CIF Project # 459 - Facilitation of EPR Discussions

<u>Background</u>

In 2012 CIF co-funded a series of facilitated discussions between AMO, Toronto and SO. The purpose of the sessions was to allow the parties to explore issues of common interest related to operations and the development of Ontario's Blue Box program. There was also potential to establish a path forward for sustainable funding. The sessions were facilitated by an independent third party conflict resolution specialist and undertaken between 2012 and 2013. It was agreed that any outcomes would be non-binding upon the parties.

<u>Summary of Results</u>

The specialist worked with the parties to develop a mutually agreeable work plan which was shared with Waste Diversion Ontario (now RPRA). The initial meetings involved the development of goals and objectives of, and issues facing the group. Subsequent meetings considered prioritization of identified issues, barriers to change, short term goals, opportunities for "Quick Wins" and measures of success. The discussion led to a promising conceptual approach to a split responsibility model wherein municipalities would continue to manage collection and producers would be responsible for processing and marketing. Further work on the initiative was parked due to recognition that provincial movement towards full Extended Producer Responsibility made the discussions moot.

<u>Financials</u>

The total cost of the discussions was under $50,000 and the CIF's contribution was $25,000.

<u>Learnings</u>

The discussions demonstrated that the parties could quickly come to agreements on defining the issues facing municipalities, producers and other stakeholders involved in the Blue Box program. This experience also proved that informal collaborative and non-binding discussions appear to be more effective in making progress towards effecting change in program plan development compared to the typical approach to plan development under the Waste Diversion Act or its successor where municipalities are operators of the programs but do not have a formal role in program development