

# MIPC Final Report

## Municipal Recycling Program Advisor A-Team EE project 156

### Table of Contents

<b>Synopsis:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Background:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Milestones:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Lessons Learned:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Results Analysis:</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Potential/Future CIF Projects:</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations:</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Copyright and Disclaimer</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Report Archives</b> .....	<b>12</b>

## Synopsis:

Observations and lessons learned since activation of the A-Team lead to the conclusion that direct, hands on help and expert resources for municipalities is cost effective and beneficial to the Ontario BB system as a whole and to the individual municipalities that participate.

It is the recommendation of the A-Team that some form of hands on assistance be maintained for the benefit of individual and groups of municipalities which will result in incremental continuous improvement and cost containment for the Ontario BB system.

## Background:

By early 2005, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Waste Diversion Ontario and Stewardship Ontario, through the Municipal Industry Program Committee, had jointly identified a pressing need to provide assistance to municipalities to share identified better practices between municipalities and work towards reducing system costs and increasing revenues.

To fill this need, the concept of the Blue Box Program Assistance Team (A-Team) was proposed and MIPC recommended approval for project EE # 156 in the spring of 2005.

The A-Team's key responsibilities were determined to be:

1. Work with operational and management staff of municipal recycling programs to assist in identifying operational problems.
2. Provide advice and direction regarding possible solutions.
3. Provide assistance in the development of E&E Fund applications when needed.

To meet these objectives, MIPC contracted with an A-Team manager, Gary Everett, for thirty months, to manage the project activities and undertake the bulk of the project responsibilities.

During the Recycling Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project 2007, (EE# 226), MIPC also recognized that program operators in the north required technical advice and were often unable to proactively network, research and implement emerging approaches due to resource limitations. Program operators in the north often are able to devote only 5 to 10% of their time to recycling. As a result MIPC approved funding (EE # 157), for a northern A-Team advisor and contracted with Clayton Sampson, for eighteen months ending January 2009, to provide A-Team advisory services for northern municipalities.

To oversee project goals and provide guidance to the A-Team manager and the northern Ontario advisor, MIPC established, via the cost containment committee, a working group of municipal, stewardship and MIPC staff. This group operates within a virtual office environment as the A-Team and currently consists of Gary Everett, Clayton Sampson, Mike Birett, Denise Belanger, Phil Jensen, and Lisamaria Akeson.

Since inception, the A-Team has offered Ontario municipalities practical, hands on advice with all aspects of Blue Box recycling programs. There is no charge to the municipality for this service and municipalities have enthusiastically embraced the project.

## Milestones:

The following is a summary of the milestones the A-Team has achieved to date. Full archives of all project 156/157 interim reports along with copies of all municipal advisory reports are available from the A-Team manager on request.

- Over 70 municipalities have used A-team services to date including:

Alexandria	Kingston	RARE
Aurora	Kirkland Lake	Region of Halton
Aylmer	Laurentian Hills	Region of Niagara
Black River-Matheson	Laurentian Valley	Region of Waterloo
Blind River	London	Region of York
Blue Mountains	Loyalist Township	Renfrew
Bluewater	Madawaska Valley	Sault North
Brantford City	Malahide	Sault Ste. Marie
Brantford County	McDougall Township	Seguin Township
Central Frontenac	Meaford	Simcoe County
Chapleau	Nippissing	Sioux Lookout
Chatham-Kent	Norfolk County	Smooth Rock Falls
Dryden	North Bay	South Frontenac
Elgin County	North Glengary	Stratford
Elliot Lake	Northumberland	Sudbury
Elizabethtown-Kitley	Oxford County	Tarbutt Township
Essex-Windsor	Ottawa Valley	Thunder Bay
Fort Frances	Peel	Timmins
Georgina	Pembroke	Toronto
Guelph	Parry Sound	Wellington County
Hamilton	Petawawa	West Nipissing
Hawkesbury	Peterborough City	Whitechurch/Stouffville
Head/Clara & Maria	Peterborough County	Woodstock
Kenora		

- In addition to hundreds of meetings, telephone and internet conversations, written program advisory reports have been provided to eleven municipalities including:

Black River-Matheson	Laurentian Hills	Waterloo Region
Elizabethtown-Kitley	North Bay	Wellington County
Kingston	Northumberland	West Nipissing
Kirkland Lake	Oxford County	

