

***Municipal Wastewater Effluent Development Committee
Overview Meeting Report – Canadian Municipal Regional Meetings
May – June 2004***

Introduction

At present, Municipal Waste Water Effluent (MWWE) is one of the largest sources of pollution, by volume, being discharged to surface water bodies in Canada. Reducing the discharge of pollution through MWWE requires a number of interventions ranging from source control to end of pipe measures. MWWE is currently managed through a variety of policies, by-laws and legislation at the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal levels. Such governance often creates confusion and complex situations for regulators, system owners and operators.

CCME has established a Development Committee (DC) to develop a Canada-wide Strategy for the management of MWWE. An integral part of the development of the Strategy will be to consult with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure that the strategy for the management of MWWE incorporates their interests, expertise and vision.

About this report – This report provides an overview of the issues raised by meeting participants at the regional municipal meetings held in May and June 2004. The report attempts to summarize the views, issues and interests of the meeting participants, and the elements/characteristics of the final strategy. This report summarizes the recommendations made by municipalities, especially with respect to their expectations around communication and participation in the process. This report is to serve as a discussion piece for the DC in moving forward on engaging municipalities in this process. The author of the report attended 4 of the 5 meetings held. Reports are also available for the individual regional/provincial meetings held.

Consultation Process

The DC will be consulting throughout the three-year period with a wide variety of stakeholders from across Canada, including municipalities. After the initial consultation sessions with municipalities in June 2004, a consultation strategy will be finalized by the DC.

Core Advisory Group

A Core Advisory Group (CAG) has been established and a first meeting held in March 2004. The CAG is comprised of members from a variety of organizations across Canada: water and waste associations, ENGOS, First Nations, health organizations, academia, Canadian Union of Public Employees, engineering community, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The role of the CAG will be to advise on the consultation process and pre-test concepts, ideas and materials, before these are distributed to a broader stakeholder community.

Municipal Involvement

To date, a final mechanism for involvement by municipalities in the development of the Canada-wide Strategy has not been determined. The DC has consulted with municipal representatives at the provincial/regional level. Meetings occurred at the following dates and locations, with the identified jurisdictions represented:

- May 25 – Quebec City, Quebec – Quebec
- June 10 – Edmonton, Alberta – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Canada.
- June 16 – Moncton, New Brunswick – Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island¹, and Canada.
- June 18 – Gander, Newfoundland – Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada.
- June 21 – Toronto, Ontario – Ontario and Canada.

¹ PEI had government representation at the meeting in Moncton. A local municipal meeting was subsequently held the following week. The outcomes of the PEI meeting are included in the Maritime Provinces report.

The purpose of these meetings was to introduce and discuss the MWWE initiative with municipalities and to learn how they would like to be engaged in the overall process.

Meeting Overview

Each jurisdiction was free to structure their meeting as best suited their participants. Overall, the municipal meetings followed a similar format: introductions, presentations with clarifying questions, general discussion, break-out sessions, and concluding discussions. A discussion paper and list of questions were distributed with the agenda, prior to the meeting (see attached). Most commonly, during the break-out sessions, groups were given questions to discuss and answer which were based on the list of questions to municipalities, distributed with the meeting materials. Presentation materials focussed on the following:

- A general overview of CCME as an organization.
- A general overview of the MWWE process and timelines.
- Guidance on how the strategy will be developed.
- The terms of reference for the Development Committee.
- Roles and responsibilities of all involved with the development of the management strategy.

Meeting participants were primarily technical staff from municipalities. To a lesser degree, political staff were also present. Local DC members, Environment Canada and CCME secretariat personnel were present at each meeting (except Quebec City). Staff from other government departments were also present.

Discussion covered a wide variety of topics. The most common among all meetings were long-term sustainable funding, communication, municipal participation with the process, and overall outcomes of the process.

Issues

Municipalities saw as some the main issues:

- Communication.
- Process – how municipalities will be engaged.
- Long-term sustainable funding.
- Enforcement of existing regulations in the interim period.
- Education and awareness.
- Environmental protection.

Communication – Communication is seen as an extremely important issue across the country. In New Brunswick it was identified as the number one action the DC could take to make the process work and an overall success. Municipalities want to hear the information and perhaps more importantly, they want to be heard.

Process/Engagement – Municipalities indicated that they want to be a part of the process and engaged with the Development Committee (DC) directly. Across the country, municipalities pushed to be a part of the DC and directly at the decision making table. Municipalities want to be where the decisions are being made. It is their view that they are the ultimate implementers of the strategy and in order to get their buy-in for the final outcome, they must be involved in making the decisions. There is a need to make the process inclusive at a number of levels: at the national, provincial/territorial, and technical levels.

