HDR

Southern Alberta Energy from Waste Association Project Development Plan: Communications Plan

May 2014

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

The Southern Alberta Energy from Waste Association (SAEWA) is a coalition of waste management jurisdictions with an interest in implementing technologies to recover energy from residual waste and reduce long-term reliance on landfill disposal.

With membership totalling 62 municipalities, encompassing 12 waste authorities and waste commissions, SAEWA represents a large portion of the population of Southern Alberta outside of the greater Calgary area.

Figure 1: SAEWA Membership Map
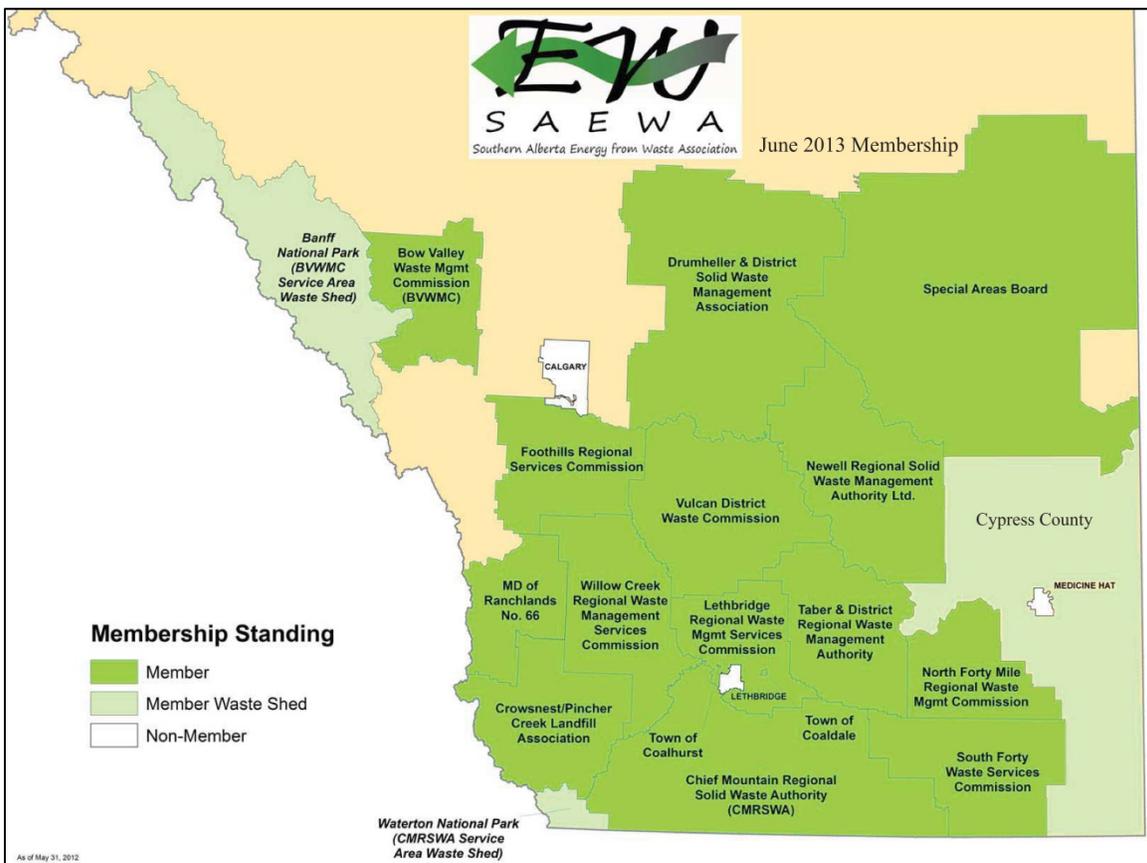
In 2011/2012 SAEWA completed a research study confirming the feasibility of establishing an energy from waste facility for southern Alberta.   The research study reports are available on-line at www.saewa.ca.

Subsequent to completion of the research study SAEWA completed a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) process targeting:

- Potential host communities for an energy from waste facility;
- Potential energy from waste project developers/technology vendors; and,
- Potential energy hosts/customers.

Responses to the REOI demonstrated that there is a strong base of positive interest and support for a southern Alberta energy from waste facility among numerous potential host communities and technology vendors. The REOI also provided valuable information to help shape SAEWA's plans moving forward.

Proceeding with the next-stage in decision-making, SAEWA is preparing a plan to map-out the steps, information needs, resources, schedule and budgets that would be required to move forward with development of an energy from waste facility for southern Alberta. The project development plan is made up of the following four sub-plans:

- Regulatory Requirements Plan
- Siting Process Plan;
- Communications Plan; and,
- Procurement Process Plan.

These four project development plans are consolidated and integrated in the "Initial Business Plan for Energy from Waste" prepared for SAEWA.

This document presents the Communications Plan component of SAEWA's project development plan. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the rationale for a proactive approach to communications and describe the tools and methods recommended to support effective communications during the course of development of energy from waste facility for southern Alberta.

2.0   PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATIONS IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

In the most general sense, a project communications plan outlines the processes for exchanging necessary information about the project with stakeholders. "Stakeholders" is a very broad term which encompasses any person, group or organization with a valid interest in a project, as well as those in a position to influence the project. Stakeholders may be internal to the project team (i.e. SAEWA members and their representatives) or may be external (e.g. the general public that may be affected by the outcome of a project, regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over aspects of a project, Aboriginal communities that may be affected, potential project partners and numerous others).

It is important to recognize that the various stakeholders' interests in a project can vary greatly and in some cases, the interests of some stakeholders may conflict with the interests of some other stakeholders.

At a fundamental level, a project communications program identifies the stakeholders, seeks to understand their interests and maps out meaningful and effective ways to exchange relevant information with stakeholders regarding the project. But a truly effective communications program goes further; it seeks to engage, educate and communicate with stakeholders in a manner that is two-way, meaningful, responsive and transparent. In doing so, an effective communications program builds trust and receives feedback to beneficially influence the outcome of the project.

The SAEWA project will be complex and extend over a number of years; initially directly engaging a broad audience that will likely narrow somewhat as the project proceeds into the siting, construction and operation phases. Project communications should always be clear, highly visible and positive in tone. The communications program should be highly flexible and used to anticipate or respond in a timely fashion to any issues or concerns that may arise. A core function of the communications program is to assist with keeping the project team informed as to stakeholders' attitudes and feedback regarding the project. The approach that is proposed for project communication is intended to:

- Present consistent messaging regarding the project and the role of energy from waste as a component of a more sustainable and integrated waste management system;
- Provide frequent exposure for the project so it is regarded as an expected and familiar component of infrastructure;
- Provide correct and reliable information in a plain language educational format to help establish a baseline of knowledge among those audiences that participate in the project;
- Seek a balance in tone and style between the technical and educational aspects of the information that is disseminated;
- Meet the appropriate milestones and applicable regulatory requirements while proactively reaching beyond those obligations; and,
- Actively solicit and encourage feedback from key audiences as appropriate to the project.

