

**The One-Tonne Challenge (OTC) Tips Guide
Focus Group Study**

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Submitted to Environment Canada



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Executive Summary

- ◆ Environment Canada commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. to conduct a set of focus groups to assess the ‘tips’ guide to be used for the One-Tonne Challenge (OTC), entitled *Your Guide to the One-Tonne Challenge*, and to explore a number of related issues. Participants were 25 to 64 years old, owned a house and/or vehicle, and represented a good mix by age, family size, working status and occupation, and income. One group in each city was conducted with high school graduates, the second with participants with post-secondary education. All participants were moderately-to-very interested in environmental issues. In total, ten focus groups were conducted August 3-6, 2004, with two groups in each of St. John’s, Montreal (French), Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver.

Prior Awareness of One-Tonne Challenge

- ◆ Virtually no one had heard of the One-Tonne Challenge before reviewing the booklet. One participant said he came across a reference to it on a Government of Canada website, while two others think they may have seen something but were not certain.

Understanding the One-Tonne Challenge

- ◆ In terms of their overall impressions, the vast majority of participants reacted positively to the guide. Initial reactions tended to focus on a range of positive attributes, including the guide being seen as comprehensive, informative, useful and easy to read. The widespread positive impressions shared verbally were corroborated through the brief questionnaire participants were asked to fill out prior to the group. Using a 5-point scale (5 = very favourable, 1 = very unfavourable), nearly everyone provided positive scores on the scale. In addition, almost half of all participants providing the highest score possible (i.e. 5). Those who did not provide positive scores tended to be neutral rather than negative about the guide.
- ◆ There was a virtual consensus among participants that the purpose of the One-Tonne Challenge is clear and that the guide clearly explains this. However, many were unclear that the challenge applies to new actions and addresses individuals (i.e. one-tonne goal per person).

Assessment of OTC Guide

- ◆ There was widespread agreement among participants that the guide is clear and easy to understand, well organized, and easy to follow. Relatively few things were identified as unclear or confusing and many of these involved small points of clarification. Nevertheless, the format of the guide does negatively impact on clarity and information flow for many people (see below). Apart from this issue, some of the introductory text, and the instructions for adding up/counting actions (page 3 of the guide), nothing else was identified as being unclear by more than a few participants.
- ◆ Many participants felt that the guide should provide some way of recording actions already taken, not only new actions to be taken. A number of participants stated that while it was clear to them that they were only to count new actions in calculating their totals (for the guide’s score card), many nonetheless included actions already taken. It

was clear that there was a desire on the part of many participants, perhaps most, for some form of recognition/acknowledgement for actions already taken. There was widespread agreement that the guide should provide some way to do this.

- ◆ When asked what they liked most about the guide, participants pointed most often to the amount and usefulness/practicality of the information. Many also identified the website addresses (for further information), the clarity/ease of understanding the guide, and information related to grants/savings. Other aspects identified less often included the impact statements/contextual information, the *Did You Know?* sections, the ‘reasonable’ nature of guide (i.e. reasonable measures, achievable goal), the participatory nature of the activities, its *reference* aspect, including a long shelf-life, and its interactivity (e.g. calculation aspects).
- ◆ The least liked aspect of the guide is the format. While well received by many, many others felt that the format inhibits clarity and information flow, using expressions like “busy”, “distracting”, and “fragmented” to describe it. Participants often criticized the use of differently coloured sections and the lack of any logic or uniformity in colour coding. This made it difficult at times to follow the flow of the text or know what to read next. Numerous participants said that certain colour schemes made it difficult to read the text. A few felt that the text tended to be too small, particularly the website addresses.
- ◆ There was general agreement that the cover was not captivating enough and that this could affect the likelihood of the guide being read if received in the mail. Many participants felt that the One-Tonne Challenge would mean nothing to people receiving this guide in the mail, while a few felt that the expression would make people think the guide had something to do with weight loss. The picture makes some think of health and fitness. The main suggestion to improve the cover focused on de-emphasizing reference to the OTC, and emphasizing the sentence “Use less energy, save money, improve air quality and protect our environment”. The latter was seen to resonate with people, and to give a good sense of the content of the guide. Numerous other suggestions were made with respect to the cover.

Perceived Usefulness of Information

- ◆ Participants differed in their impressions of the amount of new information contained in the OTC guide (i.e. things they would not have thought of doing). Estimates ranged from approximately 20% to 50%. Despite differing estimates on how much of the information is new, there was a general consensus among participants that even tips that people were familiar with served as useful reminders.
- ◆ There was a virtual consensus that the guide was comprehensive (i.e. gave them enough information about how to meet the one-tonne goal). As noted, the amount of information provided was what underlay most participants’ positive overall reaction to the guide, and was most often identified as what they liked most about the guide. While there were suggestions for additional content, there was no sense that there were any large holes that needed to be filled.
- ◆ Participants tended to view all sections of the guide as useful. This included the tips on how to use less energy on the road and in the house, the *check your score* section, the various website addresses/sources of additional information, and the *Did you*

know sections. Nevertheless, the ‘At Home’ section was seen as particularly useful, in large part because of the sheer number of tips provided. Few participants were able to identify information that was not useful and which could be cut from the guide.

- ◆ Participants made numerous suggestions for improving the guide. Virtually all the suggestions fell into one of two categories: suggestions for improving the clarity of the guide and suggestions for improving its usefulness. Suggestions for improving clarity focussed on content and format/design. In terms of content, the suggestion made most often was clarifying that the one-tonne goal is per individual and that the OTC includes only new actions. Suggestions regarding the format/design focussed mainly on reducing what was seen as the ‘busy’ or ‘fragmented’ nature of the guide. This included having more uniformity in colour/coding, fewer little boxes/sections, clearer contrast between text and background, and larger/more uniform font sizes.
- ◆ Suggestion for improving the usefulness of the guide included providing the means for people to register/acknowledge actions that they have already taken, including perhaps their impact on greenhouse gas reduction. This was seen as almost providing the capability for a ‘green’ or environmental report card for people on how they are currently doing. Other suggestions focussed on providing additional information on savings, rebates, and grants, including more telephone numbers, and making the guide more actionable. The latter included providing the information on some form of calendar, providing a one-page summary checklist so that all potential actions are listed in one place, and providing post-its or stickers for each tip/action, so that these can be taken out of the book and placed on the fridge or somewhere appropriate to remind people to take the action.

Taking the Challenge

- ◆ Most participants said they would focus on criteria of practicality and convenience to meet the OTC goal. This included measures that were easy or relatively easy to do, that did not significantly alter or disrupt their lifestyles, and that were financially realistic or feasible. Some indicated that they would look for measures that included or involved grants.
- ◆ There was a consensus among participants that the guide was easy to use. Some said they were confused at the beginning because they did not fully understand the instructions on the lower half of page 3, but also said that things became clear as they continued to read the guide. However, using the score card was problematic because many/most included current and new actions, and because there was no way to accommodate the household or family dimension of the OTC (i.e. have targets of 20 points times number in household).
- ◆ All the participants noticed the “check your score” section at the back and there was general agreement that that section is clear. By comparison, most did not notice the reference to the on-line calculator (page 4 of the guide), though many said they did.

Likelihood of Taking OTC Challenge

- ◆ Participants were asked what they would do with this guide if they received it in the mail. Most said that they would keep it and read it, though many added that they probably would not read it immediately. Some said they might pass it on to someone

else (i.e. spouse, children) they thought might be interested. Conversely, others said that they would probably toss it in the recycling bin when they received it (as they do with most unsolicited brochures). A necessary pre-condition of reading/keeping the guide for many participants was that the cover needed to be changed to make its content clear and make it more engaging. Otherwise, it would be tossed by many who might have kept it if they knew what it contained, and were motivated to open it up and read it.

- ◆ Most participants said they would keep the guide and use it as a reference document for tips on saving energy, and a number added that they would even use the score card, but relatively few said that they would explicitly or formally take the One-Tonne Challenge. While there is a consensus that the guide is a very good information document, and most participants would take action to reduce energy use, few participants were motivated to ‘sign on’ to take the challenge itself. Note, however, that this view was expressed in the absence of any communications/advertising campaign to raise awareness of the challenge and engage people in it (i.e. pique interest, motivate participation).
- ◆ The large majority of participants took the guide home with them following the focus groups. Moreover, some asked if they could take the guide home prior to being told that they could. Most said they would keep the guide for future reference and many said they would pass it on to spouses and children (some would discuss it with them). Some said they would show it to friends and acquaintances.
- ◆ In terms of using the guide, many participants said that they would look for additional information through the websites provided. Interest in the on-line calculator and the mailing card was much lower.