In the view of municipalities, the vision statement from the scoping report needs to include municipalities. While municipalities see the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as one of their voices, there is still a need for direct involvement by municipal staff at a multitude of levels. Small, rural municipalities must also be involved.

Long-term Sustainable Funding [Costs/Infrastructure/Funding] – Long-term sustainable funding was the most common and largest issue raised at meetings across Canada. Municipalities want to know who will pay. Some of the issues included:

- Who will pay?
- If we invest now, will reinvestment in the future be required?
- Funding should be all inclusive – including infrastructure development and ongoing/maintenance costs.
- Municipality and system size – smaller municipalities have a small tax base and are therefore do not have the financial flexibility to absorb an increase in costs.
- What can the taxpayer afford? What about municipalities where a large number of households are on a fixed income?
- Are there enough resources available to develop an effective strategy?

While municipalities felt that sustainable funding should be its own cornerstone, it is becoming clear that long-term sustainable funding is a cross-cutting issue over the three cornerstones to the strategy: harmonization of the regulatory regime, coordinated science and research and environmental risk management modelling.

Enforcement/Regulation – Municipalities have concerns around enforcement and regulation, especially in the interim period while the strategy is being developed:

- How will enforcement and regulatory issues be dealt with between now and finalization and implementation of the Strategy? Will it be business as usual?
- How will competing priorities be dealt with at the jurisdictional level (eg. Environment Canada's P2 planning versus strategy development)?
- How will the federal *Fisheries Act* be enforced in the interim period?

In the longer term, the issues municipalities have when developing the strategy include:

- How will the requirements under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and the CCME Strategy be harmonized?
- Consistency in enforcement within a jurisdiction and across jurisdictions is needed.
- What is a single-window approach?
- More authority at the municipal level to do a better job is needed.
- Regulation of pollution at its source, not just at end of pipe (get rid of some substances entirely?).

Education and Awareness – Municipalities indicated that education is an important issue. Municipal representatives want the message to be communicated that wastewater treatment plants are not the source of pollution - people and industry are. In the view of municipalities, public education and education among the stakeholders associated with the process (eg. Municipalities and ENGOs) is something that should be addressed. The wastewater message needs to tone down on the harmfulness of wastewater effluent.

Municipalities need information on what other municipalities are doing to understand the range of municipal, regional, national or even global issues [eg. northern, urban, rural, marine, freshwater issues].

Environmental Protection – Municipalities agree that the level of environmental protection needs to be maintained and improved. Environmental protection also needs to be balanced with financial sustainability.

Other Issues – Municipal participants identified 'spin-off' issues which perhaps need consideration through a different or independent process:

- Biosolids.
- [Regional] Land use planning.
- Septic beds.
- Wet weather flows.
- Private systems.

- Bypasses and combined sewers/septic systems can impact bacteriology and storm systems, ground and surface water.
- Stormwater is having a big impact on the great lakes – phosphorus from fertilizers, vehicle washing, soaps, etc.

Interests

The interests of Municipal participants were discussed throughout the day. Municipal participants identified the outcomes they felt should be a part of the final strategy. Participants ultimately saw capturing all interests in a balance approach through:

- Effective communication (2-way, good listening, communicating the expectations).
- Consultation – national forums, focus groups, provincial groups, meetings, etc...
- DC members learning about the interests of municipalities.
- Planning for the long-term (10 – 15 years).
- Identification and communication of the benefits.
- Participation in the process – especially at the technical/advisory level, municipal advisory groups. The process should be a bottom-up approach.
- Equality – level playing field.
- Development of a set of guiding principles which are consistently applied through to implementation.
- Timely – ensure the timelines fit and are realistic.
- Don't download issues to municipalities.

Cross-Cutting Interests – Municipalities have interests which cut across the three cornerstones:

- *General* – A simple holistic approach, which considers local/regional implications and emerging issues. The strategy should cover the range/characteristics of municipalities represented across Canada.
- *Education* – A commitment to training, education and awareness. Also public education.
- *Implementation* – The strategy should include recommendations for implementation. Education on how to implement the strategy will be important. Phased implementation will be necessary to manage costs.
- *Consistency* – A consistent approach across Canada, balancing environmental objectives with financial sustainability.
- *Equality* – Recognition of the differences across Canada, but still maintaining a level playing field. No incentives for industry to move from one municipality to another for financial gain.
- *Financial* – Includes a range of interests from a full cost-benefit analysis, long-term sustainable funding commitments, even distribution of funding mechanisms and cost-sharing across Canada [fair system for priority setting to not award ineptitude but priority set so that the most needy systems are funded first], consideration for ongoing operations and maintenance costs, and infrastructure upgrading.
- *Risk* – Risk should be real and balanced.
- *Environmental Benefits* – All communities should have treatment, balancing environmental protection with economic sustainability, identification of the environmental benefits.