Actively engaging stakeholders early in the process of developing substantial infrastructure such as an energy from waste facility will ultimately increase the potential for a successful outcome. SAEWA's energy from waste project will engage multiple audiences over an

extended period of time through various project phases. A comprehensive approach to communications that spans all phases of the project will assist with:

- Establishing and maintaining meaningful two-way communications with various interested parties and stakeholders;
- Development and timely delivery of useful and reliable information to educate stakeholders;
- Soliciting genuine feedback and expression of any valid concerns held by stakeholders;
- Establishing and maintaining focus on matters that are relevant to the project and stakeholders;
- Heading-off or responding to apprehensions, false assumptions, misperceptions and misinformation; and,
- Fulfilling specific regulatory requirements for consultation activities that are embedded in certain phases of the project development process.

It is important to the success of the project that SAEWA speak with a single, unified public voice on all matters related to the project. Given the diverse perspectives and interests of the large number of entities making up the SAEWA organization, establishing and maintaining this unified voice for the project will be a complex task. To be able to speak with a unified voice and reflect the broad interests and decisions of the overall membership in proceeding with a project, SAEWA must receive, listen to, understand and respond to the feedback of all of its members. Building upon its existing communications policies, SAEWA will need to be the internal communication hub for its membership; receiving and circulating reliable information in a timely manner, while also facilitating exchange of viewpoints among members and building consensus internally.

Externally, the role of communications in the SAEWA project is a two-way function to:

- Deliver project information to various audiences in a clear and consistent fashion; and,
- Solicit feedback from stakeholders to allow valid concerns to be expressed and addressed to the extent practical within the realm and scope of the project.

Achieving meaningful two-way communications can be particularly challenging in the context of a technically complex project that touches on the diverse and sometimes conflicting interests of a wide range of stakeholders. Delivery of information in plain language, graphic and other formats that are appropriately tailored to the key audiences including local community residents will be essential. This communication program is also intended to ensure that information is sought appropriately throughout the project, from key audiences, to support the successful completion of the approvals and permitting processes.

2.1 STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

Communication is the means to raise stakeholder awareness and build understanding regarding the importance and implications of the project, while engaging key audiences in actively participating in various phases of the work. Early identification of stakeholders will better allow for tailoring and/or focusing of key communications elements in order to most effectively reach target audiences. To ensure that the communication program is well grounded and effective, an important initial task will be to conduct a stakeholder scan to develop a comprehensive list and set of profiles of key stakeholders with an interest in SAEWA's project.

In order to successfully raise awareness and build knowledge regarding the project it will be necessary to understand the audiences to be engaged. There are some stakeholders that have already been introduced to the project through prior work tasks completed by SAEWA. These include the SAEWA municipalities, certain provincial agencies, the energy from waste vendor community and some media outlets. Other audiences that remain to be more fully engaged include: the general public, residents, businesses, local interest groups, Aboriginal peoples, non-governmental organizations and others. For all stakeholder audiences it will be necessary to gather and analyze data to understand the values, priorities, beliefs, perceptions, experiences, culture and attitudes of these audiences including developing an understanding of their current knowledge and attitudes regarding waste management and energy from waste.

As a high-level starting point, the following stakeholder groups are identified as target audiences that will need to be addressed during SAEWA's project:

- SAEWA's project steering group, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, appointed member representatives and staff;
- Mayors, Reeves, Councillors, senior local municipal administrators and senior waste management staff of SAEWA members;
- Regulatory agencies (i.e. municipal, provincial and federal) with jurisdiction over aspects of development and operation of SAEWA's project;
- Public stakeholders including:
  - Residents and businesses within communities identified by the Siting Process as potential candidate sites and the preferred site;
  - Residents and business of SAEWA communities;
  - Residents and businesses in other communities;
  - The general public at-large;

- Aboriginal communities potentially affected by the project;
- Vendors including energy from waste technology developers, suppliers and or service providers;
- Non-governmental and/or grassroots organizations and other groups with an indirect interest in the outcome of the project;
- Representatives of non-SAEWA municipalities; and,
- The media.

In preparing the stakeholder database this preliminary list may need to be expanded and/or sub-divided further to recognize the different perspectives, interests and priorities of different sub-sets of stakeholders. The following briefly profiles some of the primary characteristics of the stakeholder groups recognized in this preliminary identification:

SAEWA's project steering group, Committees, Board, Appointed Representatives and Staff

SAEWA's various internal stakeholders represent the project leaders and the primary decision-makers influencing the direction of the project. These people will also be the main representatives of the project communicating back to each of their respective community organizations. As the project progresses, it will become increasingly important to ensure that SAEWA's representatives are always engaged, well-informed and knowledgeable regarding the project's issues, progress of the work and future steps.

Other Elected Officials and Senior Municipal Staff of SAEWA Member Communities

While not directly involved in project decision making, other elected officials (primarily municipal and provincial) and senior municipal administration and waste management staff of SAEWA member communities will play an important role in building and maintaining support for the project. These people are in a position to influence the perceptions and direction of their various organizations on matters related to SAEWA's project issues. There has already been some engagement of portions of this group through the earlier REOI process, a few public meetings, media articles and project updates.

Regulatory Agencies

Regulatory agencies play a critical role in development of waste management infrastructure. As organizations that derive their mandate from different levels of elected government (i.e. municipal, provincial and potentially federal), in addition to

their primary responsibility for ensuring adherence to legislation, these organizations also have a strong interest in the public perceptions that form around the project.

Early and on-going two-way dialogue with representatives of key regulatory agencies assists with timely completion of the approvals and permitting processes. It is generally prudent to keep representatives of key agencies well-informed about the progress of the project work, the issues that are arising and the project team's responses to move the project forward. To the extent possible, it is recommended that positive working relationships with representatives of key regulatory agencies be established early and maintained throughout the course of the project.

Early steps to initiate some of these relationships have begun in the course of preparing the project development plans through initial introductory discussions that have been held with: Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (the Approvals Group and the Environmental Assessment Office), Alberta Energy; Alberta Utilities Commission; and Alberta Electric System Operator. It is recommended that measures be implemented to develop these relationships further, and expanded to encompass other regulatory agencies as may be necessary.

The Public

Establishment and maintenance of relationships with various diverse public stakeholders is the most dynamic, challenging and potentially useful aspect of communications for a large, public waste management infrastructure project such as SAEWA's. Public stakeholders can range from the broadest definition of the general public at-large to far more specific groups and individuals, such as those who may be located in close proximity to a proposed facility site. Public stakeholders have considerable potential to influence publicly funded and sponsored projects by expression of their perceptions, opinions and wishes through political channels.

To date, there has been some limited initial engagement with public stakeholders on SAEWA's project. A few media articles and public meetings have generated some initial public awareness during the completion of the SAEWA research study.

Engaging the public on a project like this is important for several reasons some of which include:

- Build awareness, familiarity and support for the project;
- Educate the public regarding key issues surrounding the project, as well as larger waste management and sustainability issues;

- Develop a shared vision for the role of energy from waste in Southern Alberta;
- Solicit input into the development of an energy from waste facility; and,
- Demonstrate compliance with regulatory consultation requirements.