Recognition and Rewards

- ◆ While participants did not think that it is a bad idea to offer some form of acknowledgement or recognition for taking the OTC pledge, the vast majority did not feel that it was necessary or important to them personally. In explaining why, most participants said that there was no need for it. They said that there were good reasons to try to reduce energy consumption such as helping protect the environment, ensuring clean air for their children, and saving money. Some suggested that this might be a good way to motivate people to take the pledge, but most doubted its effectiveness.
- ◆ Many could not identify ways in which they thought recognition for taking the pledge should be done. The few who did put forward ideas tended to feel that the most appropriate form of recognition would be to focus on things that would actually help people fulfill their pledges. This could include such things as coupons or rebates on energy-saving purchases, recycling bags, and a challenge chat room where people taking the pledge could talk to one another and encourage each other.
- ◆ There was general agreement among participants that the current form of recognition for people taking the OTC pledge was appropriate (i.e. being congratulated and thanked for joining the One-Tonne Challenge and being given links to the guide and calculator, as well as an option to print a reminder tips page).

- ◆ As was the case regarding recognizing pledges, there was widespread agreement among participants that recognition for having achieved the one-tonne reduction was not very important. Most participants said that they would not expect to receive some recognition for their achievement. Most felt that achieving the goal, or any level of reduction for that matter, was reward enough and would pay off in the long run in terms of saving the environment and saving money. That said, gifts or rewards for actually having achieved the goal were generally seen as *more* appropriate than recognition for simply having taken a pledge. In this sense, there was more interest in possible rewards for achieving something. At the same time, along with greater interest in possible rewards came a corresponding concern about monitoring. There was a general consensus that rewards would need to be small in order to be supportable in the absence of verification – no one favours verification of any kind.
- ◆ Asked in an open-ended manner what kind of recognition would be appropriate, many focussed on the possibility of some form of rebate or refund. Some suggested a tax credit. Finally, a few suggested gift certificates that could be used to purchase energy-efficient products.
- ◆ A number of reward options for people who achieve the one-tonne goal were identified to participants. The option that elicited the most support was the bi-monthly draw for prizes (e.g. annual bus pass, push mower, energy-efficient appliance). Most participants reacted positively to this. Many also felt that the receipt of a small reward was appropriate (e.g. tire pressure gauge, compact fluorescent light bulb).

Conclusions and Implications

Overall, the OTC guide tested very well. Participants' initial impressions of the guide were routinely positive, often strongly so. Moreover, there was widespread agreement that the guide is clear, comprehensive, and useful. Many see it as something to hold onto – as a reference document. While numerous suggestions were made to improve the guide, these tended to be format-related, not content-related. Moreover, these were suggestions to improve an already-strong document, and many involved relatively 'quick fixes'.

Despite the widespread favourable reaction to the guide, a number of suggestions were articulated with frequency, and should be seriously considered to strengthen the guide. Particular attention should be given to suggested changes to the cover of the guide since this is the first thing that people will notice. While the content of the guide is strong, people will only know this if they actually read the guide. In this regard, while most participants said they would read the guide if they received it in the mail, many others would quickly recycle the guide unread because the cover did not engage them, nor provide an accurate view of the contents.

Other key suggestions – ideas that were articulated most often or which appeared to be the most important to act on to ensure the effectiveness of the guide – included:

- The need to ensure that the instructions for using the guide/score sheet are clear and easy to understand. This includes greater clarity that the OTC involves *new* actions and that the one-tonne goal is per individual. As well, changes to the score sheet are needed to accommodate the household or family aspect of the challenge.

- The ability for Canadians to identify actions they have already taken, so that they can receive recognition or affirmation for their environmentally-friendly behaviour (even if only through their own act of recording the actions taken).
- Changes to help make the guide more actionable on a *day-to-day* basis (e.g. post-its/stickers, summary checklist, rebate/savings/discount information, more phone numbers to call for additional information, not just websites).
- Changes to the format of the guide to simplify it (i.e. make it less ‘busy’), and to improve information flow and readability.
- Implementation of a communications/awareness raising campaign for the One-Tonne Challenge in advance of any mass distribution of the guide (to provide a frame of reference for the OTC and the guide, so that Canadians will know that the OTC is important, and what the guide relates to).

It was clear from the research that the guide resonates with participants more than the OTC challenge itself. This is not surprising given the lack of communications/advertising undertaken to date in support of the OTC. While most participants said they would use the guide and take some of the actions identified in it, relatively few would formally participate in the challenge. One participant’s concluding statement seemed to sum up the general feeling: *“The guide itself is excellent. It’s got really great tips and very good ideas. But personally, I wouldn’t be interested in formally taking the challenge”*.

On the basis of these findings, particular attention should be devoted to ways of increasing the appeal of the OTC itself. Participants themselves made a number of suggestions related directly to this issue. These included making the cover page more catchy/appealing, sending the guide to schools to engage youth, and undertaking a media campaign in advance of the mail-out. It is also noteworthy that a number of participants tended to approach the issue of recognition and rewards from the perspective of things that would motivate people to participate in the challenge as opposed to ways of acknowledging those who were already involved. That said, there was only lukewarm support for rewards or recognition of those taking the OTC pledge, or for those who have met the OTC goal (although support for the latter was greater).

In summary, the OTC guide represents a strong communications document to inform Canadians of actions they can take to support the One-Tonne Challenge. Suggestions to improve the guide will serve to make a strong document stronger still. However, it is important to note that the guide is not really designed to motivate or engage Canadians to take the OTC challenge, but rather to support their efforts in doing so. As such, communications are needed to raise awareness of the OTC (virtually non-existent at this time) and to motivate Canadians to take part.

Introduction

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. was commissioned by Environment Canada to conduct a set of focus groups to assess the guide to be used for the One-Tonne Challenge (OTC), entitled *Your Guide to the One-Tonne Challenge*, as well as to explore a number of related issues.

Background

The One-Tonne Challenge asks individual Canadians to reduce their annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by one tonne, or about twenty percent. Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada, with input from Transport Canada, have developed and printed a guide to explain the OTC to Canadians and to provide tips for how individuals can meet the one-tonne goal. The guide has been available since the March 26, 2004 launch of the OTC in two formats: print and as a pdf file on the OTC website.

In September 2004, Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada plan to launch an advertising campaign to create awareness of the challenge among the target audience, and to encourage them to obtain a copy of the guide. The prime target audience is adults who are home owners and vehicle drivers, as this group produces the greatest GHG emissions and has the most opportunities for reductions.

Since the guide will be a major marketing tool, the OTC program needs to test its usability and appeal with the target audience before launching ads that promote it. Feedback from this audience will be used to refine the format and content of the guide prior to a large print run.

More specifically, the focus group research was designed to:

- Assess the level of understanding of the OTC (overall, and with respect to key elements);
- Assess the overall appeal, clarity, usefulness, ease of use, motivation, likes/dislikes, and specifics of the guide; and
- Explore the appeal of several different recognition and reward options.

Research Activities

To address the research objectives, a set of 10 focus groups was conducted August 3-6, 2004. The following specifications applied to this study:

- Ten groups were conducted with two groups in each of St. John's, Montreal (French), Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver.
- In each city, the groups were conducted with the following audiences:
 - One group was conducted with high school-educated participants, the second with college and university-educated participants. Participants represented a good mix by age (between 25-64 years old), family size, working status and occupation, income and education. There was an approximate gender split.

- Two-thirds of participants were both vehicle drivers and home owners, while one-third were either home owners or vehicle drivers.
- All participants were moderately-to-very interested in environmental issues. A 7-point scale was used during recruitment to assess level of interest.
- Turnout was excellent for the focus groups – between 8-10 participants took part in each group.
- Participants were paid \$75 to participate.
- Participants were asked to arrive at the focus groups facilities $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour prior to the start of the session in order to read the guide in advance and complete a short questionnaire about the guide.
- The groups lasted two hours in length, and were conducted in regular focus group facilities.
- Sponsorship of the study was revealed (i.e. Government of Canada).

This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but cannot be generalized to the full population of home owners, car drivers or the adult population as a whole.

Participants' comments are provided in italics, and are either actual verbatim comments or have been paraphrased to reflect the intent of the remark.

The principal investigator for this study was Stephen Kiar, who moderated the focus groups in Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver and wrote the final report. Philippe Azzie moderated the focus groups in Montreal and St. John's and contributed to the report.

General Note on Findings

As indicated above, one group in each city was conducted with high school graduates, and the second with college and university-educated participants. There was no noticeable difference in terms of the feedback provided by participants in the two groups.

Appended to this report are the following (in both official languages):

- the recruitment screener,
- the moderator's guide used for the focus groups,
- the instruction sheet to participants
- the mini questionnaire, and
- a copy of the OTC guide.

Understanding the One-Tonne Challenge

This section reports on overall impressions of the OTC guide, as well as clarity regarding the One-Tonne Challenge itself and what it asks Canadians to do. In order to provide a context for this discussion, participants were first asked about their awareness of climate change or global warming in general, and then the One-Tonne Challenge in particular.

