

## E&E Project Evaluation Form

\*\*\*\*Please be advised that completed evaluations are made available publicly and are posted on Stewardship Ontario's E&E Fund web site\*\*\*\*

**Project Name/Number/Priority area::** Knowledge Network/ #121/ Communications and Education

**Lead Sponsor/completed by/date:** Vubiz Ltd. November 2005

**Project Duration:** April 2005- November 2005

**Total project value:** \$60,500 (plus 10% contingency)      **E&E funding amount** \$66,655

### Section 1 –To be completed by Project Applicant

#### 1) What were the Project Goals and Objectives (as per the E&E Application and/or Contract)?

As per the agreement between Vubiz and Stewardship Ontario, the project's workplan included the following five tasks:

Task 1: Needs Assessment & Concept Level Design

Task 2: Real Time Technical Exchange –1 vs 2 Stream Issue

Task 3: Model Contract Information

Task 4: Information Sharing on Multi-Family Recycling Challenges

Task 5: Recommendations for a Long Term Plan

#### 2) Were the goals and objectives met? (and if not why not?)

By delivering both the Model Recycling Contract and the 1 vs. 2 Stream recycling Knowledge Products (i.e. e-learning products), Vubiz met the objectives of this project. Furthermore, Vubiz exceeded the goals and objectives of this project by actually executing the long term vision for the Knowledge Network rather than simply delivering recommendations for a long term plan.

The only task that was not achieved was the development of an e-learning product on Multi-Family Recycling. Early on in the project, it was determined that the Model Contract product was quite large in scope and of high priority. Vubiz's efforts and time were therefore re-directed from the Multi-Family towards the Model Contract product, to ensure the latter's robustness and high quality.

#### 3) Summary of Project Accomplishments (i.e. what did the project do/achieve?):

The project accomplished the following:

- A Needs Analysis was conducted to identify the level of "readiness" amongst municipalities to use online and interactive products proposed for the Knowledge Network. This was achieved through an online survey.
- A custom interface and functionality was created for the Knowledge Network and the site was launched at the Ontario Recyclers Workshop on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005.
- Real Time Technical Exchange on the issue of 1 vs. 2 stream recycling was conducted using the "discussion thread" feature. A "Knowledge Product" was developed based on the content of the discussion and was launched on the Knowledge Network.

- The paper-based Model Contract work was converted to an online format and pilot tested with a select group of users. Based on their feedback, revisions were made and the revised product was launched on the Knowledge Network.
- A final report was produced identifying the hardware and software required to support the Knowledge Network as an ASP solution. The content roll-out strategy and evaluation plan were also laid out in the report.

Overall, the project has resulted in the creation of the Knowledge Network site, where municipalities can easily access information and participate in dialogue around key effectiveness and efficiency issues. It also has created a communication vehicle for municipalities to identify the kinds of information and interactions they find most valuable/productive. Furthermore, online user surveys and user data tracking features have created a mechanism for the ongoing evaluation of the site itself.

**4) Summary of Project Limitations** *(e.g. is there anything that should have been done differently?)*

The Expert Discussion on the 1 vs. 2 Stream recycling was schedule over too long a period and required substantial efforts from the moderator to keep the discussion focused. Consequently, the information resulting from this dialogue was not as technically precise/sophisticated as was hoped.

While the Knowledge Network site has been officially launched, it is clear that users need to be “pulled in” to use the site’s features (i.e. discussion threads, surveys, viewing e-Knowledge Products). Consequently, targeted communications to specific municipalities based on their interest in particular topics must be supported in order for the Knowledge Network to be successful.

Section 2 –To be completed by Stewardship Ontario (and reviewed by applicant)
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**5) Did this project do what it set out to do? If not, what were the reasons/ barriers?**

The project achieved all the tasks defined in the original contract agreement, except for Task 4 – Information Sharing on Multi-Family Recycling Challenges. This is due to a realization by Stewardship Ontario and the project Steering Committee in the early stage of the project of the need to focus on the Model Contract product (and that we were not yet ready to post Multi-Family Recycling project findings).

**6) What are the key learnings from this project? Are there any next steps? What is being done to share the results?**

As the mentioned above, the Expert Discussion on the 1 vs. 2 Stream recycling was scheduled over too long a period (2 months) and required substantial efforts from the moderator to keep the discussion focused. Future threaded discussions should be implemented over the course of a shorter timeframe (i.e. 4-6 weeks).

According to the most recent Knowledge Network activity report, between November 3<sup>rd</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>, approximately 16 municipal programs had made use of either or both learning products (A Primer on 1 vs 2 Stream Recycling and Model Recycling Tender Tool). Although this number represents a good start, it also highlights the importance of actively promoting the site and its features to targeted municipalities based on their specific needs. In this respect and as part of a distinct project (# 95 Help Desk Services), staff at Stewardship Ontario are currently preparing a mail-out campaign targeting those municipal programs reporting zero or nominal revenue for their sale of recyclables, and encouraging them to make use of the Model Recycling Tender Tool.

**7) Was the project good value for the money (e.g. were there measureable program or system cost reduction benefits, cost effective tonnage increases, etc?)**

Both Knowledge Products (Model Contract tool and Primer on 1 vs. 2 Stream Recycling) are designed to help municipalities reduce system costs and increase tonnage cost effectively. At the moment however, it is not clear whether either of these benefits can be directly attributed to the Knowledge Network's tools. Although the portal includes mechanisms for monitoring and measuring its impact on increasing the system's effectiveness and efficiency (mainly through on-line surveys designed to obtain user feedback on specific Knowledge Products), no survey has yet been filled out. There is indication nonetheless that at least one municipality (Kingston) used the Model Recycling Tender Tools to develop their latest recycling collection and processing RFP in late 2005. The winning proposal for the city of Kingston came in over \$250,000 less per year than the previous contract, in part due to some of the useful direction provided by the tools.

**8) Does this project represent "best practices"? If yes, explain.**

The Knowledge Network project is the first tool of its kind. It is not possible at this point to determine whether it represents a "best practice".

*Total project cost – \$66,655 (funded entirely through E&E contribution)*

**9) Other Comments?**

Stewardship Ontario's Board has approved \$74,800 for an extension of this project. In this Year Two Phase, 4 new knowledge products will be developed. Identified topics include Promotion and Education and Depot/Rural/North/Isolated Communities. Other potential topics include:

- Multi Residential recycling
- User Pay/Utility: Threaded Discussion
- Automated Sorting technologies and developments
- Cart versus Bag collection systems
- Cooperative Marketing programs

Projects will be selected based in part on users' priorities as identified through the Knowledge Network User Survey accessed through the Knowledge Network site.