Key challenges associated with public stakeholder relations relate to: timely and effective communication of information on technically complex issues; varied and potentially conflicting interests within sub-sets of public stakeholders; highly variable degrees of stakeholder interest and attention at different project stages; and the varying degrees of effectiveness for different methods of exchanging information with different sub-sets of public stakeholders. A great deal of the effort in implementing a project communications plan is focused on overcoming these challenges through the use of extensive and multi-faceted project communication tools.

Aboriginal Peoples

As of 2011, Alberta has the third largest Aboriginal population among Canadian provinces[1], suggesting that the Aboriginal population will be an important stakeholder for this project. Moving forward with SAEWA's project, consultation with Aboriginal groups may become an important aspect of the site selection and approvals process. As part of the communications plan, the SAEWA project may need to engage with Aboriginal communities with the focus being those groups that hold treaty rights or claims within the area of the potential energy from waste site (once identified). An early task in implementation of the project communications plan will be to develop a project-specific program for engagement of Aboriginal peoples, if First Nations Consultation is deemed necessary by the Province as part of initiating the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Technology Vendors and Project Developers

Energy from waste technology vendors and project developers represent an important stakeholder group for SAEWA. As a large complex project, development of an energy from waste facility represents substantial investment and financial risk exposure on the part of the both the project Owner and the technology vendors/project developers. Confidence in the overall project development program is a high priority area of interest for technology vendors/project developers. The Procurement Process Plan report discusses the importance of conducting a credible, fair and focused process to engage technology vendors/project developers in competitive procurement to achieve

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[1] Statistics Canada. (May 8 2013). http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130508/dq130508a-eng.htm

the desired outcomes and good value. Establishing and maintaining effective communications with technology vendors/project developers throughout the project is one important activity to assist with conducting the procurement process.

SAEWA has already begun the dialogue with technology vendors/project developers through issuance of Requests for Expressions of Interest (REOI) in 2012. Because of potential legal, contractual and commercial issues that could arise, communications with technology vendors/project developers should be managed by the procurement team and is embedded within the Procurement Plan.

Non-Governmental Organizations and other Interest Groups

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are typically not-for-profit corporations that work to advance environmental, social and/or community interests and objectives. The scope, approach and mandate of NGOs can vary widely, ranging from large international organizations with a focus on activism to raise awareness and motivate action or change within broadly defined topic areas, to smaller local grassroots groups that seek to achieve certain outcomes in alignment with the interests and objectives specific to their membership. The role NGOs often fulfil in the process of development of infrastructure projects involves facilitating engagement and feedback from stakeholders, as well as directly participating in consultations.

Other than an expression of support for the project submitted by one local Chamber of Commerce during the REOI process, to-date the SAEWA project has not yet attracted substantial feedback from NGOs. Because NGOs define their own mandate and priorities to guide their activities, it is not possible to predict which NGOs may choose to participate in SAEWA's project development process. As part of building the project stakeholder database, it is recommended that profile information be compiled for those NGOs which may have an interest in participating in the SAEWA project development process. Including this information in the stakeholder database will assist in communicating effectively with NGOs that choose to become involved in the project.

2.2   MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS

It cannot be overemphasized that SAEWA's communications related to the project should be clear, concise, consistent, correct and timely. To achieve these objectives, communications must be carefully managed throughout the duration of the project. Key elements of managing communications include the following:

- Clear definition of channels of communication as well as the roles and responsibilities for the various parties involved;
- Policies and protocols governing:
    o Planning, development, quality review, approval and issuance of all communications content and materials as well as implementation of communications activities;
    o Receiving and responding to inquiries from different stakeholders;
    o Interactions with the Media;
- Coordination and routine updating of project team members regarding communications messages, content, materials and events; and,
- Record-keeping.

The following outlines a typical step-wise process for planning, development and implementation of a communications action:

a) Identification of a communications need and direction from the project leadership to proceed with a specific communications action (i.e. event, publication, release of information, etc.);
b) Definition of: overview and objectives for the communication, key concepts and messages to be conveyed, selection of effective method(s) of communication, materials and resources needed, and timing for the communication;
c) Make advance arrangements (i.e. book meeting hall, obtain advertising space, etc.) as necessary to implement the communication action;
d) Development of draft communication materials and content;
e) Review and comment on draft communications materials by project leadership;
f) Finalize communications materials and obtain final sign-off from project leadership;
g) Provide advance notification and/or circulation of preparatory materials to parties as designated by the project leadership (Note: dependent on the nature of the communication, advance notification and/or preparatory materials may be provided to parties internal and/or external to the project team); and,
h) Complete final arrangements and execute the communications action.

2.3   ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Issues management is an important aspect of project communications that encompasses anticipating, prioritizing and responding to issues that have the potential to influence the project. While no means comprehensive, the following lists a few of the key issues that are commonly raised during development of energy from waste facilities:

- The importance of controlling emissions to protect air quality, health, the environment and the local community;
- Selection of a technology that is supportive of the above and performs efficiently and well as a component of an integrated waste management system;
- Compatibility of the proposed approach with continuation of long-term, higher level waste diversion efforts (i.e. reduce, re-use, recycle);
- Control of potential nuisance impacts such as odour and noise;
- The role of a facility in the host community; and,
- Experiences at other locations where energy from waste has been implemented.

To manage these - and numerous other issues that could arise - the project team should carefully develop responses for each issue that are:

- Consistent with the guiding principles for the project;
- Reflective of the key messages for the project;
- Correct and accurately reflect the project commitments going forward;
- Target the variety of potential audiences that will have an interest in the issue; and,
- Conveyed using communications channels or approaches that are well-suited to reach the target audiences.

3.0 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

3.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The fundamental goals of communications for SAEWA's project are to: exchange information with the public and other stakeholders; establish public trust and confidence; and assist with successfully completing the approvals process for the proposed facility.

Broadly speaking, the communications program will help meet these goals and build relationships with stakeholders by:

- Enhancing general awareness of the project;
- Delivering timely and effective communications;
- Engaging key governmental agencies;
- Preparing and implementing a First Nations Consultation Plan if deemed a requirement for the EIA process by the Province and completing the specific public notification and consultation steps which are embedded in the EIA and other regulatory approvals processes;

- Providing education on the implications of the project and the role of energy from waste in an integrated, sustainable waste management system;
- Providing channels for stakeholders to express their views and a range of opportunities for feedback and input to the project tailored to the different audiences;
- Actively listening and engaging the community and stakeholders to build trust and credibility;
- Identifying and responding to issues and concerns in a proactive fashion;
- Tracking feedback and responses to support implementing activities required to fulfil commitments;
- Establishing a baseline for continued communications on the project during the later construction and operations phases;
- Engaging SAEWA members to ensure that their interests and requirements are addressed and keeping the SAEWA internal stakeholders informed about progress throughout the project, including regular schedule updates and interaction regarding key decision points; and,
- Monitoring and adjusting communications to improve effectiveness;

3.2 ACTIVITY 1: INITIATION OF COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Communications Guide

Managing communications can be challenging in the context of a complex and dynamic project such as SAEWA is contemplating. It is recommended that an early step in undertaking the communications program include development of a guide to document in detail the principles, policies and procedures that will be used to manage project communications. It is recommended that the communications guide address the following, as a minimum:

- Overview of planned communications program including guiding principles, objectives and anticipated timelines;
- Identification of SAEWA's Communications Lead, assigned with primary responsibility to run and administer the communications program;
- Designation of SAEWA's official Spokesperson(s);
- Definition of policies, procedures, assigned roles and responsibilities for:
  - o Development, review and approval of communications content and materials;
  - o Issuance of only approved communications materials;
  - o Clearly defined channels of communication and coordination of information among project team members;

- o Receiving and responding to inquiries;
- o Media interactions;
- o Making arrangements for events and publications; and,
- o Documentation and record-keeping of communications.