Widespread Awareness of Climate Change, Focus on Various Aspects of Issue

All participants claimed to be aware of climate change and/or global warming through things they had heard, seen, or read. This is not surprising in light of the significant attention this issue has received through the media in recent years, combined with the fact that the groups consisted of people claiming to be at least moderately interested in environmental issues.

While participants identified a variety of issues that they associated with climate change and global warming, the issue or phenomenon identified most often was the depletion of the ozone layer. Typically, a few participants in each group identified this issue. Other issues or phenomena identified included the Kyoto Accord, greenhouse gases, scientific debates about the extent of the problem, melting ice caps and glaciers, rising oceans and ocean temperatures, cows belching methane, and ways of dealing with the problem such as more efficient energy use, and controlling big contributors to greenhouse gas emissions such as SUVs.

In addition to issues heard or read about, many participants referred to phenomena which they themselves were experiencing. These were mainly climate and weather-related changes, including warmer or cooler summers, warmer or colder winters, longer/shorter seasons, more severe storms, and more frequent freak phenomena such as floods and hail storms. Some participants mentioned more severe sun burns, increased smog and air pollution, and the smell of carbon monoxide.

As the reference to the ozone layer demonstrates, perceptions on these matters might be correct or not (i.e. issues or phenomena identified with climate change and global warming might not in fact be related to this). The fact that the most frequently-cited phenomenon is not related to global warming or climate change suggests that 'climate change' and 'global warming' function to a certain extent as 'catch-all' expressions for environmental issues in general for some Canadians, or perhaps with respect to atmospheric or air quality-related issues.

Virtually No Prior Awareness of One-Tonne Challenge

While all participants claimed some awareness of climate change or global warming, virtually no one had heard of the One-Tonne Challenge prior to reviewing the booklet. One participant said he came across a reference to it on a Government of Canada website, while two others think they may have seen something about it but could not be certain. A few participants in Montreal said that they have seen similar types of information to that

in the guide, but not related to the One-Tonne Challenge. They were referring to information on conserving energy put out by Hydro Québec.

Widespread Positive Reaction to OTC Guide

When asked for their overall impression of the guide, the vast majority of participants reacted positively. Reactions to the guide tended to be brief and to focus on a range of positive attributes, including the guide being seen as comprehensive, informative, useful and easy to read. Such comments were offered quickly and readily to start the discussion about the guide across all of the focus groups.

Representative comments include:

- *Very informative.*
- *Lots of new information*
- *Gives a lot of guidance.*
- *Very precise.*
- *Lots of practical tips.*
- *Clear. Gets right to the point.*
- *Comprehensive, thorough.*
- *Well organized.*
- *Easy to follow.*
- *Thought provoking.*
- *Lots of options/choices.*
- *Something to hold on to.*
- *Short and sweet.*
- *Applies to everyone. Everyone can do something.*

The widespread positive impressions of the guide shared verbally by participants were corroborated through the brief questionnaire participants were asked to fill out after reading the guide and prior to the group discussion. This helped ensure that their initial impressions were not influenced by group dynamics. Asked to provide their overall impression of the guide by using a 5-point scale (5 = very favourable, 1 = very unfavourable), nearly everyone provided positive scores on the scale. In addition to being widespread, positive impressions were relatively strong, with almost half of all participants providing the highest score possible (i.e. 5). Those who did not provide positive scores tended to be neutral rather than negative about the guide.

Despite the overall positive reaction to the guide, there were some general comments of a critical nature. These tended to focus on length, 'dryness' of content, and format, including readability concerns. Feedback of this nature included:

- *Not compelling reading. Reads like a high school textbook.*
- *Too many facts, too much information.*
- *Too busy, i.e. too many colours and irregular format.*
- *Too cumbersome.*
- *Too long.*

- *Repetitive.*
- *Too wordy.*
- *Hard to follow.*
- *Hard to read.*
- *Too much colour.*

After reacting to the guide, participants were asked to explain their overall impression (i.e. why they felt the way they did). Participants who reacted positively most commonly focussed one or more of the following aspects of the information provided:

- *Amount of information:* Many participants referred positively to the volume of information included in the guide. This not only included the actual tips, but also the “Did You Know” sections and the websites providing access to additional information.
- *Usefulness of information:* Many also based their positive assessments on the usefulness of the information. It was noted that not only was the information of a practical nature, but the abundance of information meant that it was likely to include something that everyone could do.
- *Clarity of information:* Some participants based their overall reaction on the clarity of the information. This included impressions that the information was precise, easy to follow, and well organized.

General comments of a critical nature tended to be of two types. Some participants criticized the format of the guide. This included references to the on-page display, font sizes, and use of colours. This will be dealt with in detail below (see page 10). A few participants were critical of the length of the guide. They felt that it was too long, was repetitious at times, and threw too much information at people all at once. One participant doubted that most people would take the time to read the guide in its entirety. A few felt that the guide was geared to Internet users because of the number of websites included and lack of phone numbers provided (i.e. only one, and then only to get copies of the guide).

Purpose of OTC is Generally Clear

There was a virtual consensus among participants that the purpose of the One-Tonne Challenge is clear to them and that the guide clearly explains this. Asked to explain the OTC in their own words, participants tended to describe it in a general way (e.g. “it is asking us all to do our part”). However, when prompted to be more specific they were able to describe the main aspects of the challenge and what it is asking Canadians to do. That said, one participant’s comment on this issue is worth noting. When asked whether the guide clearly explains the One-Tonne Challenge, this participant answered that this becomes clear as you read the guide but that, strictly speaking, there is no actual description or definition in the guide explaining the One-Tonne Challenge. He/she noted that the guide begins with the heading: “Why Take the Challenge?” not “What is the One-Tonne Challenge?”

More Emphasis Needed on Fact That OTC Addresses Individuals and New Actions

Participants were then asked more specifically if the following aspects of the OTC were clear to them:

- they are being asked to do new things to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by one tonne compared to what they are doing now.
- they are being asked to reduce their annual GHG emissions and then stay at that level from then on.
- the one tonne goal is for every individual in Canada so that, for example, a family of four is being asked to aim to reduce their emissions by four tonnes.

There was a consensus among participants that it is clear that the challenge asks people to reduce their annual GHG emissions and then stay at that level from then on. Some participants noted that this is implied or something they simply took for granted, but it is not, in fact, stated anywhere in the guide.

By contrast, many participants felt that other two specifications – that the OTC addresses new actions and individuals – were not clear or not as clear as they could be.

While most participants said that it was clear to them that they are being asked to do new things to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, many said that this was not clear. A few of these participants said that it became clear to them as they read the guide but that it was not clear to them from the beginning. For example, one participant noted that this only became clear when he noticed that the instruction in the upper left-hand corner of each tips page said “Circle the actions you **want to take**”. He then concluded, by implication, that this referred to new actions. A few participants suspected that they had done something wrong when their score was much higher than the one-tonne goal of 20 points. They then suspected that they were only supposed to count new actions.

In the course of this discussion, it was noted that that the only place in the guide where it is clearly stated that the emphasis is on *new* actions is in the last sentence on page 3: “Remember, count only the new actions you plan to take”. Many participants missed this entirely. There was a consensus that this reference is not prominent enough given its importance.

Similarly, many participants did not understand that the one tonne goal is for every individual. While most said that this was clear to them, many thought that the goal was by household, and a few said they thought that it applied only to adults. Once again, in the course of the discussion it was noted that while this is alluded to on page 2 of the guide (“A goal of one tonne per person means reducing your GHGs by about 20%”) as well as page 4 (“While the one-tonne goal is for individuals ...”), it is only really clearly stated on page 23 (“The one-tonne goal is for individuals”). When asked if they had noticed these references, many participants said they had not. In addition, a few participants felt that the cover page contributes to the confusion by showing the picture of a family. This can give the impression that the emphasis is on families or households, not individuals.

In addition, through discussion it clearly emerged that many participants, sometimes half or more in a group, did not read *any* of the information on page 23, let alone the reference to the one-tonne goal being for individuals. It appeared that this entire page can be easily missed (and was) for a few reasons. First, the page is actually hidden behind another page with the instruction “Check your score” and “Flip out back cover to access tally sheet”. When people flipped open the page, their eyes tended to be drawn right away to the score sheet itself. As well, many participants felt that the heading “Remember” on the top of the page gives the impression that this is a reminder page only (i.e. repeating things that they have already read – and, as such, passed over). The heading was also seen to be misleading because the page contains new information.

Assessment of the OTC Guide

This section reports on the perceived clarity of the guide as a whole and its various sections, the aspects of the guide that participants liked most/least, and their impressions of the guide's format. As part of the exercise participants were asked to complete prior to the group discussion, they were asked to circle or note anything in the guide that was unclear or potentially confusing.

Guide Seen to be Clear & Easy to Understand

There was widespread agreement among participants that the guide is clear and easy to understand, well organized, and easy to follow. Relatively few things were identified as unclear or confusing and many of these involved small points of clarification (these are all identified below by section and page). Nevertheless, the format of the guide does negatively impact on clarity and information flow for many people. This issue will be discussed separately below (see page 12). Apart from this issue, some of the introductory text, and the instructions for adding up/counting actions (page 3 of the guide), nothing else was identified by more than a few participants (typically two or three at most).

