

## 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:** Municipal Consultation Sessions on Blue Box Best Practices/PN 200/ Cost Containment/Best Practices

**Lead Sponsor/competed by/date:** AMRC with York Region/Mike Birett/ Oct. 2006

**Project Duration:** May to October 2006

**Total project value:** \$278,866

**E&E funding amount:** \$128,866

### **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)?
- To obtain stakeholder input into application of Best Practices to Blue Box funding by:
    - a. Defining/developing guiding principles to determine best practices
    - b. Identifying potential best practices & associated indicators
    - c. Identifying priority program activities where best practices are needed
  - To identify barriers to implementation
  - To facilitate informed policy development by MIPC & others
  - To raise municipal awareness of the pending change in blue box funding in 2008

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

Yes

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

Municipal awareness of the history behind the current funding model and the challenge associated with this issue was raised. Several areas of potential best practices development were identified. Guiding principles and areas of concern and/or barriers to implementation were identified. Different approaches to funding model development and alternatives were also identified.

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

The project initially envisioned attracting stakeholders from waste haulers and stewards. This did not take place and requires further analysis as to the barrier(s) and how to overcome them.

The attendance at the Toronto session was somewhat disappointing. This is likely due to the fact that this session was held at a time when many people are off on summer vacation. The Toronto location was originally selected with the expectation that the OWMA members and stewards would participate in the consultation sessions, which did not happen. There was adequate GTA municipal representation at the Ottawa and London sessions.

An evaluation form was completed that asked about venue, presenters, etc and thoughts on the issues. Feedback was also solicited verbally from attendees during the course of the summer to determine if the project goals and objectives were being achieved. This information was used to refocus the sessions and their input was incorporated into the final report.

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

The project successfully raised awareness amongst municipal attendees and participants about the issue and its complex nature. The unique nature of municipal programs and challenges with trying to apply best practice activities and/or indicators to them universally and fairly was clearly identified by this project. The project also identified possible alternative approaches such as reviewing the programs that are at the high end of their respective cost bands, identifying the best practices appropriate to those programs and working with the operator(s) to achieve compliance with the proposed Best Practices. Tradeoffs will ultimately be required to establish practices which are both clear and transparent but also fair to all parties.

**6) What specifically is 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.**

Municipalities are currently participating in the Best Practices Management Team. The AMRC is considering alternative approaches to the Best Practices issue such as activity based solutions.

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

No.

**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?**

Many of the suggestions and comments provided by participants during the consultation period are noteworthy to groups like the MIPC and the Best Practices Management Team. The guiding principles, in particular, should be factored into any application of Best Practices to municipal programs.

***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 application, the goal of this project was to solicit municipal and other stakeholder input through a consultative effort to establish the principles and guidelines to define, determine and identify Blue Box Best Practices. Specifically, the following three objectives were formulated:

- 1) define/develop the guiding principles to determine best practices;
- 2) identify potential indicators and performance measures for best practices
- 3) identify priority aspects of programs where best practices are needed

Although broad consensus regarding indicators and performance measure was only achieved in a few instances, the project was successful in achieving its overall goal of soliciting (primarily) municipal input on the issue of Blue Box Best Practices.

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

The key findings are structured around the three basic approaches to identifying Best Practices:

*Best Practices Performance Indicators:* There was a consensus that percentage recovery (recyclables marketed/recyclables available) was a fundamental indicator as long as there was good data on recyclables available for each program. There was less agreement on using indicators that measure cost since programs are so unique in their characteristics even within cost bands.

*Best Practices Activities:* In general, while there were many good practices identified, there were few fundamental best practices. Some of the more important ones identified by workshop participants include: Municipal regulatory measures (Bag limits; User pay; Mandatory recycling); Communications plan; Competitive bids; Flexible tenders/contracts; Diversion targets; Tracking diversion; and Audits and set out studies.

*Principles and Criteria:* Participants felt that the following principles and criteria should be used to frame any discussion of the application of best practices. Some of the common points made in the workshops include:

- BP must:
  - respect municipal autonomy & apply equally to stewards
  - recognize municipal contractual obligations; provide predictable municipal funding
  - be applied to all stakeholders (municipalities, stewards, and provincial guidelines and regulations)
- BP must not:
  - restrict diversion or be reduced to a cost cutting exercise

There was a general consensus that to make any funding system fair would require some adjustments, in particular to the current cost band groupings, which many participants felt do not adequately capture the variations that exist between programs.

The workshops explored the issues and implications of funding allocation models and best practices. What emerged was a preference for a base level of funding based either on \$/tonne recovered or a percentage of program costs. The remaining portion of the funding allocation for any particular year would be a reward system that would allocate funding based on best practices.

As a next step, the findings from this project (final report and workshop notes) have been forwarded to the Recycling Program Enhancement and Best Practices Project Team for their consideration. The AMRC is also consulting with members and providing further input to MIPC on the issue of Best Practices.

**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?)

The budget for this project was \$128,866 + GST, actual spending was \$110,649.14

The municipal in-kind contribution for this project, as per the original agreement, was valued at \$150,000 (150 days @ \$1000/day). Actual in-kind support was estimated to have been \$200,470 (200.47 days) - 133% more than was committed.

The project's considerable budget is justified by the fact that sessions were conducted in four different areas of the province and considerable sums were required to cover the costs of having all four sessions available via web cast.

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

This project represents an important step in addressing the complex and often contested field of Blue Box "Best Practices". Although, as was expected by many, there were relatively few points of consensus, this project successfully raised awareness among municipalities, and provided participants with the necessary information to ensure they can participate in the debate in a meaningful way.