Communications team members should review and become familiar with the communications guide. It is recommended that the communications guide be periodically revised and updated during the course of the project to reflect changes that may occur.

Project Branding

A consistent and meaningful project identity is important to create recognition and familiarity with a broad audience over the length of the project. Project recognition will assist with engaging stakeholders and also provides an opportunity to express fundamental themes regarding the overall philosophy and intent for the project. The project branding will provide visual keys that can be used repeatedly to convey the primary themes that SAEWA wishes to emphasize. An example of a strong project brand is illustrated on the project website for Peel Region's energy recovery project(http://www.peelenergyrecovery.ca/).

Some initial project branding has already been undertaken by SAEWA as reflected by its logo and website (http://www.saewa.ca/). SAEWA's corporate logo should be used consistently as a primary project identifier. As a component of initiation of the Communications Plan, the current approach to project branding should be reviewed, expanded on and if necessary, refined or refreshed to meet the full scope of anticipated needs for the various phases of the project. The branding includes such items as the development of consistent graphic themes, appropriate tag line(s), templates for communications materials to be used throughout the project (i.e. project web site, advertisements, FAQs, letters and memos, study reports, presentations, information panels etc.).

Key Messages

Key messages are brief, strong statements that convey fundamental or core information about the project (i.e. guiding values, goals, facts, commitments, actions etc.) in a focused manner. Information included in key messages must always be correct, clear and consistent. Key messages are an important tool to assist with many aspects of project communications including public advertising, media contacts, facilitation of public discussions and as supporting guidance for SAEWA members to use.

Development of key messages is a process that should begin as soon as possible at the start of the project. Key messages should also be reviewed, refined, and added to, on an on-going

basis as the project proceeds. Key messages should be carefully crafted taking into consideration the project specific information that is available, the target audience, the message delivery method as well as the public nature of information that is released. Key messages should be approved for use by SAEWA's project leadership.

As a starting point, the following lists a selection of a few preliminary key messages that may apply to SAEWA's energy from waste project:

- SAEWA is a coalition of Southern Alberta municipalities and waste management organizations committed to recovering energy from waste materials and reducing reliance on landfills.
- The purpose of the SAEWA energy from waste project is to develop an energy from waste facility to move Southern Alberta towards a focus on the fourth "R" - energy recovery.
- SAEWA's energy from waste project will provide its members with the opportunity to pool their residual waste streams to maximize resource recovery potential, while maintaining control of their own disposal capacity.
- As one element of an integrated waste management system, energy from waste maximizes the recovery of energy and other products from the waste stream, ranking higher than landfill disposal on the hierarchy of sustainable waste management practices.
- SAEWA's proposed energy from waste facility will be designed and operated using modern, advanced air pollution controls to meet stringent regulatory emission criteria to protect human health and the environment.
- SAEWA's proposed energy from waste facility will focus only on those materials that would otherwise be sent to landfill for disposal and will be designed and operated to support on-going and future expansion of 3R's initiatives.
- Meaningful two-way communication and consultation with stakeholders is central to SAEWA's proposed plan for development, construction and operation of an energy from waste facility for Southern Alberta.
- SAEWA's development and operation of an energy from waste facility in Southern Alberta will comply with Federal, Provincial and Municipal regulatory requirements.
- SAEWA's siting process will follow a careful, science-based decision-making process to choose the preferred location for an energy from waste facility taking into account environmental, social and economic factors.

- SAEWA will conduct a fair and transparent competitive procurement process to select a highly qualified project developer and state-of-the-art technology with the track-record and capabilities needed to successfully develop the facility.

Numerous additional key messages will likely need to be developed to address additional topic areas that may be of interest to stakeholders. It is anticipated that the key messages will evolve over the course of the project and will possibly expand or change as the project progresses.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Upon initiation of the project, a list of FAQs should be developed and released that reflect the key messages and the range of questions that have already arisen publicly in the media regarding the project and also to address questions that may arise. As an example, the Durham York Energy from waste project website (http://www.durhamyorkwaste.ca/faq.htm) lists FAQs associated with a recent energy from waste project.

During the course of the project, regular updates to the FAQs should be undertaken based on feedback received through consultations. Posting updated FAQs to the project website would serve as a response to key questions posed on-line and through other media.

Issues Database

The importance of on-going issues management and a sample of potential issues and responses are discussed briefly in Section 2.3. An initial early task in implementation of the Communications Plan should include development of an issues database and potential responses.

Stakeholder Database

A detailed stakeholder database should be established and kept updated for the duration of the project. The database should include contact information for all identified stakeholder individuals and groups and will be used to notify stakeholders of opportunities to participate in communications activities. Recognizing that different target audiences may need different communication and engagement approaches, stakeholder profiles should be prepared and communication efforts should be uniquely tailored for each audience. In addition to including basic contact information, the following profile characteristics should be assessed for each stakeholder (individual and group) and included in the database:

- Specific interests and priorities with respect to the project;
- Potential role(s) and influence;

- Potential contributions/impact;
- Knowledge of project specific issues and topics;
- Group organization, leadership and resources;
- Linkages and relationships with other stakeholders; and,
- Records of contact and participation in the communications program.

The database should be developed initially by the project team, based on experience with this and similar projects, with input from SAEWA representatives. Over the course of the project, various internal and external stakeholders are likely to express interest in the project, and the database will need to be updated on a continual basis to reflect this interest. This electronic database can easily be converted to a mailing list.

Activity 1 Summary	
Objective	— To document the policies, procedures, tools and systems that will be used by the communications team to guide implementation of project communications — To prepare the fundamental elements of the communications program
Timeline	— Commence shortly following SAEWA's decision to proceed with project development — Estimated duration: Approximately 3 months initially with periodic updates thereafter
Desired Outcomes	— Preparation of the communications guide, project branding, key messages, FAQs, issues database and stakeholder database

3.3 ACTIVITY 2: COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT TOOLS

Project Website

A project website has been developed and currently provides general information, background materials and documents on SAEWA. The website should continue to be used and maintained as a platform for distribution of information and notification of opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the project. The website functionality should also be expanded to provide mechanisms to receive input and potentially provide a basis for more interactive communications. All content for the website should be developed, reviewed and approved according to the policies and procedures recommended to be developed and included in the communications guide.