Introduction (pages 1-4)

The introduction to the OTC guide was the section in which participants were most likely to be confused or identify problems with clarity regarding content. That said, some participants noted that aspects that may not be immediately clear in the introduction become clear as you read the guide. The following things were identified:

Page 2:

- It was noted that it is not clear right from the start what the One-Tonne Challenge is. This becomes clear as you read the guide, but there is no definition or description of it per se. The first thing you see is “Why Take the Challenge” not “The Challenge is ...”
- The statement in the blue box under the table of contents: A GOAL OF ONE TONNE PER PERSON MEANS REDUCING YOUR GHGS BY ABOUT 20% is confusing in that location because some readers do not yet know that the average Canadian produces over 5 tonnes of GHGs (i.e. all those who start on the left-hand column of the page, or go to highlighted boxes first). This becomes clear as you read on but it is initially confusing, and can give rise to the question: 20% of what? Some readers also seem to have missed the blue box entirely. This is an example of where the design/format of guide impedes information flow.

Page 3:

- Some participants felt that the bottom half of this page, which provides instructions on counting actions, is not very clear or could be more clear. Three things were noted in this regard. First, it is not very clear that people should count only ‘new’ actions (lack of prominence issue, as previously noted). Second, for some participants it is not clear how the examples of actions, letters (A,B,C), and the amount of GHGs all relate to one another. Third, the description of the adding

or counting process itself is not clear to some (i.e. it is not clear *how* they are to be added up). As with other things, it was noted that these types of things tend to be clarified as one proceeds through the guide.

On The Road (pages 5-9)

Participants did not identify anything in this section that was unclear or caused them confusion, other than formatting issues (discussed below).

At Home (pages 10-21)

Three things were identified as unclear or potentially confusing in this section.

Page 11:

- A few participants in the Francophone groups noted that it was not clear to them that what was being referred to at the top of this page as a ‘générateur d’air chaud’ was in fact a furnace. This gave rise to a more general discussion in which most Francophone participants agreed that this is an uncommon expression that might not be understood.

- One participant was not clear on what is meant by “sealing and insulating warm-air ducts”.

Page 12:

- A couple of participants were confused by the notion of asking their local energy supplier about switching to or buying some green power. They assumed they received whatever power they received from their current energy supplier and there was nothing else that could be done. How does one go about switching to green power? Additional information was desired.

Page 13:

- A couple of participants were unclear as to why baking, washing, drying, and ironing should be done early in the morning or in the evening during the summer if possible. They suspected that this was suggested in order to avoid peak usage times but they were not sure.

‘Check your Score’ page:

A few participants were confused by the following sentence at the bottom of this page: “To reach your one-tonne goal, you need a score of 20 points or higher (see left page for details).” It was not clear to them how the page on the left (“Remember”) relates to the scorecard or what details it provides in relation to this. The two sections should be more clearly linked, since some of the information on page 23 concerns filling out the score card. As well, the fact that the score card focuses on the one-tonne goal as it relates to individuals only, with a target score of 20 (i.e. not families/households), it makes even those who know that the one-tonne goal is per individual forget about this fact when completing the score card. As an example, some people who had scores well above 20 felt that they had already surpassed the goal, even though they were answering for their

entire household (and so, in fact, might be under-target). It seemed clear that a 'household' aspect to the scoring procedure is required to solve this problem.

Widespread Desire for 'Recognition' of Actions Already Taken

In all groups, an issue emerged in the course of the discussion on the clarity of the guide which became a general theme of discussion: a desire for recognition of actions already taken. This issue came up in the context of two related discussions: the discussion about whether it was clear that people were to count only new actions they would take to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and the discussion of how participants actually calculated their score in the tally sheet at the end of the guide.

In these discussions, a number of participants stated that while it was clear to them that they were only to count new actions in their tally sheet, they nevertheless also included actions they had already taken. Most of them said that they had done this because they wanted recognition for actions already taken. Some said they had done this in order to produce a benchmark to distinguish what they had already done from what they could still do. Regardless of the motivation, the discussion gave rise to widespread agreement that the guide should provide some way of recording actions already taken.

Comprehensive/Practical Information – Most Liked Aspect of Guide

When asked what they liked most about the guide, participants identified a number of things. Most often, however, they pointed to the amount and usefulness/practicality of the information provided. Many participants specifically identified the website addresses provided as what they liked most, while almost as many said the same about the clarity/ease of comprehension. Numerous participants said they especially liked the information related to grants/savings.

All other aspects were identified by smaller numbers:

- *Impact statements/contextual information*: Some participants identified the various impact statements or information to provide context as what they liked most about the guide. This included, for example, statements such as the one on page 16 referring to the savings that could be made if every household in Canada changed just one traditional light bulb to an energy efficient bulb. Another example was that each Canadian uses up to four trees in paper products each year. While these types of statements are actually part of the 'Did You Know' sections of the guide, they were specifically identified.
- *Did You Know* sections: Some liked these sections because they provided new information.
- *Reasonable nature of OTC guide*: It was noted that the guide emphasizes taking measures that are reasonable and proposes a goal that is achievable.

- *Participatory nature of the activities:* The guide suggests activities that allow everyone in the family to participate (i.e. it is an inclusive document).
- *Long shelf-life:* The guide was seen by many to be a good reference document that can be kept for a long time.
- *Interactivity:* It's not just something you read. You can use it to calculate the effect or impact that you have so far and the additional impact you can have.
- *Empowering:* The guide gives people a sense that they can make a difference in these matters. Moreover, even if you have taken some of these actions, the guide confirms the value of what you have done, and provides a sense of affirmation.

Perceived Weaknesses

Few things were identified by participants as weaknesses or things they liked least about the guide. Moreover, only one aspect of the guide was identified in this regard with any regularity – the format of the guide (see below). In the context of this discussion, some participants stated that a number of tips in the guide did not apply to them, though some added that this is not really a weakness.

Other aspects of the guide that participants did not like tended to be of a general nature and included the following:

- *Length:* A few participants felt that the guide was too long and cumbersome. Related to this, some felt that the guide was overwhelming and that too much information was being thrown at people all at once.
- *Repetition:* A few felt that the guide was repetitive at times.
- *Not inclusive enough:* Some felt that there was not enough attention paid to certain types of people, such as renters, condo owners, or children.
- *Geared to Internet users:* Related to the last point, a few noted specifically that the guide contains many website addresses but only one phone number. As such, it seems to privilege Internet users and potentially excludes many older people and others who are less likely to have Internet access.
- *Targets wrong people:* A few participants felt that, as the guide itself says, most Canadians are already taking steps to conserve energy. They felt that the government should go after the 'big polluters' in industry through legislation or otherwise. It was also felt by a few that only people who are already doing things will act on the guide, not people who have yet to take action to reduce energy use.

Related to the latter point, one participant did not like the reference on page 4 of the guide under the heading **You're not alone** to businesses and industry being asked to do their part. He felt that they are the worst culprits when it comes to producing greenhouse gases and only legislation/coercion will work with them. A few participants did not like

the insert between pages 12 and 13, and noted that this is something that they usually rip out immediately and throw away.

It is perhaps worth noting that while the guide cover was seen as requiring significant changes (see page 13), it was not listed among things participants liked least about the guide.

Format Generally Well Received, Although Many Felt Too Busy

Many participants provided positive feedback on the format of the guide. They felt that it enhanced or at the very least did not inhibit clarity or understanding, including the ability to read and to follow the guide. Many liked the use of colour, some describing the effect as “vibrant” or “enhancing”. That said, a significant number of participants felt the opposite. They felt that the format did inhibit clarity and the ability to follow at times. The expression they used most often to describe the format was “busy”, though some also used the expressions “distracting”, “disjointed”, and “fragmented”. Recall that comments regarding the format were the most common comments of a critical nature in participants’ overall impression of the guide.

Participants most often criticized the use of differently coloured sections and the lack of any logic or uniformity in colour coding. This made it difficult at times to follow the flow of the text or know what to read next. Page 7 was most often singled out as an example of this, but pages 2, 4, and 16 were also mentioned in this regard. A number of participants said that they had difficulty following any sequence or logic when reading page 7. Some said their eyes simply ‘wandered’ over the page and they’re not even sure that they read everything.

A specific example of this difficulty came up for discussion in the Francophone groups. A few participants drew attention to page 4 of the guide where the heading **Qu’est-ce-que cela vous apportera?** is followed by four bullets. However, two of these bullets appear at the bottom of the column on the left side of the page which has a light yellow background, and the two other bullets are at the top of the column on the right side which has a white background. These participants did not realize until later that these four bullets were linked and were meant to be read in sequence because the change in format made it difficult to follow the sequence/flow of the text. Along similar lines, a few participants did not like the fact that sometimes colours change within a single sentence or heading. They pointed to pages 7 and 12 as examples of this pattern.