- Advisory reports are comprehensive written reviews of the municipal recycling program that include observations of BB operations and provide options and or recommendations for improvement.
- Advisory reports are produced for programs upon request by the municipality and are intended to provide an independent point of view designed to stimulate system changes and/or enhancements. Reports are retained by the A-Team manager and copied to MIPC via the EE subcommittee. Advisory reports are not available for public distribution as they may contain confidential or sensitive municipal information. Occasionally, municipal staff request A-Team advisors to appear at local council or waste management committee to present/discuss the report contents.
- The Northern Advisor project (EE #157), has been a recent undertaking by the A-Team, but it has been noted that the direct contact offered by the position to remote programs is well received. During site visits and telephone inquiries, it has been observed that there appears to be a gap in the knowledge of current better practices in blue box recycling. This gap is created due to the fact that most of the northern programs do not have staff dedicated wholly to recycling and therefore do not have the time to keep current. Initiation of contact and proactive visits with programs affords an excellent opportunity for information delivery on recycling and resources available to the programs.

- A-Team members have participated in the development of over twenty five EE projects and intents including:

EE #	Project Description	EE #	Project Description
341	Recycler training program and delivery	207	single stream compaction study
337	Hamilton Container Line upgrades	200	Mun. consultations on Best Practices
326	Peterborough County depots conversion	198	Peterborough Regionalization study
311	Recycler training strategy & implementation	187	fuel cost escalation clause guidelines
280	York Glass sort equipment upgrade	168	Plastics Central MRF
247	Woodstock transfer station	167	Knowledge Network Continuous Improvement
232	London regional MRF	157	A-Team Northern Advisor
226	Best Practices Project	156	A-Team
224	Northumberland MRF retrofit	8565	WDO transfer cost capabilities
214	York Co-Operative Tender	94	Peer review support
211	Kingston MRF expansion	63	RARE regional study

- Along with the above projects, A-team members are participating in the following E&E intents currently under development:

EE #	Project Description	EE #	Project Description
309	GTA co-operative opportunities	351	Small/Northern Municipality P&E Training Seminars
323	Simcoe County P&E Plan Development	310	Seguin Township Depot Compaction
343	Creating a Greener Black River Matheson	345	West Nipissing Recycling Depot Enhancements
350	Northern Ontario Recycling Transportation Study		Optical Sort Technologies Working Group
349	Timmins Waste Management Plan	355	Contracts Database Tools

- The A-Team has participated in municipal projects, RFP and tenders with identified cost savings in excess of \$3,162,000 annually and over \$15,902,000 extended over the duration of the various municipal contract terms. The A-Team project therefore represents a significant return on investment of EE funds.

## Lessons Learned:

A-Team activities have tended to categorize into three divisions; projects directly impacting individual municipalities, multiple municipalities and all Ontario municipalities.

Individual municipal projects concentrate mainly around assisting the municipality to obtain services and comment/annotate and suggest modifications to contracts/tendering and RFPs. Resources were also used to assist municipalities with optimizing their collection, processing and marketing activities on both a planning and equipment utilization level. Additionally, providing “how to”, “where to” and “who’s doing that” type resource information. Assisting with EE intents and detailed applications made up noticeable amounts of time in this category. Many individual municipalities that received assistance have shown strong financial benefit in the form of program cost containment/reduction, residue reduction or revenue increases.

Multi-municipal projects fall into two broad categories:

- 1) working with several municipalities to obtain economies of scale and program cost containment/reduction or revenue increases. E&E Project 214, the York multi-municipal co-operative collection tender, is an example of this approach. (Under this project, with A-Team and external consulting assistance, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville developed a joint collection tender that resulted in municipal contract savings exceeding 800,000 per year.) Municipalities that have received this type of assistance have shown significant financial benefits along with improvements in recovery and service levels in some cases.
- 2) projects designed to develop resource materials for use by many municipalities with similar circumstances. The development of LCBO deposit return contractor negotiation guidelines, (a project completed with A-Team resources only and no additional EE funding) and E&E project 187 fuel cost escalation clause guidelines, fall into this category. While It is more difficult to quantify financial benefits for projects that develop resource materials, there remains considerable ongoing demand for those materials which leads to the conclusion that municipalities need/want them and are obtaining value from them.