Interests relating to the **Harmonization of the Regulatory Framework** –

- *Harmonization and Flexibility* – A harmonized and flexible approach to regulation, enforcement and reporting. Reduction in duplication of activities. Harmonization of the role of municipalities in environmental management across Canada. Less red tape. Respond to one authority. Interested in a *one-window-approach*, but not a *one-size-fits-all*.
- *Fisheries Act* – Legal certainty under the Fisheries Act.
- Examine international approaches to wastewater management.

Some specific regulatory or policy instruments suggested by municipal participants:

- Development of methods for analysis and parameters for measure.
- Regulation of other substances that end up in the wastewater stream (point source pollution control).
- Ability for municipalities to issue tickets.

- Wet weather bypass policy.
- Regional or issue based regulations.
- National model sewer-use by law.
- Nationally policy oriented.
- [Model] Bylaws for industrial/business pollution (point source).

From an **Environmental Risk Management Modelling** perspective, municipalities are interested in a Strategy that:

- Includes Canadian guidelines for wastewater treatment, effluent and for the receiving environment.
- Is a Performance-based system.
- Is a flexible, risk and science based process.
- Considers the receiving environment/waters and the mixing zone.
- Considers system inputs and outputs.
- Needs to be based on inputs and outputs of effluent.
- Considers drinking water management.
- Requires industrial wastewater needs to meet a "standard".
- Considers pollution control prior to entry of the wastewater stream.
- Regulates point source pollution.
- Commits to utilization of good effluent – soil complements, irrigation.
- Identified targets which balance with affordable costs.
- Defines appropriate levels of treatment based on receiving waters and environment.
- Addresses the achievable technology for a certain limit? Identified the right science for the standard, and identified what the proper limit should be.
- Identifies technical objectives as soon as possible in order to plan for future parts of the strategy.
- Tackles the basic stuff first – development of standards in the order that problem substances evolved.
- Does not include industrial waste.
- Considers seasonal variations.

Interests for **Coordination of Science and Research:**

- Address the basic stuff first.
- Don't reinvent the wheel - Ongoing research in sludges and biosolids and land application [New Glasgow NS]. The Region of Peel has a lot of ongoing research as well.
- Examination of new available technologies.

Consultation/Engagement – All meeting participants agreed that municipalities need direct involvement with the process to develop the management strategy for MWW. Municipal participants have an interest in engaging with the process:

- Through multi-stakeholder provincial or territorial level committees or teams. The composition of these would be at the discretion of the province or territory.
- Through sub-committees, technical committees, focus groups or advisory groups.
- Through a national consultation process identified by the DC.
- Through review and comment on documents.

Some municipalities are not interested in using surveys as a means of engaging with the process or for communicating. Municipalities would like to appoint their own representatives when participating on committees and advisory groups.

Recommendations

General

- Create a process that respects the interests of Municipalities
- Commit to communication/cooperation
- Identifies a single regulation
- Fact-based risk assessment
- Adequate resourcing (time and money).
- A clear commitment at all levels (municipal, provincial, territorial, federal).
- Make the strategy and its outcomes manageable.
- Change the vision statement to include municipalities.
- Development of a set of guiding principles which are consistently applied through to implementation.

Communication

- Networks of people for emailing ("email tree").
- Utilize the municipal associations to get information out to their members.
- A universal communiqué – Develop a [quarterly] newsletter or bulletin that can be sent out to a variety of different groups/associations across Canada, and can be posted on the CCME website.
- 2 way communication– bottom up and top down, talking but also listening.
- Utilize the website to make information available.