In addition to difficulties in following the text, a number of participants said that the use of certain colours made it difficult to actually *read* the text. Specifically, the use of certain text colours on certain background colours do not work very well. Specific examples of colour schemes perceived as not working well together included the following.

- White text on a light blue background (page 3).
- Light green text on green background (page 3).
- Light blue text on blue and purple background (page 7).
- Yellow text on green background (page 12).

- White text on green background (page 12).
- Blue text on green background (Page 12).

The page numbers indicated above are provided in order to identify examples of what participants identified. They do not necessarily constitute the only instances in the guide of these schemes.

Finally, a few participants drew attention to the font sizes. Some felt that the text in general tended to be too small and difficult to read, particularly the website addresses, while others felt that the font sizes varied too much at times

Guide Cover Seen to Require Significant Changes

A significant part of the discussion about format focussed on the guide's cover. There was general agreement that the cover was not captivating enough and that this could affect the likelihood of the guide being read if received in the mail. Many participants felt that the One-Tonne Challenge would mean nothing to people receiving this guide in the mail, while a few suggested that the expression would make people think the guide had something to do with weight loss. One participant thought that the expression had in fact already been used for a weight loss contest he had heard about, the goal of which was for an entire town to try to lose a combined weight of one tonne. In light of such considerations, the following changes were suggested to the guide cover:

- *Emphasize the sentence "Use less energy, save money, improve air quality, and protect our environment"*: This was the most commonly suggested change to the guide's cover. Many participants were of the opinion that this sentence, currently situated at the bottom of the cover page, would resonate much more with people than the current title. More specifically, this involved two things:
 - Reversing positions so that the sentence would become the new title. This would likely include increasing the font size of the sentence and decreasing the font size of *Your Guide to the One-Tonne Challenge*.
 - Getting rid of the light green text on a dark green background. Use colours that contrast well and make the text visible and easy to read. The new title should jump out at people.
- *Emphasize savings*: In addition to changing the order and size of the text on the guide cover, some participants suggested that the new title should place more emphasis on saving money by making it the first reference in the sentence.

Participants suggested other changes as well. A number suggested changing the picture that currently appears on the cover. The general feeling was that the picture does not convey what the One-Tonne Challenge is about. Some suggested that a picture of a family gives the impression that the guide has something to do with health or fitness, perhaps tourism, but not the environment. It was also repeated that it gives the impression that the goal of the challenge is a family goal not an individual goal. A number of

participants suggested using a picture more evocative of the environment. One participant suggested placing a picture of what the environment should look like on the cover and a picture of what it could look like if nothing is done on the back cover. Another suggested using less white in whatever picture is used because it washes things out.

Other changes to the guide cover were recommended by individual participants or no more than a few and included the following:

- Add the word “individual” to the sentence “*Take action on climate change*”. It was suggested that this would help reinforce the fact that the OTC is geared towards individuals.
- Change sentence at bottom of cover to: “*Your reference guide to using less energy ...*”. This would help reinforce the idea that this guide is something to keep or hold onto. A number of participants favoured inclusion of the word ‘reference’ somewhere on the guide’s cover.
- Add a sentence that says something like “Complete the exercise to determine your environmental impact”: This would help ensure that people understand that they are supposed to use the guide, not just read it.

Usefulness of Information

This section reports on issues related to the perceived usefulness of the information provided in the OTC guide.

Divided View on How Much is New Information/Ideas

Participants differed in their impressions of the amount of new information contained in the OTC guide (i.e. things they would not have thought of doing). Estimates ranged from approximately 20% to 50%. Only a few participants said they were aware of almost everything in the guide.

Despite differing estimates on how much of the information is new, there was a general consensus among participants that even tips that people were familiar with served as useful reminders. Similarly, some participants who had implemented many of these measures said that it was nice to see that what they had done was effective, and in some instances, to what extent (i.e. extent of reduction in GHGs something represented).

The information most likely to be described as new tended to be the information contained in the *Did you know* sections (although not only), including the various impact statements or contextual information. Many participants indicated that the information in these sections was new to them. Many also specified that home-related information on page 12 was new to them. This applied mainly to the information regarding EnerGuide for Houses, and the R-2000 standard, but also to green power.

When it came to actual tips, participants were more likely to identify those related to the home as new than those related to the car. Tips most commonly identified as new included:

Car-related tips:

- Using ethanol-blended gasoline.
- Removing roof racks.
- Using a block heater.
- Not idling.

Home-related tips:

- Using a fan in winter to push warm air down.
- Power saving features on computers.
- Energy-efficient light bulbs.
- Opening curtains during the day in winter and closing them during the day in summer.
- Washing clothes in warm water and rinsing them in cool water.
- Replacing exterior doors.
- Shutting off pilot light.
- Selecting the no-heat or air-drying cycle on the dishwasher.
- Grass recycling.
- Planting trees

- Capturing rain water

Guide Described as Comprehensive

There was a virtual consensus among participants that the guide was comprehensive (i.e. gave them enough information about how to meet the one-tonne goal). As noted, the amount of information provided was what underlay most participants' positive overall reaction to the guide, and was most often identified as what they liked most about the guide. While there were suggestions for additional content, there was no sense that there were gapping holes that needed to be filled. Suggestions for additional content are listed below along with other suggestions for improving the guide.

All Information Seen to be Useful, Particularly 'At Home' Section

Participants tended to view all sections of the guide as useful. This included the tips on how to use less energy on the road and in the house, the *check your score* section, the various website addresses/sources of additional information, and the *Did you know* sections.

Nevertheless, the 'At Home' section was seen as particularly useful. Participants gave a variety of reasons to explain why, but the reason identified most often was the sheer number of tips provided. Some added that because this section provided the most tips, there were likely to be more opportunities to reduce greenhouse gases in the home.

Other reasons for viewing the 'At Home' section as particularly useful were cited less often and included the following:

- *Ease/convenience*: Some participants felt that the 'At Home' section was more useful because it was easier and more convenient to make changes in the home (i.e. a number of measures were simple and easy to implement).
- *More time spent in the home*: Some explained that they spent most of their time in the home so that measures related to energy savings there were more useful to them.
- *Effectiveness*: A few participants felt that more people could participate in the activities in the 'At Home' section, thereby having the potential to reduce energy use more substantially.
- *Cost*: A few felt that many measures in the 'At Home' section were not costly.

As mentioned, many participants expressed a desire for recognition of actions already taken. This issue came up again in the context of discussing the usefulness of the *check your score* section. Some participants noted that while it was useful, it would be even more useful if they could also calculate the measures they had already taken.

Little, if Anything Should Be Cut From Guide

Asked if there was any information that was not useful and which could be cut from the guide, nearly all participants answered no. The few who identified things that could be cut identified the following:

- the table of contents (p. 2): the guide was not seen as not long enough to require this.
- the section titled **Why Take the Challenge?** (p.2): the sense was that no explanation was needed for taking action on climate change.
- the section titled **You're not alone** (p.4): the reasoning was that only legislation would motivate businesses and industry to take action and therefore referring to the voluntary approach regarding them was a little naïve.
- reference to “walking school buses” (p.7): This was seen as a “nice” idea but not very realistic.

Additional Suggestions for Improving Guide

In addition to the suggestions concerning the guide cover discussed above, participants made numerous suggestions for improving the guide in general. While some suggestions were made with relative frequency, many were made by individual participants or no more than a few. Virtually all the suggestions fell into one of two categories: suggestions for improving the clarity of the guide and suggestions for improving its usefulness.

Suggestions for Improving Clarity of Guide

Suggestions for improving the clarity of the guide tended to fall into two categories: improving clarity through changes to content and changes to format/design. In terms of content, the suggestion made most often was clarifying that the One-Tonne Challenge is addressed to individuals and includes only new actions. As noted, many participants, including some to whom this was already clear, felt that these two aspects could be made more explicit. Most suggested that the best way to do this would be to have a clear statement in the introductory section that the one-tonne goal is for individuals and includes only new actions. Other ways of highlighting this included the following:

- Highlight the reference to *new* actions at the bottom of page 3 by making it bold or larger.
- Highlight and clarify the statement on page 4 that the OTC being for individuals. Currently it is mentioned only in passing.
- Add a paragraph on the reminder page (page 23) stating that the OTC includes only new actions. This could be placed just before or just after the paragraph reminding people that the OTC is for individuals.
- Alter the instruction in the upper left hand corner of the tips pages to read: “Circle the *new* actions you want to take” and make it bolder or larger.
- Add a household/family aspect to the tally sheet clarifying that the emphasis is on individuals (e.g. “4 people = 4 X 20 = 100 points needed”).
- Re-title and perhaps reposition the ‘Remember’ page (page 23).

