



# RECYCLING CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE

## **Recycling Certification Institute Strategy for Managing Conflict of Interest (COI)**

Independent third party evaluation is required for all projects to substantiate the recovery and recycling assertions made within the participating C&D Recycling Facility's application for certification. Evaluation helps to assure that recovery and recycling data reported to the Institute in the facility's Application for Certification are real, permanent, enforceable, verifiable and above all else – credible. The Institute has a rigorous process in place to train, and oversee evaluators to ensure its high standards are being met. As a part of the oversight process, the Institute assesses the objectivity and impartiality of its evaluation bodies and individual evaluators for every project before any evaluation activity may begin. We do this through application of a Facility-Specific Conflict of Interest Assessment. This process supports the transparency and integrity of the data contained within the Institute and maintains that evaluations are conducted in a consistent and comparable manner across facilities.

The Institute relies upon the Evaluation Report to attest to the accuracy and legitimacy of the recovery and recycling rates reported by the facility and the evaluation body is held accountable to the Institute for the quality and independence of the report and opinion submitted to the Institute. Certification is awarded only after an Evaluation Report and an Evaluation Opinion have been submitted and accepted by the Institute. Prior to evaluation activity, the Institute also aims to ensure integrity in the evaluation process. A conflict of interest (COI) is any situation that could compromise an evaluation body's ability to perform a wholly independent evaluation. To ensure the credibility of the recovery and recycling data reported to the Institute, municipal, and industrial stakeholders, it is critical that the evaluation process is completely independent from the influence of the participating facility.

An evaluation body must act objectively and exercise professional judgment while conducting evaluation activities. This is sometimes a difficult and dynamic issue and thus is assessed by Institute staff for every participating facility through review of the Facility-Specific Conflict of Interest form.

Evaluation bodies must provide to the Institute information about their organizational relationships and internal structures for identifying potential conflicts of interest (organizational COI). Additionally, for each evaluation the evaluation body must disclose to the Institute all pre-existing relationships it may have with the participating facility. The Institute reviews any pre-existing or ongoing relationship between an evaluator and participating facility and assesses the potential for COI. This task is undertaken by the Institute with a detailed review and evaluation of the form submitted by the verification body against the criteria in the Evaluator's



Manual (potentially conflicting services, timing, location, type and financial value of services) and is cross-checked against the Institute's internal records.

If the Institute finds that there is no or low risk of COI, a determination is made in writing and sent to the evaluation body allowing it to proceed with the proposed evaluation activities. After that point, the evaluation body may finalize negotiations of their contract with the Institute and evaluation activities may proceed. Following completion of the evaluation, the evaluation body must continue to report any new relationships that may increase the potential for COI (emerging COI).

If the Institute finds that there is a medium risk of COI that can potentially be mitigated, then it may request further information and/or a mitigation plan before it makes its final determination.

The evaluation body is notified of the Institute's determination. Should the evaluation body disagree with the Institute's determination, it may appeal (the appeals process is detailed in Section 6.1.3 of the Evaluator's Manual).

As an added protection, an evaluation body may not provide evaluation services to a facility for more than five consecutive years. After a five-year period, the Institute will engage a different evaluation body to evaluate the facility. The original evaluation body may provide evaluation services to that facility after a lapse of a minimum of three years. This three-year period begins with any lapse in providing annual evaluation services to a participating facility. Additionally, if an evaluation body has performed evaluation activities for more than ten (10) facilities per year with the same owner/ or operator, the Institute may require further information to inform its COI determination, may impose additional restrictions, or may require that another evaluation body is selected.