

E&E Project Evaluation

****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: Building on 'Smart Contracts, Smart Marketing' - an AMRC 2004 Workshop / Project # 19 / Cost containment

Lead Sponsor/competed by/date: Quinte Waste Solutions/October 2004

Project Duration: One month

Total project value: \$14,500

E&E funding amount: \$5,709

Section 1 – Completed by Project Applicant

1) What were the Project Goals and Objectives *(as per the E&E Application and Contract)*

1. To ensure municipal staff had access to the “Smart Contracts” workshop and its contents;
2. To improve Blue Box system costs by providing information by which municipalities could improve contracts, reduce costs, and increase market revenues;
3. To provide opportunities for staff from targeted municipalities to attend the workshop by removing financial barriers; and
4. To ensure widest promotion of the workshop and access to the proceedings.

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

From AMRC's perspective, workshops continue to be an effective tool for communicating important and valuable information to municipal program operators. This workshop was well attended and generated positive feedback. The challenge in this case was to encourage attendance by representatives of those programs who it was felt would have the most to gain (i.e. those whose reported costs appeared unusually high) and those whose existing contracts were close to expiry). It was decided to augment the general promotion of the workshop by sending specific invitations to all reporting programs and to have those invitations addressed to the person who signed off on WDO's Financial Data Call reports. Financial incentives in the form of free or discounted registration fees were offered to those programs with high costs and soon-to-expire contracts. While a few program operators took advantage of the free or discounted fees, some regular attendees of AMRC events did not take up the offer and registered at the regular price. Despite the incentives offered and the personal invitations, the attendance from non-AMRC members or those not considered part of the active AMRC membership was not high. In total, 6 participants from the 'target' group (i.e. those identified as having the most to gain) attended the event (from a total of 43 municipal official attendees representing 29 municipal programs).

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

The workshop brought together a full slate of speakers on various aspects of contract design and recyclables marketing. There were 67 delegates to the workshop, including 43 municipal officials, representing 29 municipal programs. One of the speakers - Alfred Von Mirbach - has been working on the E&E Funded Model Contract Project (project #97) and was able to offer point-by-point information of how to write a better contract. Two speakers offered the contractor's perspective and a speaker from Stewardship Ontario provided a review of current contracts. This was followed up by a Hot Topics session where municipal staff were able to question the speakers about specific issues. The session on marketing recyclables removed the 'mystique' of marketing for those attending, easing the way for them to consider doing their own marketing directly.

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

In addition to the usual promotional techniques, a decision was made to send invitation letters to those municipalities who had completed the WDO Data Call forms and to address the letters to those who had signed the form. In many cases, these were not the people who actually look after the recycling programs so much as those who oversee them – i.e. clerks and administrators. If the plan is attract those who do not normally attend workshops of this kind, it may be more effective for future events to follow up on invitations with direct telephone contact. Time constraints did not allow this on this occasion, but when we are dealing with non-traditional audiences the additional time would likely be a good investment.

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

By learning the importance of each aspect of the contracted service and by ensuring the contract wording reflects what is actually required, and *does not* include services that are not required, workshop attendees were able to learn from the experiences of others and develop best practices. Avoidance of ambiguity, and clarity in contract wording can reduce costs and unexpected expenses. In addition, understanding the contractor's perspective and building a good working relationship with the contractor were also stressed as essential.

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.

By applying the principles and methodology learned about contract design at the workshop, and understanding better the contractor's perspective, municipal staff can write more effective contracts. This can result in lower bids from contractors, savings from the avoidance of unnecessary expenses and reduced costs through making the most of the competitive process. By learning more about marketing, municipal staff may be more inclined to market their materials directly, which normally results in stronger relationships with buyers and better prices paid for the recyclables.

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

All municipalities who completed the WDO Data Call forms have been sent copies of the proceedings CD from the workshop and there was coverage in both the AMRC newsletter and website. The proceedings have been available for download from the website since the fall of 2004.

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?

While this project was provincially oriented, the reality is that most workshops attract the bulk of their attendees from within a given radius of the location. In tandem with the Model Contract document and Knowledge network tools, an updated workshop could be held in other parts of the province and if more resources were applied to specifically inviting targeted programs to attend (with follow-up – see Question 4), the benefits of the information could be shared with others.

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)

Those attending the workshop, and to a lesser extent, those who make use of the proceedings, can apply the tender/contract information and materials marketing information from the workshop. This should lead to a reduction in gross costs and an increase in revenue for the municipalities, resulting in a reduction to total Blue Box system costs. Improved tenders/contracts could result in more of each material being collected and more materials being collected.

Section 2 – Completed by Stewardship Ontario (with review by the applicant)

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

Yes- this project was intended as a “rep-cursor” to an active MIPC outreach program that is intended to encourage and support better contract tendering. The workshop engaged some target municipalities in the issue and notified all municipalities that additional tools to support better contracting are being developed and delivered with E&E Fund support, primarily through the newly launched Knowledge Network.

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

The results of the workshop were distributed by AMRC and are still available on CD for those who are interested. One of the learnings from this project is that workshops alone are not enough to motivate new behaviour; that is why E&E fund has also proceeded to prepare a written document supporting model contracting best practices and has also developed on-line tools available on the Knowledge Network site (i.e. these were the “next steps” for MIPC in this area). The suggestion that invitations to workshops such as these include a follow-up telephone invitation is a good suggestion for the future.

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 was a very inexpensive project and a good lead into follow up work in an important area. As a stand alone activity however, there is no evidence that it leads to a specific decision by a municipality which would result in a better contract, reduced costs or increased tones recycled.

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

This is not a relevant question for this type of project – it was intended to use a workshop format to promote best practices in recycling contracting.

13) Tonnage and Financial Summary

Blue Box tonnes recycled in previous year – n/a – province –wide program

Blue Box tonnes recycled during project year – n/a

Blue Box tonnes recycled (est) for next year- n/a

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

No

Program costs from previous datacall – n/a

Term of E&E project – One month

Projected cost for next year – n/a

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

None that could be measured/directly attributed to this project.

Total project cost -\$14,500

E&E contribution – \$5,709 (39% of total)

Other Cash/in-kind contributions – Workshop fees collected by AMRC