Social Media

Social media used in support of this project should include Twitter, YouTube, mobile apps and QR codes as information technology tools to supplement the project website.

The Twitter account should be established early on in the project, at the time of the project's public launch. The project Twitter account will allow for promotion of the project, events, as well as provides immediate alerts and news. The 'hash tag' for the project should be publicized in other communications vehicles such as the project website and publications. The content for the Twitter account should be supportive of the project objectives. All content that is posted on the project website should also be cross-posted on the Twitter account. The Twitter account should be maintained on a continual basis. Ideally an individual will be designated as the 'personality' of the Twitter account. By establishing a single personality behind the Twitter account, the community is much more likely to engage and to feel engaged. Tweets should be issued on a regular basis; ideally from 1 to 4 tweets per day depending on levels of project activities. The focus of tweets would be to engage in dialogue regarding the project or to distribute information.

Depending on the audience, videos are often found to be more engaging than extensive text-based documents. The project website should incorporate brief videos profiling various specific aspects of the project as a convenient platform for wide-spread sharing of information and emphasis of key messages. Basic videos are easily produced and can be as simple as a recording of a project representative or person from the community, speaking in front of a camera. Professional videos can also be produced at key project milestones (e.g. at the completion of the EIA) or to address specific topics, to provide visual materials and dialogue that can assist the audience in understanding highly technical material. Videos of project presentations and events can then easily be available on the project website and/or project YouTube channel. SAEWA has already posted videos to its website on occasion.

Quick Response or "QR" Codes are two-dimensional bar codes that store web addresses or other information. Using a smart phone's built-in camera and a free application, people can scan QR codes and be directed immediately to a specific website. QR codes can be printed on posters and advertisements, as well as on the commitment cards to drive people to the project website in a fun and interesting way.

SAEWA's QR Code

The following table summarizes the effective use of social media as it relates to typical project activities and potential audiences:

Social Media Platforms and their Areas of Effectiveness					
		Twitter	**YouTube (Videos)**	**Mobile Apps/QR Codes**	**Project Website**
Type of Activity	Engagement and Relationship Building	✓	✓	✓	✓
	News	✓	✓		✓
	Project Announcements (i.e. events, major milestones)	✓		✓	✓
	Education/Information	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Consultation				✓
	Listening to the public	✓			✓
Age Group	Youth		✓	✓	✓
	Middle-aged	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Seniors		✓		✓

*This chart has been adapted from the Web 2.0 Tools and Situations chart in the Victoria Department of Health – Reference Guide.

Online Open House

It is recommended that SAEWA make use of Online Open Houses, in which video presentation of key project information and messages are combined with interactive presentations and posted online. This provides both verbal and visual presentation of the information in a format where the audience can focus on those specific topics in which they have the most interest. On-line questionnaires and feedback forms can be incorporated into the Online Open House. Such a forum would be conveniently accessible to a broad range of stakeholders and would contribute valuable input to the consultation record required as part of the EIA.

Customer Contact Centre

A telephone call centre and/or physical customer contact location (i.e. municipal offices of one or more of the SAEWA members) should be established as a point of contact for inquiries and information. A toll free telephone number for customer contact should be established and included on project contact information publications. Regular manned hours of operation should be established for the customer contact centre. An automated recording and message relay system should be implemented outside of the hours of operation. Staff at the customer contact centre should be provided with prepared and approved information (i.e. brochures, FAQ lists, summary reports etc.) and trained in the following:

- Use of the approved communications procedures;

- Key messages and FAQs;
- Receiving and recording inquiries; and,
- Directing customers to the correct information sources including potentially forwarding inquiries to the project team for response.

The customer contact centre staff will not necessarily be knowledgeable regarding all aspects of the project and as such, training should include clear instructions on what types of inquiries can be addressed directly (i.e. FAQs, key messages, event information, and direction to other information sources) and what matters must be referred to a member of the project team for response (i.e. media contacts, complex or sensitive matters and all other inquiries not listed above). The performance and effectiveness of the customer contact centre and its staff should be monitored throughout the project and adjustments or corrections implemented if necessary.

Surveys

Public surveys can provide valuable information regarding a cross-section of public opinions and attitudes towards the project. It is recommended that at least three public surveys be carried out across the SAEWA population during the course of project development. Surveys should be brief, using focused questions that are carefully constructed to accurately solicit unbiased feedback on key topics.

An initial survey should be conducted as soon as possible following SAEWA's decision to proceed. This will establish a baseline understanding of public knowledge, interest and opinions regarding the project. Subsequent surveys provide a method of judging change in the public's viewpoints and potentially identifying new issues and concerns as they arise. This information could prove very useful in the environmental impact assessment, particularly when responding to questions regarding the potential social effects of an energy from waste facility. Subsequent surveys will also provide a method of gauging the effectiveness of communications efforts. Additional or alternative attitudinal research may be needed to enhance the surveys, if collection of supplementary information is warranted.

Facility Tours

Stakeholders who have the opportunity to visit and tour operating energy from waste facilities are better able to understand the following:

- The first-hand, real-world sensory experience of the sights, sounds, smells, size, appearance, complexity and activities of energy from waste facilities;

- The role that an energy from waste facility can have in a community and the ability to meet and speak directly with staff, politicians, regulators, etc. from those communities;
- A broad approach to integrated waste management making use of all the tools available to the greatest advantage and the context of energy from waste as one important piece of the puzzle;
- The resource potential (i.e. energy and materials) contained in waste and recognition of the role that waste management can play in improving society's overall resource efficiency;
- The complex technical processes that are incorporated into energy from waste systems;
- The importance of sophisticated, modern technologies and control systems in managing operational and environmental performance of energy from waste facilities along with recognition that those technologies are continually advancing;
- The extensive role that monitoring and reporting plays in operation of energy from waste facilities;
- The important context of regulation and compliance throughout the lifecycle of an energy from waste facility;
- The importance of community stakeholder interaction and participation; and,
- Observation of a range of design and operational approaches to assist with development of informed judgments on what represents best-practices and is potentially most applicable at "home".

Stakeholder representatives who have had the opportunity to tour energy from waste facilities are then able to share their unbiased impressions with other stakeholders, develop informed opinions with greater confidence and communicate the reasoning behind their opinions based on their personal experiences and judgements.

A small group of SAEWA representatives have already had the benefit of visiting a few energy from waste facilities and have shared their observations with other SAEWA members. It is recommended that an additional tour of energy from waste facilities be conducted with a broader cross-section of stakeholders prior to finalization of the EIA submission. Extending such tours to include members of the local community and potentially other stakeholders would promote the transparency of SAEWA's process, support stakeholders developing their own informed judgements and could assist in addressing a number of common mis-perceptions. Documentation of tours should be included in the project communication record as consultation. Practical budget limitations will determine how many persons can participate in the proposed tour and which facilities could be visited.

