

## 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:** Development and Review of Baseline Information of Multi-residential Recycling Programs in Ontario / E&E Project #18 / Multi-family recycling

**Lead Sponsor/completed by/date:** Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority / Cynthia Hyland / February 13, 2006

**Project Duration:** 8 months

**Total project value:** \$45,350 (includes 128 in-kind days @ \$600/day provided by project advisory committee)

**E&E funding amount:** \$28,550

### **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)?**

The project goals and objectives were:

- To define the current state of multi-residential (MR) recycling in the larger MR programs in Ontario
- To use this information as a basis to identify and implement effective, economical, and sustainable multi-family recycling tools/approaches

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

To the extent that we now have a very detailed baseline study of the “state of the art” in MR recycling in Ontario, the goals and objectives were met. To the extent that this baseline information can be used as a basis to identify and implement the next steps – i.e., effective and sustainable multi-residential initiatives designed to bolster participation and capture in the MR sector, the goals and objectives were not completely met.

The reason for this is that the baseline results have not pinpointed any specific program factors that might lead to increased participation, capture or efficiency. This is due to the fact that there are generally insufficient monitoring systems or procedures (i.e., audits, participation studies) for the ongoing tracking of MR program success within municipalities. The result is that there is not necessarily a concrete link between a program innovation and increased capture.

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

- Administered a detailed survey and compiled information for 19 of the province's largest MR programs;
- Compiled information on MR recycling includes: residential units/buildings served per municipality, eligibility criteria and statistics, operating procedures (collection, containers, vehicles, processing), costs, use of disincentives and incentives, tracking mechanisms, promotion and education, waste audit history, demographic information, and by-laws;
- Identified the major issues and constraints faced by municipalities that operate Ontario MR programs;
- Identified potential areas for further baseline study and possible next steps.

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

For the purposes of the baseline study, there is nothing that should have been done differently.

The proposed survey recipient list was revised and then reviewed by members of the advisory committee (Multi-res working group) and by Geoff Love. The original list was compiled based on the 25 largest

programs in the province. It was agreed that program size was an inappropriate criterion in the case of two of the programs, as they did not have a sufficient multi-residential population to warrant inclusion in the study. They were eliminated from the list. The 23<sup>rd</sup> program did not receive the survey, mainly because they had indicated that they would not have sufficient time to fill it out. All working group members (7) received and completed the survey. Of the remaining 15 programs that received the survey, three did not complete it.

**4) What do you consider to have been the key “lessons learned” from this project? Does your project/activity represent a “best practice”?**

**Key lessons learned include:**

- Although the majority of multi-residential buildings in the surveyed municipalities have access to recycling services, low capture rates, low participation levels, and high contamination mean that the MR sector represent an important opportunity to increase tonnage;
- Most programs define MR consistently with Regulation 103/94;
- Regulation 103/94 is not enforced, but is used by a number of programs as a “backdrop” or tool when dealing with some buildings;
- Resources to adequately staff, monitor and promote MR programs are uniformly insufficient;
- Contamination is a consistent and persistent problem;
- Communications is always an issue – no MR program deals directly with tenants;
- Superintendents and/or building managers are critical elements of a “successful” recycling program;
- Unlike curbside recycling for single family dwellings, there is a lack of ownership/responsibility on the part of some MR residents. There is no direct accountability for not participating; and it is often less convenient to carry many items to depots or carts;
- Efforts and resources dedicated to MR recycling appear to have declined in a number of MR programs since they were first launched.

**As to lessons learned regarding the survey process itself:**

- Numerous iterations of the draft survey were reviewed by a subgroup of the working committee, to organise, suggest questions, and streamline it. Working group members were then asked to complete a beta version of the survey and provide suggestions for revisions/changes before it was distributed to the remaining programs on the recipient list. This helped to ensure that we covered everything we needed to, as well as put it into a realistic municipal context. This was a very important process and should be the template followed for future surveys of this scope.
- Every participating program was initially contacted to ask them to participate in the study, and to determine the appropriate contact person. Given the relatively low number of recipients (22), this was a very useful approach that was helpful in getting the response that we did. This is something we would repeat with future surveys where the number of recipients is low. It is not appropriate for large numbers, like those in the user pay survey.
- The survey was sent out on July 22<sup>nd</sup> with a requested response date of late August. This is not the optimum time of year for work of this kind, and I believe it was one of the main factors in our not achieving a 100% response rate. We would try to avoid timing like this in future projects of this scope.

