

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: West Perth Blue Box lid pilot / 289 / Innovative Financing and Program Compliance

Lead Sponsor/competed by/date: Municipality of West Perth/Christine Baker/November 2008

Project Duration: December 2007 to April 2008

Total project value: \$7,280 **E&E funding amount:** \$4,640 **Actually Spent:** \$2,640

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 goal of this project was to increase the quantity of materials in the collection stream by piloting a net-type lid (Enviro-Net). The lid's effectiveness at preventing lighter materials from being blown out of collection boxes was also assessed.

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

The goal and objective of increasing the amount of recyclables in the collection stream was not met. There were too few nets in use (154) over a widely dispersed area to have any effect on the quantity of recyclables in the system. The collection contractor stated that weather variables and the newly-implemented Ontario Deposit Return Program (which came into effect in the same time period as this pilot project) would have a greater impact on tonnage data.

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

The net was found to be very successful at containing materials in the blue box (as stated by 89% of survey respondents). The reduction of wind-blown litter provides a great benefit by reducing the amount of time property owners and municipal staff would spend collecting this litter. Less visible litter in any municipality is beneficial for residents and tourists.

A large majority of respondents (86%) found the net helped to increase the amount of material in their blue box although no conclusive data could be obtained to support this due to a need for more monitoring.

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

A more defined and larger monitoring area would increase the number of nets in use. Supplying nets to a target area at no cost would certainly increase uptake for more effective monitoring.

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

An interim report was delivered to Council on March 31, 2008. Council then considered the possibility of free distribution to a target area in order to increase the number of nets for monitoring purposes when it was determined that net uptake was too low. Council decided not to continue with free distribution and the project was concluded with a user survey.

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?

The goal of this project was to test a flexible netting-type lid (Enviro-Net) for blue boxes to determine whether they can drive up recovery and help control litter. As mentioned by the project proponent above, the project did not meet its goal due to the poor net uptake in a dispersed area.

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

The main learning from this project is that in order to be able to monitor the impact of the nets, it is necessary to distribute them directly (i.e. door-to-door) to residents in the target area and at no charge. Based on the survey findings and observations from other municipalities using them, the nets were effective at controlling litter. No similar statement can be made regarding the net's performance at driving recovery.

Moreover, the assessment of the nets from a collection efficiency point of view was quite negative. The collection contractor, Bluewater Recycling Association, flagged various issues with the nets, including increased time required to remove them, increased spillage at removal because of overfilled boxes, and nets that are improperly attached to the box or not attached at all.

It should be noted that BRA has decided to move to a cart-based collection system, addressing both issues of capacity and litter. The Association launched its first cart program in October 2008 in the Town of St. Marys, and plans to convert approximately 90% of households to the new collection system over the next four years.

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 small project that did not result in any program benefit from a Blue Box system point of view. Although additional funds were made available to the proponent to ensure proper monitoring, City Councilors decided not to act on this offer. In hindsight, the City did not have the necessary resources to distribute the nets directly to the householders and to ensure the necessary net uptake. This speaks to the broader issue of the limitations that small under-resourced municipalities face in carrying out projects. In that sense, it is encouraging to see that the Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF) has decided to dedicate 10% of the Fund's resources to project management and evaluation, implementation and execution support.

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

The Blue Box Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project identified the provision of free blue boxes to households in order to ensure ample household recycling capacity as a Best Practice. Although the report recognizes the capital outlay this requires, it highlights that the added capacity may not only increase capture and potentially lower unit operating costs, but the minimization of home-made curb side containers may yield longer-term ergonomic benefits to collection crews.

When a city does not have the financial resources to provide free blue boxes to its residents, the provision of a net for a half the cost of a blue box may make sense. As stated previously however, whether the use of the net-type lid actually results in increased Blue Box capacity remains to be seen.

Finally, the collection contractor in this project noted significant collection efficiency issues associated with the nets. If this is indeed the case, then their usage cannot represent a Best Practice.