Communications Records

It is recommended that the communications team establish and maintain records detailing all communications efforts, feedback received, follow-ups undertaken and outcomes reached. Documentation of the communications aspects of the project is an important activity to assist with coordination of information among the project team, as well as being able to demonstrate the adequacy of the communication program in the EIA process.

Communications Effectiveness Monitoring

Engagement with a broad audience is an important part of the communications program. It is recommended that the effectiveness of the community engagement process be assessed periodically throughout the project using the following key indicators, as a minimum:

- Attendance of stakeholders at public information centres and other events;
- Number and type of inquiries received at the customer contact centre;
- Number and nature of "person-to-person" conversations at public events;
- Comment cards distributed and feedback returned at events;
- Quantity of Twitter followers, website visits, participation in Online Open Houses, etc.;
- Media coverage – quantification of uptake and accuracy of message delivery;
- SAEWA members feedback and comments relayed through elected members by constituents;
- Responsiveness to surveys and assessment of results including participants' changing awareness, knowledge and attitudes;
- Record of correspondence directed to the project;
- Evolution of issues as recorded in the tracking database; and,
- Numbers and profile of engaged stakeholders as recorded in the stakeholder database.

As the project proceeds, the project team should periodically review the effectiveness of communications and if necessary, adjust and refocus the communications plan to improve effectiveness, if warranted.

Activity 1 Summary	
Objective	— Develop and apply the primary tools necessary to support project communications
Timeline	— Commence shortly following SAEWA's decision to proceed with project development — Estimated duration: On-going throughout project development

Activity 1 Summary	
Desired Outcomes	— Effective use of the project website, social media, online open houses, customer contact centre, attitudinal surveys and facility tours to inform, educate and consult with stakeholders regarding the project — Recording and documentation of communications efforts and outcomes — Monitoring, assessment and adjustment of the communications program, if necessary to improve effectiveness

3.4 ACTIVITY 3: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

On-Going Engagement of Stakeholders

The following outlines approaches recommended for on-going engagement of various stakeholder groups throughout the course of the project:

SAEWA Membership

An information package should be developed and provided to all SAEWA members in the beginning stages of the project, including an overview of the communications strategy for the project, the initial key messages and FAQs, the project schedule and project team contact information. A follow-up meeting should be held with SAEWA representatives to provide an update on the project and an overview of the communications guide, including review of communications policies and procedures which are to be followed. As the project continues, all SAEWA members should be kept informed regarding planned communications activities and the overall progress of the project through quarterly briefing packages and additional email bulletins as may be necessary. Member update meetings should be held twice per year, as a minimum, and at additional key project milestones (i.e. identification of the preferred site, identification of the preferred vendor, etc.). Additional topic-specific meetings of the membership may also be required to address specific issues that will arise.

The Public

As indicated in Section 2.1, engaging in meaningful communications with the general public is one of the most important aspects of the communications program for the project. The potential range of interests, viewpoints, and preferred communications styles of this diverse stakeholder group requires the communications program to make use of a broad range of multi-faceted tools. Some of the key elements of broad

communications with the general public are discussed in Section 3.3 and include the project website, social media, online open houses and customer contact centre. Additional targeted communications efforts will be required and include public information consultation sessions, local community events, notifications and small focused meetings with potentially affected parties such as residents, property owners and businesses in close proximity to a preferred site location. Summary documentation of the efforts and outcomes of public engagement is a required element for completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Regulatory Agencies

Initial introductory discussions have been held with SAEWA representatives and representatives of some Provincial regulatory agencies. It is recommended that the project team and SAEWA representatives continue to engage in discussions with local, Provincial and Federal officials throughout the course of the project. Communications with regulatory agencies is outlined in the Regulatory Requirements Plan.

Aboriginal Peoples

As part of initiation of the Environmental Impact Assessment process, the need for First Nations Consultation will be determined by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development based on an understanding of the proposed site location and the potential for adverse impacts of First Nations rights and traditional uses. While the specific needs and details of a First Nations Consultation program cannot currently be fully defined without determination of the preferred site location (see Siting Process Plan), the document, *"Alberta's First Nations Consultation Guidelines on Land Management and Resource Development, (Nov. 2007 Final)"* outlines the following general elements:

- Assessment - decision on the duty to consult and whom to consult;
- Potential delegation - determination of roles and responsibilities of the Proponent (i.e. SAEWA) and the Province in consultations;
- Notifications and information sharing – Notify First Nations and provide written notification soliciting responses expressing any concerns; provide plain language description of the project identifying potential impacts and if required conduct meetings with First Nations contacts to discuss comments, concerns and potential mitigation strategies;
- Consultation record – summarize and document consultation efforts and outcomes

The above referenced Guideline emphasizes the importance of initiating these consultations early in the project process, before decisions are made. If required, First Nations Consultation should take place as early as possible in initiation of the EIA process.

Following completion of the First Nations Consultation, the Province will make a determination as to the adequacy of the consultation process based on assessment of the following:

- Meaningful consultations conducted in the spirit of collaboration;
- Clear identification of potential adverse impacts;
- Effective communication of the project information and the scope of potential impacts;
- Efforts expended to avoid and mitigate impacts/concerns;
- Exchange of information within a reasonable timeframe; and,
- The nature and extent of First Nations participation.

Non-governmental Organizations and other Interest Groups

Non-governmental organizations and other interest groups may choose to participate in SAEWA's project to express their views and provide input through the communications program. As indicated in Section 2.1, it is not currently possible to predict the involvement that representatives of this stakeholder group may choose to have in SAEWA's project. It recommended that the communications plan include allowances for meetings, discussions and correspondence with NGOs and other interest groups. As the project progresses, the specific requirements and budget allocated to communications with NGOs and other interest groups should be periodically reviewed and revised if necessary.

Technology Vendors/Project Developers

Through the procurement process, the project team and key SAEWA representatives will engage in discussions with technology vendors/project developers at various stages of the project. Once selected through the procurement process, the preferred technology vendor/project developer will become involved in the project communications plan. Communications with technology vendors/project developers is outlined in the Procurement Process Plan.

Media

The media is an important channel for circulation of information throughout the project. Not only will the media distribute information and influence stakeholder perceptions within SAEWA's member communities, media coverage will likely reach the general public and other interested parties throughout Alberta, and potentially across Canada and internationally. It is important that SAEWA recognize the role the media can play and work to ensure that the project messages are correctly represented in a timely manner. It is recommended that a project media kit be developed and produced with background information on the project. The media kit should be periodically updated as the project progresses. Media releases should be developed at the beginning of the project and throughout the project for key project milestones or if significant issues arise.

It is important to note that due to the potential commercial and contractual implications of the procurement process (see Procurement Process Plan), any media interactions relating to the procurement process should be carefully coordinated between the procurement lead and the communications lead.

Project Notifications

Throughout the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regular advertisements will be needed to publicize events and major milestones and/or project developments. These notices are important to the engagement process as the public needs to be kept informed and aware of the project progress, issues that arise and are being addressed and opportunities for feedback.

