

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: Optimizing the City of Stratford's Blue Box Program/ 76 / Innovative Financing & Program Compliance Projects

Lead Sponsor/completed by/date: City of Stratford with 2cg / City of Stratford / April 2007

Project Duration: March 2005 to April 2007

Total project value: \$78,820 + GST **E&E funding amount:** \$59,000 + GST

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)?

1. Assess the User Pay Program by determining waste composition via waste auditing and identifying blue box recyclables that could be captured.
2. Develop and implement a revised communications and education program to facilitate the improved capture of blue box recyclables.

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

Yes, two waste audits were completed and a new face on the recycling information was adopted. The work included the development of a new recycling theme and the production of new communications and education materials as well as templates that can be carried forward for future work.

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

- Two waste audits: base line and follow up
- Communication and Education documents
 - Content and style manual
 - Theme created
 - Posters
 - Calendar
 - Newsletter
 - Instructions
 - FAQ

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

The project worked as intended.

There was not as much response by the media to help promote the new program as we would have liked even though the project was launched to the media on two occasions. Media response was a function of relatively small number of outlets. More frequent calls could have been placed and possibly from a higher level of management.

The release of the calendar did ensure that each home saw the new theme and revised approach to C&E.

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

The baseline audits revealed that many materials were not making their way to the blue box. The Communications and Education manual assisted the City of Stratford with creating a clean, simple message that will get the message across to all residents. The strategy employed was to develop materials that could be easily reproduced by municipal staff.

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.

The City of Stratford now has the tools to create more posters, calendars, FAQ that are streamlined, concise and able to get the message across without the clutter (i.e. too many words, graphics etc.) of the previous versions.

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

Municipal council has been informed about the project.

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?

Every municipality should have a waste audit done. It allows us to target materials through advertising that are not making it to the blue box.

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)

The impact of the revised C&E strategy on capture rate of recyclables will be measured in 2007. There is a fixed rate per tonne on the collection and processing of blue box materials. The more we divert, the more we pay the contractor.

In the new recycling contract a shorter term was taken (i.e. 3 years versus 7 years) in anticipation of a possible Regional MRF in southwestern Ontario. This resulted in an RFP process that was similar to the previous one but with a shorter term.

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 detailed application, the objectives of this project were to

- 1) Assess the User Pay program by determining waste composition via waste auditing and identifying additional Blue Box recyclables that could be captured
- 2) Develop and implement a revised communications and education program to facilitate the improved capture of Blue Box recyclables

Both of these objectives were met.

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

The baseline waste audit identified those materials did not achieve 60% recovery on average, including the following materials with particularly low (i.e. less than 30%) recovery rates: Other paper, Kraft paper, Laminated/Other plastic packaging and Aluminum Foil and Foil trays. The specific objectives of the revised C&E pieces were to increase recovery for those materials.

The review of the C&E materials identified weaknesses and provided guidelines for the revision process, such as keeping the materials copy light, using a consistent and recognizable style, and using branding systematically.

The resident survey into preferred communications methods was filled out by 219 residents and revealed that nearly 60% of respondents identified the Waste Reduction Program Calendar as a primary source for recycling information. Survey findings also revealed the growing importance of the internet in conveying information to residents, and confirmed the importance of weekly community newspaper as an effective advertising media.

The second waste audit conducted after the launch of the revised C&E materials did not reveal much change from 2005 to 2006, although 2 plastic categories that had a capture rate of less than 60% exceeded this rate in 2006. In general, the revised C&E pieces did not appear to have a measurable impact on capture rates in the Blue Box although it should be noted that the new measures will take some time to have an impact.

As a next step, the essential points of the project report are being assembled into a document, which will be showcased as an example of a Strategic Communication for a mid-sized community. The document will be made available on the P&E module of Stewardship Ontario's Knowledge Network.

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?)

Although there were no significant increases in tonnage, it is expected that the revised C&E materials will lead to such increases in the medium terms, especially for those low-recovery materials.

Although the original project proposal indicated the possibility of a decrease in system cost at the time of negotiating Stratford's contract in 2006, this did not materialize. This is due to the fact that a Regional MRF initiative was not anticipated when this project was initiated. Rather than attempt to negotiate significant changes to the new contract, it was decided that a better strategy would be to opt for a shorter length contract that maintained the status quo in anticipation of the developments surrounding the regional MRF.

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

The nearly completed report for the Blue Box Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project, a \$2.5 million E&E Fund initiative awarded to KPMG, establishes "Appropriately planned, designed, and funded Promotion and Education program" as a Fundamental Best Practice. It will be important for the City to allocate adequate funds to its revised P&E strategy – the report found that municipalities achieving 60% recovery levels, on average, tended to spend approximately \$1 on Promotion and Education – as well as to continue monitoring its impact through on-going waste audits and other means, and to adjust if need be.