The last major category of A-Team assistance involves projects that are designed to assist all Ontario BB programs. EE 226 Best Practices and 311/341 Recycler training are examples. (A-Team members authored four of the eight fundamental best practices in project 226 that will eventually be tested for use throughout the province.)

There is a strong tendency for A-Team members to be drawn into these types of system wide projects. (For example, the best practices project consumed over twenty percent of the available A-Team manager hours in the second year of the EE# 156 contract.)

It is difficult to quantify financial benefits for projects that affect BB programs on this level, however, there is considerable pressure for A-Team members to be involved in these projects. Considering the implications for overall system savings, a strong argument can be made for the continuation of some level of A-Team involvement in these type of projects on a go forward basis.

## **Results Analysis:**

Based on strictly financial considerations, the conclusion is that the greatest absolute return from future municipal BB assistance projects can be obtained from intervention at the multi-municipal cooperation level. The next best purely financial return was obtained by providing assistance to individual municipalities with procurement/tendering activities.

Assisting individual small municipalities can produce the greatest “percentage” of financial improvement in a program. In small tonnage/cost programs less than one hundred thousand dollars in annual savings can represent a significant financial percentage of the overall BB program cost. Assisting these programs when requested, and especially proactively targeting small programs with unusually high costs, can be an effective way to continuously/incrementally improve the overall BB system over time.

Assisting larger municipalities, especially with multi-municipal projects, can produce the highest absolute “dollar” return for the overall recycling system. This conclusion is based on demonstrated municipal savings and is explained via the leverage effect applied to the larger tonnage recycled in these programs multiplied by the absolute dollar savings obtained. Therefore, even an incremental saving per tonne in these larger programs/projects can yield significant system savings/cost containment due to the high tonnage multiplier.

The CIF strategic plan guiding principles state that “In general, the CIF will demonstrate a bias toward and seek to allocate its funding to projects that: ...

- can be implemented across multiple municipalities and/or represent collaborative efforts on behalf of two or more municipalities to share facilities, resources and expertise”

Results of the A-Team project clearly demonstrate that this guiding principle is a strong vehicle upon which to move the goals of the CIF strategic plan forward and promises to yield very positive results if pursued vigorously.

## **Potential/Future CIF Projects:**

Notwithstanding whether municipal assistance is delivered via the current A-Team format or through some other vehicle, field observations of A-Team members have revealed a number of potentially valuable projects that may be considered for CIF funding on a go forward basis.

Some of these potential projects are described briefly below and will be explained in more detail under separate reports.

### **1: Contract Database Sample Tool: (EE 355 currently under development)**

Ongoing A-Team support work over the previous two years has identified a strong municipal need for an easily accessible database of sample contract, tender, RFP and RFQ recycling documents.

This need is currently being inadequately addressed through ad-hoc sharing of documents among municipal staff and the limited archived samples maintained by A-Team members.

Millions of dollars in municipal recycling contracts are issued each year and the most opportune and cost effective time to make significant changes to a recycling program is during a new tender. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the A-Team that an automated “continuous improvement” tool be developed to assist municipalities in their efforts to produce the best contracts possible.

### **2. Plastics Market Development:**

This is an outstanding issue and it may or may not need to be actioned depending on what happens through the SO plastic market development strategy. A-Team resources can be made available to assist the CIF manager in executing the role determined for the CIF with respect to market development projects. Plastic film is especially challenging in BB programs for both collection and processing operations. More research needs to be done to provide municipalities with viable alternatives for handling this material. Some technological solutions are on the horizon but field testing will be required prior to making any firm recommendations.

#### **4. GTA Co-operative Opportunities:** (EE intent 309, currently under development)

The objective of this project is to quantify current and future blue box recyclables processing requirements within the extended GTA municipalities and identify and facilitate potential short, intermediate and long term opportunities for cooperation in the provision of processing capacity.

The focus of the project is to identify potential system and municipal specific cost savings that can be implemented within 0-5 years, from immediate opportunities up to a five year planning period. Longer range opportunities may also be identified as a result of the project.