Of the remaining suggestions for clarifying the content of the guide, only two were made with any frequency. One was clarifying the section on the bottom half of page 3. Some participants suggested clarifying how the examples of actions, letters (A,B,C), and the amount of GHGs relate to one another, as well as clarifying the counting/adding process (i.e. how actions are to be added up). The other suggestion was changing the expression ‘générateur d’air chaud’ to ‘fournaise’ on page 11 of the French version of the guide. Many participants in the French groups thought that the latter expression was more commonly used and therefore would be more understandable.

All other suggestions for clarifying the content of the guide were made by few participants. Ideas included:

- Start the guide with a concise definition of the OTC (e.g. “The One-Tonne Challenge is... and asks ...”).
- Integrate the sentence in the blue box on page 2 (“A goal of one tonne per person means reducing your GHGs by about 20%”) into the main text. Have it follow the sentence that says: “Every year, each Canadian produces an average of over five tonnes of GHGs”. This will clarify what the 20% refers to.
- Include a pie chart on page 5 showing what accounts for the 82% of Canada’s total GHG emissions not produced by cars and trucks.
- Add a sentence on page 13 explaining why it is better to use electrical equipment early in the morning or in the evening during the summer.
- Clarify the statement at the bottom of the last page linking the score to the details on the previous page (“see left page for details”). The connection between the score and the reminders is not clear.

Suggestions for improving clarity through the format/design focussed mainly on reducing what was seen as the ‘busy’ or ‘fragmented’ nature of the guide. The following suggestions were made by at least a few participants in each group in order to make it easier to follow or read the text in the guide:

- *Have more uniformity in colour/coding:* This included using fewer colours or some sort of colour-coding pattern (e.g. one main colour for the ‘On the Road’ section and another for the ‘At Home’ section).
- *Fewer little boxes/sections:* This would give the guide a more unified, less fragmented look and feel.
- *Clearer contrast between text and background:* Make sure that the text colour contrasts with the background colour in such a way as to make the text easy to read. This could include more basic black text on a white background. The colour schemes to avoid were identified earlier in this report.
- *Larger/more uniform font sizes:* Increase the font sizes on certain pages of the guide (e.g. pages 4, 7) and try to use a more uniform/consistent font size.

The remaining suggestions were offered infrequently:

- *Uniformity in colour of website addresses:* Use the same colour for website addresses throughout the guide.
- *Highlight the website addresses in blue:* Blue is the colour of live links on the Internet and should be used for websites throughout the guide.

- *Place all the 'Did You Know' statements in one section:* This would enhance the flow of the document by reducing 'interruptions' in the provision of tips.
- *Highlight the on-line calculator:* The reference to the on-line calculator should be more visible. It should either be highlighted or moved from page 4 to the end of the guide beside the tally sheet so that people see it once they have calculated their reduction.
- *Highlight the page titled 'Remember...':* This might be placed either at the very end of the document or on page 22 (currently occupied by "For more information").
- *Move the page titled "For more information" to the very end of guide:* Usually such pages appear at the very end of information/reference documents.

Suggestions for Improving Usefulness of Guide

While there was a virtual consensus among participants that the guide is useful, numerous suggestions were made to make it more useful. That said, most of these suggestions were made by small numbers or individual participants. In all, four sets of suggestions for improving the usefulness of the guide were made with relative frequency.

The first, and most frequently-made suggestion, was to provide the means for people to register/acknowledge actions that they have already taken, including perhaps their impact on greenhouse gas reduction. Some participants in every group felt that this would improve the guide, in part by providing a useful benchmark from which to start. This might take the form of two columns, one for actions taken and another for new actions that will be taken. Alternatively, it could involve noting actions taken with a check mark and circling actions that will be taken. This was sometimes seen as almost providing the capability for a 'green' or environmental report card for people on how they are currently doing.

The other types of suggestions made relatively frequently were:

- *Provide additional information on grants and possible savings/rebates:* Many participants expressed interest in getting more information about grants and possible savings/rebates in trying to reduce energy consumption. They felt that this would make the guide a more useful document. Some also suggested adding coupons or something similar.
- *Include more telephone numbers:* A number of participants felt that the guide should include more phone numbers to additional sources of information (as noted, the guide currently includes only one phone number). It was felt that this addition would make the guide more useful to people who do not have access to the Internet or do not use it.
- *Make the guide more actionable:* There was a series of suggestions that focused on making the guide more actionable on a day-to-day basis. These included providing the information on some form of calendar, providing a one-page summary checklist so that all potential actions are listed in one place, and providing post-its or stickers for each tip/action, so that these can be taken out of the book and placed on the fridge or somewhere appropriate to remind people to

take the action. What these types of ideas have in common is a desire to pull information out of the guide and keep it in front of people (e.g. for when the guide book is put away in a drawer, provided it is kept at all).

Remaining suggestions for improving the usefulness of the guide were made by relatively small numbers. In order to facilitate their review, they have been grouped under general headings.

Format/design:

- Include a section for children and renters/condo owners (e.g. group the “At Home’ suggestions relevant to renters/condo owners in one place, with other suggestions that our house-owner-relevant elsewhere). It was felt that this would improve buy-in from various groups.
- Include a section on gardening, grouping some of the tips currently in the guide, and adding others not in the guide.
- Provide different versions of the guide: one for children, one for teens, one for adults.
- Provide functional tabs to differentiate sections: At present there are tabs in the guide but they are decorative, not functional, and some are on the inside of the guide pages, not the outside where tabs usually are.
- Make the guide bigger/thicker: By making the guide more substantial it can enhance the impression that this is something durable, something to be kept.
- Shorten the guide. Make it less wordy, avoid repetition.

Impact statements/contextual information:

- Information on what the government itself is doing to reduce emissions.
- More information on the consequences of not doing anything.
- Information on the impact of taking action (i.e. if Canadians do reduce emissions by one-tonne what will be the concrete effects down the road?).
- More information on health care costs associated with smog/pollution.

Additional tips information:

- Information on half/full flush toilets.
- Information on diesel fuel and propane.
- Recommending washing dishes manually.
- Recommending washing clothes in cold water.
- Information on water beds and heating them.
- Mention existence of programmable thermostats.
- Add a sentence on what refrigerator coils should look like.
- Warning about danger that an unplugged freezer poses for children (i.e. possibility of getting trapped in it).

Additional information related to things already in the guide:

- Information on the cost of an EnerGuide inspection, and clearer language on page 12 that explains that the relevant section involves house assessments.
- Recommended types/ brand names of certain products.

- Possible substitutes/alternative (i.e. “If you can’t do this, try ...”).
- Information on the approximate costs of certain things, like high-efficiency furnaces or front loading washers.
- Availability of green power (i.e. where it is currently available? how to access it?).
- Information on where to buy block heaters.

Additional sources of information:

- Include a page listing all the website addresses included in the guide. This would be a comprehensive version of what currently appears on page 22 and provide a useful one-stop source of links to additional information.
- Include more non-gc website addresses. Include other useful non-governmental sources of information regarding energy reduction, such as websites of associations such as the Canadian Window and Door Manufacturers Association, the Canadian Solar Industries Association, and the Canadian Wind Energy Association.
- A website address for additional information on hybrid vehicles.
- Contact information regarding recyclable materials (i.e. who to contact).
- Provide province-specific information when possible (e.g. if something is not available in a certain region).

Tracking progress and calculating/tallying totals:

- Provide possibility to calculate totals at the bottom of each page in order to facilitate final calculation.
- Provide a column for tracking over time (e.g. a 6-month review/update).
- Include a blank page or two to make notes.
- Ensure that the score card has provision for calculating the actions taken for households, not only for individuals.

Additional suggestions:

- Emphasize the statement on back cover reminding people to keep the guide handy. Perhaps move it somewhere that people are more likely to see it.
- Present the guide as a reference tool as opposed to a challenge.

Finally, at least one or two participants in each group made a recommendation that, while not related to the content or format of the guide itself, related to the impact it might have. They recommended that an ad campaign, through TV and/or radio, should precede any mail-out of the guide. They felt that this would be valuable preparatory work in creating a certain amount of prior awareness about the OTC. Recall that prior awareness of the OTC among participants was virtually non-existent.

Taking the Challenge

This section reports on findings related to *using* the guide itself, including developing an action plan for meeting the one-tonne goal, ease of use, and likelihood of taking various actions. Prior to the actual discussion, most participants had not only read through the guide but had also used it (i.e. had circled actions and used the “check your score” section at the back). In some groups, those who hadn’t done this were asked to take a few minutes to do so.

Most Focus on Practicality & Convenience When Developing Plan

Asked how they would meet the one-tonne goal (i.e. go about developing a plan), most participants said they would focus on criteria of practicality and convenience. This included taking measures that were easy or relatively easy to do, measures that did not significantly alter or disrupt their lifestyles, and measures that were financially realistic or feasible.

