking directly with one of the NBN Co contact centre representatives.

3. *Is Technology Choice available for whole streets or individual premises?*

Applications for Technology Choice can be made under two categories: Area Switch or Individual Premises Switch.

Area Switch enables an application for a whole area (e.g. a business park, town, CBD, or Multi Dwelling Unit (MDU)) via one contracting party.

Individual Premises Switch caters for single a premise per application. Individual premises which share infrastructure in a specific location may be able to share some costs if they apply at the same time.

Not all technology options are available at this time. Please consult the availability tables.

4. *When can I apply for a Technology Choice option?*

Ideally an Area Switch application should be made before the rollout of the network, while the individual premises switch is not available until after the initial rollout of the national broadband network in an area or adjacent to it.

5. *If the network has been rolled past my area already does that mean we can't get an Area Switch?*

In most cases it should be possible to make a decision to apply for Area Switch at any time before or after construction, however the most cost-effective timing is before NBN Co starts the detailed planning in an area.

6. *How can I tell if my area is in the rollout plan?*

NBN Co has released an indicative rollout plan up to June 2016 and will release updates from time to time. It is preferable that interested parties discuss applications for an Area Switch with NBN Co as soon as possible after the rollout schedule is announced. Interested people need to monitor the rollout schedule and, when the rollout schedule is announced for their area, get in touch with NBN Co to discuss their potential application

If detailed planning or construction has started in the area before an applicant decides on Technology Choice, it is likely to add to costs because NBN Co will have already expended funds on designs/construction for FTTN and those outlays need to be recovered.

7. Can I apply for an Area Switch even if my location is not on the rollout plan?

Interested councils, bodies corporate, state governments or business groups can engage with NBN Co at any time to discuss their regional technology plans, but applications cannot be processed until a rollout plan has been released and there is an indication of the planned technology.

Technology Choice is not designed to allow individuals or groups to change the rollout sequence as this is determined by a range of other practical and engineering criteria.

8. When can I apply for Individual Premises Switch?

Applications for Individual Premises Switch within the fixed-line footprint i.e. change from FTTN or FTTB to FTTP can only be made after construction is completed for that area.

Applicants who are in a current or planned fixed wireless or satellite area and are aware that NBN Co has rolled out or is in the process of rolling out in a nearby area can apply via the online application portal. Inquiries can be made by calling 1800 687 626.

9. How can a group of premises in a street apply for Technology Choice

If you and your neighbours in a street or cul-de-sac are interested in applying for Technology Choice, a single Individual Premise Switch application can be submitted as long as the person submitting the online form is an authorised representative with all interested premise owners' written consent. A single application fee and design fee is charged in this scenario. Depending upon the circumstances NBN Co may issue a single contract or individual contract per premises when providing a build quote. NBN Co will discuss these options prior to requesting an application fee for that application.

10. When will I know what technology is originally planned for my area by NBN Co?

Visit NBN Co's website to view the interactive map for the latest information on the rollout. Also indicative information about the future rollout is also given around 18 months in advance on NBN Co's website, though details are subject to change,

<http://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco2/documents/MTM-rollout-plan-01122014.pdf>

11. How does NBN Co determine the technology to be rolled out in an area?

NBN Co has developed a planning process to identify which technology should be rolled out in an area and the most practical and economic rollout schedule. NBN Co is required to make 25Mbps available to all Australian premises and 50Mbps to 90 per cent of fixed-line premises as quickly as possible.

Please note that the type of technology used to deliver the NBN may change as NBN Co gets further into the detailed planning stage for a specific area.

12. What is the estimated cost of a technology change?

The cost to change technology infrastructure for an Area Switch could range from tens of thousands of dollars to several millions of dollars depending on the size and complexity of the project. For an Individual Switch it could range from a few thousand dollars to tens of thousands of dollars. Therefore the cost will be determined site-by-site based on the difference in cost between the planned technology and the selected technology.

13. How many premises are in an Area Switch?

The most cost effective and efficient Area Switch involves changing the technology for all premises connected to a pillar/node, which may be approximately 150-350 premises. An Area Switch of a Multi-Dwelling Unit would be all units in that block. NBN Co may accept other areas – such as streets in a business park – but if not all premises at a pillar/node switch it may add to costs.