Public Information Consultations

Public information consultations will have a key role in communications during various stages of the project. Public information consultation sessions will be required to support key steps in the Environmental Assessment process. These sessions are typically held as facilitated meetings, with information presented in panels and handouts, with an opportunity for questions and answers with members of the project team. Consultations at project initiation and at other key project milestones should be held across the SAEWA area to allow interested parties to participate and provide feedback on the overall project. During the site selection process, a number of sessions will need to be held in the areas closest to prospective sites, to solicit input from the general public and other stakeholders located in proximity to a potential site. Summary information from each session should be documented and made available on the project website.

Local Community Events

In the later phases of the project specific focused sessions will be necessary to engage residents and landowners at locations within close proximity to the preferred energy from waste site. These sessions should take the form of small group meetings and/or one-on-one sessions with specific parties. These venues would allow for more direct dialogue, which is often required to identify specific social and other issues, and to discuss a reasonable resolution of those issues. These sessions would not be broadly advertised, and instead would be arranged through direct contact with the affected parties. These sessions would be arranged and led by the consultant team, with support from key SAEWA representatives.

Resident Property Owner Notifications and Meetings

Typically, for projects of this nature, municipalities require a standard process and support materials that are used for notifying residents and businesses within areas where municipal activities are taking place. For this project a standard notification will be used and ensure that it is consistent with the project branding. Once the location of the proposed energy from waste site is confirmed, a resident notice will be updated and issued and meetings will be arranged as needed. Most resident notices will be distributed as unaddressed admail or may be hand-delivered, depending on proximity to the site.

Activity 1 Summary	
Objective	— Proactive engagement of stakeholders in meaningful, two-way communications regarding the project
Timeline	— Commence as early as possible following completion of initial tasks included in Activities 1 and 2 — Coordinate with initiation of the site selection process — Estimated duration: On-going throughout project development
Desired Outcomes	— Conduct consultations tailored to stakeholders and project phases including: issuance of notifications, broad public information consultations, local community events and focused meetings with potentially affected parties located in close proximity to the preferred site

3.5 RESOURCES

Several different resources will be required to complete the Communications Plan. Carrying out the work described requires an experienced project leadership group working in collaboration with a diverse group of specialists and subject-matter experts. To provide effective leadership of the overall project development plan and contribute to the

communications program, it is recommended that SAEWA designate the following key roles from among its representatives:

SAEWA's project steering group:

- Liaison between SAEWA membership and the project team;
- Guides implementation of the project development plan;
- Provides direction to the project team and expedites day-to-day decisions on behalf of SAEWA as necessary to advance the project;

SAEWA's designated spokesperson(s):

- Communicates publicly on behalf of SAEWA.

The following table summarizes the credentials recommended for the members of the communications team.

Table 1: Communications Team

Activity	Required Resources	
	Description	**Minimum Credentials**
Activity 1: Initiate Communications Program	SAEWA's project steering group	—Designated and authorized by SAEWA —Experience in management of municipal capital works
	SAEWA's designated spokesperson(s)	—Designated and authorized by SAEWA —Experience in communications
	Communications lead and support	Minimum 10 years experience in: —Leading communications for large public capital works projects, preferably in the field of solid waste —Conducting and facilitation of public and aboriginal consultations —Application of social media —Media relations
	Project management lead (with technical support as needed)	Minimum 10 years experience in: —Development and approvals for large waste management projects in Canada —Energy from waste facility, engineering, specifications, design, construction and operation —Procurement, public consultation and project management
Activity 2: Communications Support Tools	SAEWA's project steering group	As above
	SAEWA's designated spokesperson(s)	As above

Activity	Required Resources	
	Description	**Minimum Credentials**
	Communications lead and support	As above
	Creative electronic communications support	Minimum 10 years experience in: —Creative design and implementation of web sites and social media
	Customer contact representative(s)	—Designated and authorized by SAEWA —Role assumed to be fulfilled by host community municipal staff
	Project management lead (with technical support as needed)	As above
Activity 3: Stakeholder Engagement	SAEWA's project steering group	As above
	SAEWA's designated spokesperson(s)	As above
	Communications lead and support	As above
	Project management lead (with technical support as needed)	As above

3.6 BUDGET

The costs to carry-out the communications plan can be influenced by a number of factors including:

- Outcomes of the siting process and the role that the host municipality can fill;
- Extent of First Nations consultations, if required;
- Additional regulatory-driven communications requirements that may arise beyond those identified herein and in the Regulatory Requirements Plan;
- The role that NGOs and other interest groups may choose to have in the project;
- Changes to the needs of stakeholder engagement and outcomes of consultations;
- Adjustment to the recommended facility tours program;
- Modification to the communications program that may be necessary or advantageous based on communications effectiveness monitoring; and,
- Scheduling and coordination needs.

Bearing in mind that costs can vary based on factors mentioned above and recognizing that there remain a number of areas of uncertainty and potential for change, a preliminary budget estimate for the Communications Plan is presented in Table 2. It should be recognized that this budget estimate is approximate and cannot reasonably address all eventualities that may

occur. It is recommended that project budgets be periodically reviewed and revised to address changes in the work plan that occur as the project proceeds.

Table 2: Preliminary Communications Plan Budget

Task	Description	Units	Qty	Unit Price	Task Totals	Activity Totals
	Activity 1: Initiation of Communications Plan					$ 380,000
1.1	Management and Coordination of Communications Plan	%	10	NA	$ 136,000	
1.2	Communications Guide	LS	1	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	
1.3	Project Branding	LS	1	$ 26,000	$ 26,000	
1.4	Key Messages	LS	1	$ 48,000	$ 48,000	
1.5	Frequently Asked Questions	LS	1	$ 24,000	$ 24,000	
1.6	Issues Database	LS	1	$ 48,000	$ 48,000	
1.7	Stakeholder Database	LS	1	$ 48,000	$ 48,000	
	Activity 2: Communications Support Tools					$ 502,000
2.1	Project Website	LS	1	$ 28,000	$ 28,000	
2.2	Social Media	LS	1	$ 52,000	$ 52,000	
2.3	Online Open Houses	LS	2	$ 49,000	$ 98,000	
2.4	Customer Contact Centre	LS	1	$ 16,000	$ 16,000	
2.5	Surveys	LS	3	$ 28,000	$ 84,000	
2.6	Facility Tour Allowance	LS	1	$ 100,000	$ 100,000	
2.7	Communications Record	LS	1	$ 88,000	$ 88,000	
2.8	Communications Effectiveness Monitoring	LS	1	$ 36,000	$ 36,000	
	Activity 3: Stakeholder Engagement					$ 480,000
3.1	On-Going Engagement of Identified Stakeholders	LS	1	$ 72,000	$ 72,000	
3.2	Project Notifications	LS	12	$ 4,000	$ 48,000	
3.3	Public Information Consultations	LS	12	$ 16,667	$ 200,000	
3.4	Local Community Events	LS	12	$ 10,000	$ 120,000	
3.5	Resident/Property Owner Meetings	LS	6	$ 6,667	$ 40,000	
				Recommended Contingency (10%)		$ 136,200
				Regulatory Requirements Total		$ 1,498,200

3.7   SCHEDULE

A preliminary schedule for the activities involved in this Communications Plan has been developed and is presented in Appendix A. The schedule presented has been designed to correspond with other elements of SAEWA's project development plan. Some of activities may be carried out in parallel with others and some may be carried out concurrently with activities identified in the other Project Development Plan reports. There remains some uncertainty as to some of the specific elements of the work program and as such the schedules presented are preliminary. It is recommended that schedules be periodically reviewed and revised to address changes in the work plans that occur as the project proceeds.