Suggested options for engagement

- Create provincial/territorial committees or teams, the composition of these committees to be determined by the provincial/territorial group and will include the DC member from that jurisdiction. A municipal representative from these committees (could be the chair or a representative agreed to by the committee) would sit on a national Municipal Group. Provincial/territorial groups can meet as often as needed. The Municipal Group would meet jointly with the DC, at least once a year. The chair or a designate of the Municipal Group could sit on the CAG. Federal representation on the provincial/territorial committee would be considered by the provincial/territorial committees.
- An alternate municipal group could be formed with all representatives coming from municipalities, water and waste associations – the CAG could then be comprised of all other organizations interested in MWWE.
- Municipal representatives could engage with DC members on Sub Committees, Technical Committees, Focus Groups or Advisory Groups.
- Utilize other conferences and tie into existing groups/workshops conferences [especially at the political end], to disseminate information and facilitate discussion.
- Utilize the local municipal associations to distribute information up and down and to both technical and political people.
- National discussion fora. Municipalities would like to see a national policy conference occur.
- Municipalities are interested in sponsoring workshops, discussion groups, etc...
- Participation in DC consultation events.
- Review and comment on proposed/draft documents.
- Political people need to be involved.

List of Participants

Quebec City, Quebec – May 25, 2004

Denis Bergeron	Fédération québécoise des municipalités (FQM)
Renée Plamondon	Ministère de l'Environnement (MENV)
Didier Bicchi	MENV
Robert Tétreault	MENV
Yvan Dumont	Ministère des Affaires municipales, du Sport et du Loisir (MAMSL)
Stéphanie Tremblay	Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ)
Marcel Gaucher	MENV
Raymonde Verville	MAMSL
Renée Marceau	MAMSL

Edmonton, Alberta – June 10, 2004

Ric McIver	Calgary, AB
Dennis Trudeau	Nanaimo, BC
Barry Kobryn	Calgary, AB
Rick Van Horne	Nunavut Municipalities
Frank Wetsch	Medicine Hat, AB
Bill Brant	Association of Manitoba Municipalities
Doug Sitland	Government of Nunavut
Michael Hale	Government of Yukon
Jerry Cheshuk	Resort Municipality of Whistler, BC
Raymond Bonnetrouge	Wekweti/NWT Association of Municipalities
Laura Taylor	Victoria, BC
Chris Ward	Edmonton, AB
Will Pearce	Okotoks, AB
David Blain	Chilliwack, BC
Max Hall	Yellowknife, NWT
Gord Thomson	Alberta Urban Municipal Association
Larry Wright	Wood Buffalo, AB
Gary Nieminen	Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association
Fred Nenninger	Vancouver, BC
Joe Muldoon	DC member (Champion), Saskatchewan Environment
Len Sinclair	DC member (Chair), Saskatchewan Environment
Catriona Hickley	DC member, BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
Bob Truelson	DC member, Yukon Department of Environment
Bijan Aidun	DC member, Alberta Environment
Jane McMullen	DC member, NWT Department of Resources...
Larry Strachan	DC member, Manitoba Conservation
Didier Bicchi	DC member, Quebec Ministry of Environment
Haseen Khan	DC member, Newfoundland Department of Environment and Conservation
David Briggins	DC member, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour
Claude Fortin	DC member, Environment Canada
Jennifer Vigano	CCME Secretariat

Moncton, New Brunswick – June 16, 2004

Doug Robinson	Town of Parrsboro
Robert Streach	Municipality of Cumberland
Lyle Yorke	Town of Parrsboro
Gregg Morrison	Town of Wolfville
Tim Devlin	Town of St. Stephen
Fred Whynot	Municipality of Kings County
Bruce Gault	Town of Grand Bay-Westfield
Brian Hazlett	Municipality of Kings County
Joe O'Connor	Municipality of Inverness County
Paul Dionne	City of Edmundston
David Ernst	Town of Yarmouth
Don Beatty	Town of Windsor
Cecil Bowes	City of Miramichi
Michael Cummings	Sussex
Judy Carr	Town of Oromocto
Patrick Wall	City of Fredericton
Chris Nason	Village of McAdam
Peter Terauds	Annapolis County
Ken Simpson	UNSM
Alan Bond	County of Antigonish
Mike O'Leary	County of Antigonish
Herb Deherey	County of Antigonish
Jerry Ryan	CBRM
Marvin MacDonald	SNSMR
Kevin MacDonald	CBRM
Conrad Allain	GMSC
Laurie Emms	Municipality of Annapolis County
Susheel Arora	Municipality of Colchester County
Alan Brady	Halifax Regional Municipality
Tony Blouin	Halifax Regional Municipality
Brenton Colborne	Oxford
Ronald Boudreau	Greater Shediac Sewerage Comm.
Eric Slauenwhite	Village of Lawrencetown
Sean MacDonnell	New Glasgow, NS
Anthony Sheehan	ERPAS, NS
Sandy Cyr	Westville, NS
Graham MacKinnon	ERPAS/NS
Harland Wyand	Town of Bridgewater
Bev Brown	Town of Bridgewater
Charles Crosby	Mayor, Town of Yarmouth
Andy Kirk	Windsor
Tim LeBlanc	DC member, New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government
Cheryl Johnstone	New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government
David Briggs	Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour
Bob Langdon	DC member, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour
Alan Beninger	Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour
Kim Lawrence	Facilitator, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour
Victoria Bruce	Facilitator, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour
Claude Fortin	DC member, Environment Canada
John Clarke	Environment Canada
Jennifer Vigano	CCME Secretariat