Some indicated that they would look for measures that included or involved grants, while a few said that they would be guided by long term-savings (i.e. they would be prepared to incur some immediate expenses if this involved long-term savings). A couple of participants said that they were particularly concerned with water-related issues and would focus on issues involving water conservation.

Guide Seen to be Easy to Use Despite Some Initial Confusion

There was a consensus among participants that the guide was easy to use. As noted, some said they were a little confused at the beginning because they did not fully comprehend the examples on the lower half of page 3, or because they were still not sure what they were being asked to do by the time they were asked **Are you ready?** on page 4. However, they said that this became clear as they continued to read the guide. A few noted that they skipped ahead to the “check your score” section at the back and that this helped clarify the process.

All the participants noticed the “check your score” section at the back and there was general agreement that that section is relatively clear (subject to the limitations already discussed – issues of new actions, household vs. individual calculations). As noted, a number of participants calculated their score by including actions they had already taken but their calculations were correct, indicating that they understood the calculating procedure. Some participants who had included actions already taken recalculated their scores to see what these would be if they only included new actions.

Most Did Not Notice On-Line Calculator of GHG Emissions

Most participants said they did not notice the reference to the on-line calculator on page 4 of the guide, though many said they did. Some participants who did not notice it explained why by suggesting that it did not draw their attention. Reasons included its position in the lower right-hand corner of the page, the smaller font compared to the rest

of the text on the page, the ‘busy’ or ‘fragmented’ format of the page, the variety of information contained on that page, and their eyes being drawn to the more prominent **Are you ready?** section.

Participants Identify Variety of New Actions They Would Likely Take

When asked which new actions they would be most likely to take, participants identified a variety of measures, none of which predominated. However, when asked why they would take these actions there was widespread agreement these actions tended to be practical or convenient. The variety of new actions identified underscores the idiosyncratic nature of the exercise (i.e. different mix of actions for different individuals).

‘On the Road’ activities/measures identified included:

- Idling less.
- Driving at the speed limit.
- Checking their tire pressure.
- Removing the car roof rack.
- Looking for ethanol-blended gasoline.
- Driving less.
- Getting a block heater.

‘At Home’ activities/measures included:

- Using caulking and weather stripping.
- Sealing and insulating ducts.
- Cleaning refrigerator coils.
- Doing more washing at night.
- Using the dryer less.
- Avoiding running the tap.
- Regulating the air conditioner.
- Installing a low-flow shower-head.
- Using fans instead of air conditioners.
- Washing clothes in warm water.
- Opening and closing curtains during the day depending on the season.
- Getting energy-efficient light bulbs.
- Looking for energy star appliances.
- Composting.

Some participants stated that they would do *more* of what they were already doing (e.g. more consistently adjusting the temperature setting at home, more often doing washing in cold water).

Actions Least Likely to be Taken

Participants provided a less extensive list when asked which new actions they would be least likely to take (this does not include actions already taken). Moreover, unlike actions most likely to be taken, some activities were mentioned more often than others. The

activity mentioned most often was getting rid of a second car. Also mentioned relatively frequently were driving less and unplugging a second refrigerator or freezer.

Convenience was the main reason given by participants to explain why they would not get rid of a second car or drive less. Some pointed to personal circumstances to explain why (e.g. live in suburbs where a second car is a virtual necessity).

Other measures identified as least likely to be taken were cited much less frequently (by one participant or a few at most) and included the following:

- Hanging clothes outdoors to dry.
- Paying attention to packaging (seen as something people have less control over).
- Buying energy-efficient light bulbs.
- Capturing rainwater.
- Closing blinds and curtains during the day in the summer.
- Not using the heat cycle on the dishwasher.
- Planting trees.
- Buying a block heater.
- Using a manual push mower.

Different reasons were offered to explain why these various activities were least likely to be taken.

- *Time considerations/convenience*: This was the reason given by participants to explain why they would be less likely to pay attention to packaging, not use the heat cycle on the dishwasher, and capture rainwater.
- *Regulations*: This explained why hanging clothes outdoors to dry and planting trees were less likely to be done. Participants who said this explained that regulations in their neighbourhoods do not allow them to use outdoor clothes lines or plant certain types of trees.
- *Cost*: This explained why participants would be less likely to buy a push mower or energy-efficient light bulbs.
- *Regional factors*: This explained why participants would not be likely to buy a block heater or close blinds and curtains during the day in the summer. The participant who said he/she would be least likely to buy a block heater is from Vancouver and explained that the temperate climate makes this unnecessary. The participant who said he/she would be least likely to close curtains during the day in the summer is from St. John's and explained that they get very little sunlight in St. John's and he/she does not want to block it out.

In conclusion, comparison of the list of actions most likely to be taken and least likely to be taken reveals that there is relatively little overlap between the two. While the lists are not mutually exclusive, very few activities appear in both lists.

Likelihood of Taking OTC Challenge

This section reports on findings related to the likelihood of participating in the One-Tonne Challenge.

Most Say They Would Keep Guide & Read it if Received in the Mail

Participants were asked what they would do with this guide if they received it in the mail. Most said that they would keep it and read it, though many added that they probably would not read it immediately. Some said they would probably scan it upon receipt, then come back to it or pass it on to someone else (i.e. spouse, children) they thought might be interested. A few participants said that it would depend on the quantity and type of mail received at the same time. If it came on its own they might keep it, but if it came with important mail or with a quantity of other things, they said that it might get tossed aside and forgotten or even thrown out.

Conversely, some participants said that they would probably just throw it in the recycling bin (as they do with most unsolicited brochures). A few of them added that this was sad in a way because having read the guide they know that it contains a lot of good information. However, if it came in the mail they would probably throw it out. Comments in this area included:

- *I was paid to read this and I can't honestly say I would read it if it was in my mail box.*
- *It contains very concrete things I can do but if this came in my mail box I'd put it in recycling.*
- *I don't know that I would take the time to read it even though I think it's incredibly important.*
- *It was very useful information but I wouldn't take half an hour to read it.*

A necessary pre-condition of reading/keeping the guide for many participants was that the cover needed to be changed (as discussed) to make its content clear and make it more engaging. Otherwise, it would be tossed by many who might have kept it if they knew what it contained, and were motivated to open it up and read it.

Most Would Use Guide Without Explicitly Taking OTC Challenge

Most participants said that they would keep the guide and use it as a reference document for tips on saving energy, and a number added that they would even use the score card, but relatively few said that they would explicitly or formally take the One-Tonne Challenge. While there is a consensus that the guide is a very good information document, few participants were motivated to 'sign on' to take the challenge itself. Note, however, that this view was expressed in the absence of any communications/advertising campaign to raise awareness of the challenge and engage people in it (i.e. pique interest, motivate participation).

Participants who said they would not explicitly or formally take up the challenge offered a variety of reasons to explain why:

- *Guide seen primarily as information document:* Some participants view the guide primarily as an information document. The guide provides useful information that can help them in their efforts and they will use it in this sense – as a reference document. The challenge itself is secondary and, according to a few, unnecessary.
- *Action already being taken:* Some participants explained that they are already taking actions to reduce energy consumption and will continue to do so. A few added that they feel that they are ‘ahead of the pack’ in energy reduction and so do not need to take up the challenge.
- *Will do things when possible:* Some explained that they know they can reduce their energy consumption and do not need to be guided by a reduction goal of one tonne. They will do what they can, when they can but will not set out specific goals in advance.
- *Not motivated by idea of challenge:* A few participants explained that they are not motivated by the idea of a challenge. While concerned about the environment, they said they have enough challenges in their daily lives and don’t need to take on additional ones. It was felt that the idea of a challenge is a good way to motivate children and young people, but not adults.

The relatively small minority of participants who said that they would formally take up the challenge pointed mainly to an interest in helping the environment to explain why. A few participants said they would take up the challenge because it was a good way to involve the entire family in energy reduction.

In the course of discussions, the involvement of children in the challenge routinely emerged as a theme (at different times during the groups, and in most/all focus groups). A general feeling emerged that children would be most likely to be motivated to formally take the challenge. There was a sense, especially among parents in the groups, that children tend to be both environmentally-conscious and motivated by challenges and competition. Some parents were certain that if this guide came into their child’s hands, they would push their parents to take up the challenge. Along similar lines, some participants suggested that the most effective way to promote ‘buy-in’ for the challenge would be to send the booklets into the schools if possible.

Most Took Guide Home Following Focus Groups

The large majority of participants took the guide home with them following the focus groups. Moreover, some asked if they could take the guide home prior to being told that they could. Most said they would keep the guide for future reference and many said they would pass it on to spouses and children (some would discuss it with them). Some said they would show it to friends and acquaintances. A few asked if the guide was available and if so where.

Actions Participants Would Take Using Guide at Home

Participants were asked specifically how likely they would be to ...

- Seek out additional information, such as through the websites provided.
- Use the on-line GHG calculator to calculate the amount of GHG emissions they produce .
- Fill out and send back the mailing card.