14. Can I use Technology Choice to bring the NBN to my area earlier?

Technology Choice can't be used to change the roll-out sequence. This is because the rollout sequence is determined by a range of other practical rules such as continuing to rollout where work has already begun, the availability of core network infrastructure and to make an efficient use of available construction capacity.

15. What is the process of applying for an Area Switch?

Once an application is submitted, NBN Co will confirm the eligibility of the application. For a fee, NBN Co will provide a high-level range of estimated cost for the entire build. The applicant can elect to proceed to get a detailed design and quote for which NBN Co will charge a design fee. The costs indicated in the quote will vary from site to site for a number of reasons, including the number of premises within the area being switched, whether new lead ins are required to properties, the number of apartment blocks and distances between properties etc.

16. What is the process for applying for an Individual Premises Switch?

Once an application is submitted, NBN Co will confirm the eligibility of the site. For a fee NBN Co will then provide a high-level range of estimated cost for the entire build. The applicant can elect to proceed to get a detailed build quote price for a fee. The costs indicated in the quote will vary from premises to premises for a number of reasons including the premises' distance from the nearest node, whether a new lead in is required to the premises etc.

17. If my neighbour accepts a quote for an Individual Premises Switch at the same time as I do, does this reduce my Individual Premises Switch cost?

Yes, subject to several conditions. NBN Co will only recover the incremental cost of changing the network technology. As such, the cost of a Technology Choice build will be recouped (on a pro-rata basis) where network infrastructure is shared between premises. This will reduce the cost to each premise.

It is important to note that NBN Co will only prepare quotes based on an individual request for connection. Where there are multiple applicants along the same route, NBN Co will only be able to provide a firm (pro-rata) cost when it receives all relevant applicants' deposits after the Build Quote. When these are received, NBN Co will recalculate payments, and issue a new quote. Alternatively if you proceed based on the full quote, NBN Co will be able to issue a price adjustment if a neighbouring build proceeds before you complete your payments for your Technology Choice option.

18. Once an application has been accepted by NBN Co, how long will it take for construction to begin and when will I be able to connect to a high-speed internet service?

Construction time frames will vary according to the size of the Technology Choice build and also the time of the application with respect to the NBN Co planned rollout schedule.

NBN Co will advise the estimated time frame for construction completion to the Technology Choice applicants at the time of issuing a quote.

19. How will I know if I am eligible for a Technology Choice option?

The first stage of the application process is to assess eligibility. There is a range of criteria including that the property is not in a planned FTTP area, that the applicant is the authorised party to submit an application, and that the switch sought is technically feasible. If these criteria are satisfied, NBN Co will advise that the application can progress. If the applicant wishes to proceed and obtain a cost estimate, they will be required to pay an Application Fee.

20. If I apply for a quote, do I have to commit to the Technology Choice option?

No. There is a fee for cost estimation, after which you can decide to proceed to obtain a design and build quote. Applicants are not obligated to proceed with the construction. However design and quote fees are non-refundable.

21. Why is there an application fee?

This is to offset NBN Co's costs in assessing and researching applications and develop a cost estimate.

22. Will the quote be final and involve no further cost to us?

The initial high-level estimate may change but the full quote provided after detailed design will be the final cost.

23. Will there be an opportunity for Fixed Wireless and Satellite communities to now apply for FTTN?

Yes, that is one of the options available. NBN Co encourages interested towns in the Fixed Wireless and Satellite footprints to submit their Technology Choice applications as soon as possible so that such large change can be planned as part of the rollout.

24. We live in an HFC area. Will we have access to the Technology Choice program?

NBN Co has not yet released any HFC sites on its rollout plan so HFC areas are not included in the program at the current time.

25. Why isn't an FTTN to FTTP solution under Individual premises switch available at this time?

It is necessary to build the FTTN network first before it can be upgraded. Some elements of the FTTN network will form the basis of the FTTP network for the purposes of the individual switch.

26. How does Technology Choice work relative to the Network Extension program?

The Technology Choice program supersedes the previous Network Extension policy. The upgrade options previously available under Network Extension are now a subset of the options under the Technology Choice policy. These options include a change from fixed wireless to FTTP for an individual premise.