Gander, Newfoundland – June 18, 2004

Max Stacey	Town of Badger
Lyle Blackmore	City of Mount Pearl
Alonzo Cusik	Town of Marystown
Angus McLouglin	Town of Norris Arm
Francis Peyton	Town of Norris Arm
Kevin Power	Environment Canada
Barry Carroll	Town of Protugal Cove-St. Phillips
Lynnann Stapleton	City of St. John's
Cyril McCarthy	Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs
Ken John	Conne River
David Moulton	Town of Gander
Malcolm Kelligrew	Town of Eastport
Rick Appleby	Town of Paradise
Lindell Smith	Town of Deer Lake
David Hiscock	Town of Bonavista
Stewart Foote	Town of Pasadena
Arthur Burke	Town of Victoria
Ralph Smith	Town of Clarenville
Charlie Sheppard	SGE Acres
Tony Skiffington	Town of Gambo
Bon Hurley	Town of Glenwood
Glenn Gillingham	Town of Glenwood
Everett McLean	Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Lee Perkins	Town of Grand Falls-Windsor
Bob Thompson	Town of Grand Falls-Windsor
Cluney Matchum	Town of Gander
Claude Fortin	Environment Canada
Herb Card	Department of Environment and Conservation
Haseen Khan	Department of Environment and Conservation
Renee Paterson	Department of Environment and Conservation
Deneen Spracklin	Department of Environment and Conservation
Jennifer Vigano	CCME Secretariat

Toronto, Ontario – June 21, 2004

Tom Tseng	Environment Canada
Paul Drca	City of Windsor
Mark Schiller	Region of Peel
Vic Lim	City of Toronto
Tony Van Rossum	City of London
Milena Avramovic	Association of Ontario Municipalities
Steve Carty	DC member, Ontario Ministry of Environment
Simon Glauser	Ontario Ministry of Environment
Yousry Hamdy	Ontario Ministry of Environment
Claude Fortin	DC member, Environment Canada
Jennifer Vigano	CCME Secretariat

Appendix A: Recommendations and Development Committee Response

The recommendations from the five regional municipal meetings have been summarized below. The Development Committee response and action to the collective recommendations follows the recommendations.

Recommendations from Municipal Regional Meetings

General

- Create a process that respects the interests of Municipalities
- Commit to communication/cooperation
- Identifies a single regulation
- Fact-based risk assessment
- Adequate resourcing (time and money).
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- National discussion fora. Municipalities would like to see a national policy conference occur.
- Municipalities are interested in sponsoring workshops, discussion groups, etc...
- Participation in DC consultation events.
- Review and comment on proposed/draft documents.
- Political people need to be involved.

Development Committee Response

1. The DC will engage and dialogue routinely with the Core Advisory Group (CAG) as the strategy is developed. The CAG includes representatives from ENGO's, Wastewater Associations, FCM, Engineering Groups, First Nations, Researchers, CUPE, INAC.
2. Each DC representative will establish a consultation mechanism within their jurisdiction to ensure that Municipalities and others are informed/engaged as the strategy unfolds.
3. Municipalities are represented on all DC sub-committees: Economic Implications, Harmonization of the Regulatory Framework, Coordinated Science and Research, and Environmental Risk Management Modeling. Through this engagement municipalities will have opportunities to engage at an early stage and can be further informed by their representation.
4. An additional sub-committee has been formed to address Funding Mechanisms required to implement the strategy. Municipalities will be directly engaged on this sub-committee.
5. The DC welcomes opportunities to "piggy-back" on other Canada Wide and Regional fora, including workshops, in order to engage and exchange information with all stakeholders, including municipalities, on the strategy.
6. The DC will engage expert peer review on work products as they are developed. This peer review will involve Municipalities and their consultants as appropriate.
7. Environment Canada is looking at practical ways to address Fisheries Act enforcement while the strategy and the new Fisheries Act regulation is being developed and finalized.
8. The CCME website will be used to post materials on the strategy as it is developed. Other forms of communications such as meetings and direct mailing may be use by DC members to communicate with municipalities and other stakeholders within their jurisdictions.