4.0   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report presents the Communications Plan component of SAEWA's project development plan. The preceding sections include an overview of principles and practices for communications in large, public capital works projects such as SAEWA is contemplating; the communications activities recommended to be followed; identification of resources, a budgetary estimate and a schedule for SAEWA to complete the communications plan.

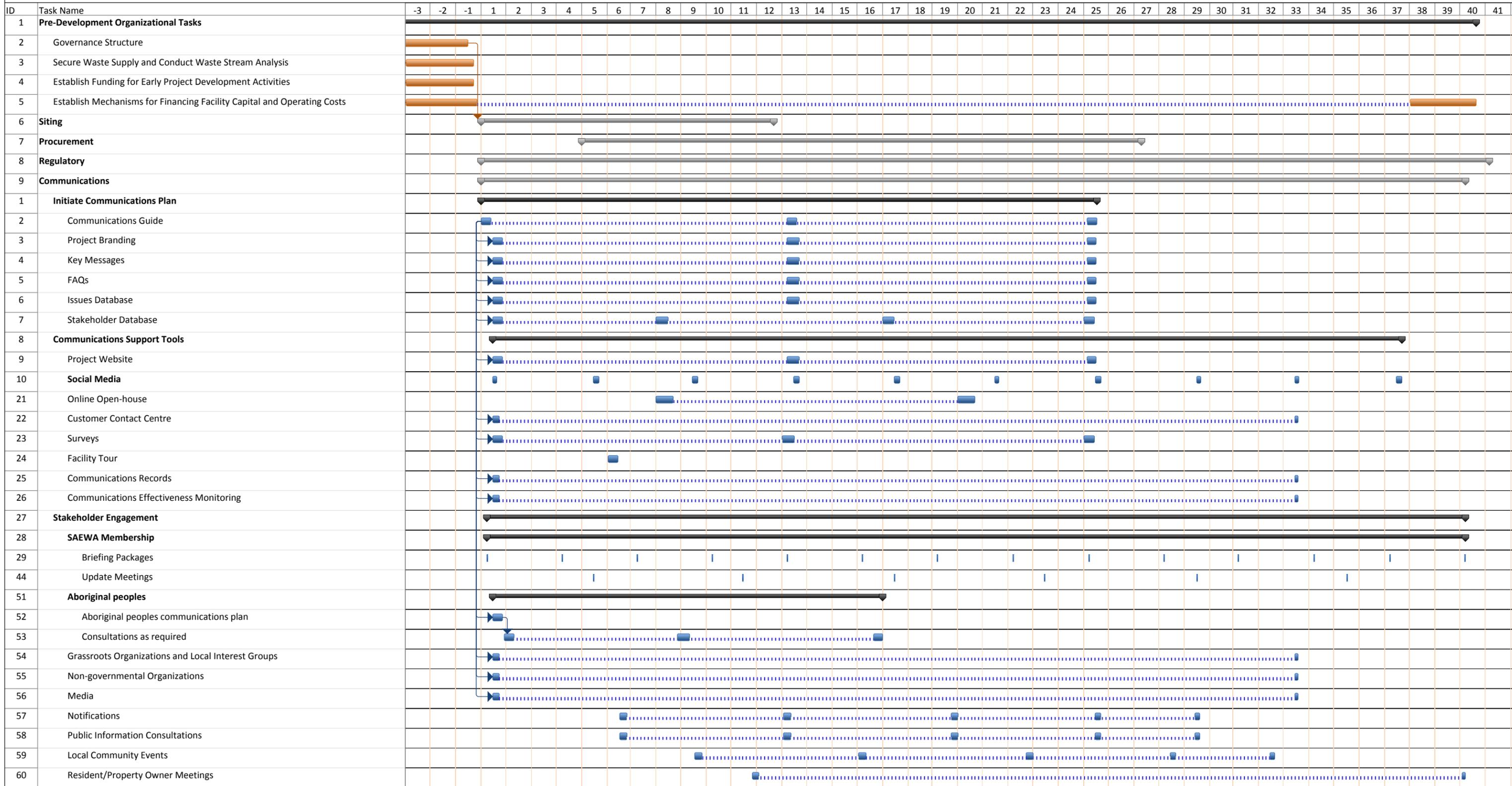The methodology presented in this report consists of the following activities:

1. **Initiation of Communications Plan** – Preparation of the communications guide, project branding, key messages, FAQs, issues database and stakeholder database;
2. **Communications Support Tools** – Use of the project website, social media, online open houses, customer contact centre, attitudinal surveys and facility tours to inform, educate and consult with stakeholders regarding the project; recording and documentation of communications efforts and outcomes; monitoring, assessment and adjustment of the communications program, if necessary to improve effectiveness; and,
3. **Stakeholder Engagement** - Conduct consultations tailored to stakeholders and project phases including: issuance of notifications, broad public information consultations, local community events and focused meetings with potentially affected parties located in close proximity to the preferred site

To complete the work involved in the communications plan, SAEWA will need to establish its own project steering group and spokesperson(s), as well as retain several resources including a communications lead, a project management lead, and communications support specialists.

APPENDIX A
PRELIMINARY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN SCHEDULE

ID	Task Name
1	**Pre-Development Organizational Tasks**
2	Governance Structure
3	Secure Waste Supply and Conduct Waste Stream Analysis
4	Establish Funding for Early Project Development Activities
5	Establish Mechanisms for Financing Facility Capital and Operating Costs
6	**Siting**
7	**Procurement**
8	**Regulatory**
9	**Communications**
1	**Initiate Communications Plan**
2	Communications Guide
3	Project Branding
4	Key Messages
5	FAQs
6	Issues Database
7	Stakeholder Database
8	**Communications Support Tools**
9	Project Website
10	**Social Media**
21	Online Open-house
22	Customer Contact Centre
23	Surveys
24	Facility Tour
25	Communications Records
26	Communications Effectiveness Monitoring
27	**Stakeholder Engagement**
28	**SAEWA Membership**
29	Briefing Packages
44	Update Meetings
51	**Aboriginal peoples**
52	Aboriginal peoples communications plan
53	Consultations as required
54	Grassroots Organizations and Local Interest Groups
55	Non-governmental Organizations
56	Media
57	Notifications
58	Public Information Consultations
59	Local Community Events
60	Resident/Property Owner Meetings

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