#### **5. Northern Ontario Transportation Effectiveness Pilot:**

(EE 350 currently under development)

All recycling programs deal with transportation issues. The collection of recyclables is the “easy” part of the transportation chain – municipalities have lots of experience on how to do this in an effective and efficient way. The other links – moving material to a processor and moving material to market are somewhat less developed as there are various options to consider and often much of this work is outside the programs control. This is especially evident in northern Ontario.

The marketing of materials also suffer in the north, due to the fact markets are often long distances away and there are not many local markets for recycling materials. This means that products have to be transported long distances, which becomes costly.

So transportation is a major area that needs to be examined to determine if there are opportunities to lower operating costs for programs in the north (and some in the south). There has not been a specific study examining the transportation issue and proposing some options on how to effectively gather, consolidate and transport recyclables. There is a need to examine all forms of transportation (road, rail, ship) and how they could work together in moving material, as well as examining contributing factors such as, consolidation points (transfer), compaction, and processing and how they work into the equation.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Millions of dollars in municipal recycling contracts are issued each year and it is generally recognized that the most opportune and cost effective time to make significant changes to a recycling program is during a new tender. Therefore, this is the time to step in to offer assistance and to continuously improve the overall BB system via the introduction of best practices and individual/multi-program enhancements.

The CIF strategic plan purpose and objectives states that the fund “exists to provide funding to municipalities in support of projects and programs that increase cost-effectiveness, increase diversion of Blue Box (BB) materials and/or increase the performance of Ontario’s residential BB recycling programs.”

The A-Team project fits directly within all of these objectives and has demonstrated its effectiveness in directly supporting municipalities.

Additionally, the plan states; “Through projects funded by the CIF, the Fund seeks to maximize the efficiency of both individual municipal recycling programs as well as the system as a whole. The goal of the CIF is both to identify and apply ‘best practices’ and preferred approaches within and across municipalities as well as to help foster and support innovation throughout the system.”

Because of the hands on contact A-Team members have with municipalities, they are well positioned to identify and apply ‘best practices’ and preferred approaches within and across municipalities as well as to help foster and support innovation throughout the system. By working closely with municipal program staff on a daily basis, the A-Team will be able to act as the eyes and ears of the CIF as well as the workforce that can discover and act on opportunities to roll out incremental continuous improvement, technological innovation and preferred approaches. Over time, this introduction of a continuous improvement component into the BB system will result in optimization of the various municipal BB programs and ultimately, full implementation of the CIF strategic plan.

The CIF strategic plan also states: “The CIF will also play a key role in helping to ... ensure that all municipalities have access to the information and resources necessary to maximize the performance of their local “blue box” recycling program, and to take advantage of scale efficiencies or other opportunities that might exist across multiple municipalities or regions.” As stated earlier, the A-Team project has shown the greatest opportunities and scale efficiencies can be obtained from assistance rendered at the multi-municipal cooperation level and it is uniquely positioned to operate at this level.

For all of the above reasons, it is the recommendation of the A-Team that some form of hands on assistance be maintained to implement the CIF strategic plan, provide program and financial benefits to individual municipalities and continuously improve the system as a whole.

## Copyright and Disclaimer

**Copyright 2008**    *All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, recorded or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photographic, sound, magnetic or other, without advance written permission from the owner.*

*This Project has been delivered with the assistance of Stewardship Ontario's Effectiveness and Efficiency Fund, a Fund financed by Ontario municipalities and stewards of blue box waste in Ontario. Notwithstanding this support, the views expressed are the views of the author(s), and Waste Diversion Ontario, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Stewardship Ontario accept no responsibility for these views.*

This Report has been prepared by:

**Author**                    **Gary Everett,**  
**Municipal Recycling Program Advisor,**

who personally and on behalf of MIPC, acknowledges and thanks the municipalities for their assistance, contributions and cooperation.

**Disclaimer**              This report is provided as opinion for discussion only and is **not** designed to replace qualified engineering, architectural or legal advice in any way. Municipalities are cautioned to obtain qualified advice and certified/approved drawings and plans prior to undertaking or adopting any recommendations that may affect their programs or facilities.



## Report Archives

Archives of all previous monthly reports are maintained by the A-Team Manager.

For copies of any reports please contact:

Gary Everett  
519-462-2500 office  
519-500-5555 cell  
[GEverett@WDO.ca](mailto:GEverett@WDO.ca) email