Many participants said that they would look for additional information through the websites provided. Some repeated that the guide should include more non-web-based information sources in order to increase its usefulness and relevance to people who do not have access to the Internet. A number of participants said they would visit www.oeenrcan.gc.ca/houses to seek out additional information on the grants associated with home improvements. Some were interested in www.oeenrcan.gc.ca/keep_heat_in for information on heat leakages in homes. Other sites that elicited interest among at least a few participants included transportation-related sites, sites providing information on green power, and sites providing information on composting.

Interest in the on-line calculator and the mailing card was much lower. While a number of participants said they might visit the site of the on-line calculator out of curiosity, only a few said they would actually use it. Very few said they would fill out and send back the mailing card.

Limited Interest in OTC Newsletter

Only a few participants expressed interest in possibly providing their email address to receive a monthly OTC newsletter electronically. Information they would expect to find in such a newsletter included additional tips, updates on such things as environmental legislation, the number of people signing up to take the challenge, tracking of the impact the OTC is having, and comparative data on what is being done in other countries. Those who were not interested in the newsletter generally pointed to a lack of need to explain why.

Recognition and Rewards

This section presents findings related to the importance and appropriateness of recognizing those who take the OTC and rewarding those who achieve the OTC goal.

Few Would Visit OTC Website to Take Pledge

Participants were informed that visitors to the One-Tonne Challenge website are asked to pledge on-line to take the challenge. Asked if they would visit the site and take the pledge if they knew about this feature, a few said they would but most said they would not (consistent with their *informal* way of taking the challenge; i.e. taking action, if not formally take the challenge). Among those who said they would, a couple specified that they would do this if there were an incentive or a reward. In the more general discussion of recognition for taking the pledge, some other participants also suggested that an incentive or reward might serve as a way to motivate people to take the pledge in the first place (but most did not).

Participants who would not take the pledge suggested that they saw no real value or purpose in it. Some specified that they see no value in taking a pledge because it does nothing to ensure that people will be more likely to follow-up on their commitment. A few added that this might be a good idea for children (i.e. actually signing-up to take the challenge), but not for adults.

Recognition for Taking Pledge Not Seen to be Necessary

While participants did not think that it was a bad idea to offer some form of acknowledgement or recognition for taking the pledge, the vast majority did not feel that it was necessary or important to them personally. Some suggested that this might be a good way to motivate people to take the pledge, but most doubted its effectiveness.

In explaining why this was not important to them, most participants explained that there was no need for it. They said that there were plenty of good reasons to try to reduce energy consumption such as helping protect the environment, ensuring clean air for their children, and saving money. One participant seemed to sum up the general sentiment by quoting from the cover of the guide: “If you do this you will use less energy, save money, improve air quality, and protect the environment. Why would you need anything else?”. In addition to this, a few participants said they did not feel that people should be recognized just for taking a pledge to do something (i.e. why get something when you haven’t done anything yet?). Finally, a few noted that some recognition for taking the pledge might be good for children.

Few Ideas for Appropriate Forms of Recognition

Perhaps because most participants did not think that recognition for taking the pledge was particularly important, few could identify ways in which they thought this should be done when asked about this in an open-ended manner. In fact, very few suggestions were put forward. Those who did put forward ideas tended to feel that the most appropriate form

of recognition would be to focus on things that would actually help people fulfill their pledges. Along these lines, the following were suggested:

- Coupons or rebates on energy-saving purchases.
- Recycling bags.
- A challenge chat room where people taking the pledge could talk to one another and encourage each other.
- A fridge thermometer to maintain the temperature at the appropriate level.
- A free energy efficient light bulb. The reasoning here was that once people saw how efficient they were they would be motivated to go out and buy them afterwards.

Other suggestions included certificates for children, stickers or decals, and mouse pads.

Current 'System' of Recognition On-Line Seen as Appropriate

After being asked in an open-ended manner how pledges should be recognized, participants were told what currently happens. They were informed that when someone takes the pledge on-line they are congratulated and thanked for joining the One-Tonne Challenge. In addition, they are given links to the guide and calculator, as well as an option to print a reminder tips page.

Asked what they thought of this, there was general agreement among participants that this was appropriate. Some said that this was a good form of recognition because it would help people fulfill their pledge (i.e. the guide, the calculator, and the tips page were all useful things to help people meet their goal).

Fridge Magnet Seen as Most Appropriate Type of Acknowledgement

Participants were then asked for their reaction to specific ways in which pledges could be acknowledged and recognized. They were asked whether they thought the following were good forms of acknowledgement:

- Printable certificate which reads "I'm taking the One-Tonne Challenge."
- Free screen-saver.
- Fridge magnet with thermometer.
- Self-adhesive decal which can put on a house, car window or filing cabinet.

Most participants showed no more than lukewarm interest for everything except the fridge magnet. The printable certificate elicited the least amount of interest. While some felt that it might be a good form of recognition for children, many saw it simply as a waste of paper. A few found the suggestion ironic in light of the fact that the guide states on page 16 that each Canadian uses up to four trees every year in paper products. Free screen-savers and self-adhesive decals elicited only slightly more interest than the certificates.

Samples of the magnet were passed around to participants to give them a palpable sense of what was being proposed. Most participants felt that it was an appropriate gift for two

reasons. First, from its position on the fridge it could serve as an effective reminder of the challenge and keep it top of mind. Second, it was a small, inexpensive gift which did not seem inappropriate. One participant did not like the idea of giving fridge magnets because it sent a conflicting message (i.e. the magnet is not bio degradable and is therefore a pollutant).

Lukewarm Interest in Recognition/Rewards for Meeting Challenge

As was the case regarding recognizing pledges, there was widespread agreement among participants that recognition for having achieved the one-tonne reduction was not very important. Most participants said that they would not expect to receive some recognition for their achievement. Most felt that achieving the goal, or any level of reduction for that matter, was reward enough and would pay off in the long run in terms of saving the environment and saving money.

That said, gifts or rewards for actually having achieved the goal were generally seen as *more* appropriate than recognition for simply having taken a pledge. In this sense, there was more interest in possible rewards for achieving something. At the same time, along with greater interest in possible rewards came a corresponding concern about monitoring – how would it be determined that people claiming to have reached the goal had actually done it? A few participants wondered whether there would be some form of verification or whether it would simply be based on the honour system. There was a general consensus that rewards would need to be small in order to be supportable in the absence of verification – no one favours verification of any kind.

Participants found it easier to identify appropriate rewards for achieving the goal than for pledging to take it. Asked in an open-ended manner what kind of recognition would be appropriate, a number of participants suggested some form of rebate or refund. It was noted that people in Ontario receive a rebate from the government when they purchase an energy efficient washer or dryer. Some others suggested a tax credit. Finally, a few suggested gift certificates that could be used to purchase energy-efficient products. These ‘larger’ items were not supported in the groups because of their need for verification.

Draw for Prizes, Token Rewards Seen to be Appropriate

As was the case with recognition of pledges, participants were then asked for their reaction to some potential options. These included ...

- Submitting their story on-line for how they reduced their GHG emissions by at least one tonne.
- Having their name added to a bi-monthly draw for prizes that would help them reduce their energy use. Such prizes might include ...
 - EnerGuide for Houses evaluation.
 - free annual bus pass for their city.
 - choice of an energy efficient appliance: washer, dryer, fridge, stove or dish washer.
 - wind-up and solar powered flashlight or radio.

- push mower and sharpening kit.
- pedometer (measures distance walked in a day).
- Having their name posted on an “achievers’ or “hall of fame” page on-line at the OTC website.
- Receiving a letter of congratulations from the Ministers of the Environment and Natural Resources.
- Receiving a small “reward” or item that shows they’ve reduced their GHG’s by at least one tonne. Such prizes might include ...
 - tire pressure gauge.
 - compact fluorescent light bulb.
 - cotton tote bag.
 - in summer: car window screen to reflect heat or clothesline and clothes pins.

The option that elicited the most interest was the bi-monthly draw for prizes. In fact, the level of interest increased, even among participants who had said that rewards were not important, once the potential prizes were identified. Most participants were positive, and in some cases genuinely enthusiastic, about some of these prizes. This was especially the case for the EnerGuide for Houses evaluation, the free annual bus pass, the choice of an energy efficient appliance, and the push mower. One participant suggested holding regional draws in order to increase the chances of winning such a prize.

A number of participants also felt that the receipt of a small reward was appropriate, though it was suggested that people have the option to inform the government whether they wanted such a gift or not. When preferences were expressed, the tire pressure gauge and compact fluorescent light bulb were seen as more interesting than the tote bag and car window screen or clothes line and pins.

The other possibilities did not resonate among participants or elicit much interest. Few expressed any interest in either submitting their story on-line for how they reduced their GHG emissions by at least one tonne, having their name posted on an “achievers’ or “hall of fame” page on-line at the OTC website, or receiving a letter of congratulations from the Ministers of the Environment and Natural Resources.

Appendix