**6) What specifically are municipal staff doing with the experiences and data from this project? Do you have plans to apply these lessons in your program? Please explain how.**

Members of the Multi-residential working group can use the final report as a resource for information on programs in other jurisdictions. It will help guide discussion and decision on the next steps for initiatives designed to improve MR tonnage. The report can also be used by other municipalities as a reference on very specific aspects of MR programs.

**7) Has your municipal council been informed about the project and its results?**

The study results, once fully vetted and released by SO, will be brought to the Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority's (EWSWA) Board. The Authority serves a number of municipalities who are represented on the Board by local council members.

**8) Do you think there are opportunities to share/replicate the successful elements of this project with other Ontario programs? If yes, how and where?**

It is important that other Ontario programs (beyond the working group) have access to the results of this project for the wealth of detailed baseline program data that it represents.

**9) Did this project result in either reduced costs per tonne of Blue Box waste recycled and/or increased Blue Box tonnes diverted? (Please explain)**

n/a

***Section 2 –To be completed by Stewardship Ontario (and reviewed by applicant)***

**9) Did this project do what it set out to do? If not, what were the reasons/ barriers?**

As per the original contract agreement, the goal of this project was to develop and review baseline information on multi-residential recycling programs in Ontario. The project included three main deliverables:

- Baseline Information Survey:
  - Design a detailed survey that will provide baseline information on all aspects of current multi residential recycling programs.
  - Test survey with members of the multi-residential project team.
  - Circulate survey electronically to 20 large municipalities selected from the WDO datacall; follow-up telephone verification.
- Document Review: Solicit reports and documents (e.g. waste audits, pilot programs, surveys, promotion/education materials, demographics, social marketing, participation data, the use of incentives/disincentives, etc) from selected municipalities and multi-residential project team members.
- Baseline Information Report: Compile information into a report outlining the next steps necessary to produce a comprehensive multi-residential recycling plan. This may include an outline of areas for further research, the identification of best practices that appear effective but may require additional testing, the identification of roadblocks or problems limiting effectiveness and efficiency, etc.

The first two deliverables were completed as planned. The project was not able to identify the necessary next steps to produce a comprehensive multi-residential recycling plan however. This is due to the lack of reporting mechanisms on MF recycling (e.g. audits, participation studies), which in turn, make it difficult to attribute specific program factors to increased participation, capture or efficiency.

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

The key learnings pertaining to both the current state of MF recycling and the survey administration process itself are presented under question 5.

As a next step, AMRC has indicated its intent to submit an application to undertake a project extension. The objective would be to carry out awareness/opinion research with tenants of multi-family buildings throughout Ontario in smaller urban communities, using qualitative (focus groups) research. In parallel to this, E&E Project 105 aims to develop a media campaign to promote improved recycling behaviour among target audiences (including MF residents) based on technical information about available tonnage and market research. A detailed application has also been received for a Vaughan/Richmond Hill/Markham Multi-Family Project which aims to gather attitudinal and behavioural information from Ontarians who reside in multi-family residences in the three York Region GTA municipalities.

It has been agreed that the applicants for the two pending projects (AMRC and Vaughan/Richmond Hill/Markham Multi-Family Project) will include in their applications an intention to collect information from focus group participants relating to:

- identifying barriers to efficient recycling in multi-family residences (e.g. asking what residents need to allow them to establish and maintain efficient recycling routines)
- collecting information on cultural traditions which affect the adoption of efficient recycling behaviour
- examining ethnic/cultural attitudinal issues pertaining to creative messages and language
- including common elements in discussion guides

If these applications are approved, the project managers will maintain a dialogue to cooperate in the planning and implementation processes and to facilitate the sharing of information.

Finally, in terms of sharing results, it is planned that the findings from this project will be made into a Knowledge Product and posted on the Knowledge Network in collaboration with VuBiz.

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

This project was intended as a baseline study of MF recycling programs in Ontario and as such, was not expected to result in either program or system cost reduction benefits or cost effective tonnage increases.

**12) Does this project represent “best practices”? If yes, explain.**

The limited information that is available indicates that a significant amount of “cheap tonnes” are still available in MF residences. This project represents a first step in accessing these tonnes.

**13) Did this project have a direct impact on Blue Box tonnes recycled ? (Please explain)**

N/A

**Did this project have a direct impact on the cost of Blue Box recycling? (Please explain)**

N/A

*Total project cost – \$45,350*

*E&E contribution – \$28,550*

*In-kind contribution – \$16,800 (28 in-kind days provided by the project advisory committee @ \$600/day)*