

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Water Targets Expert Advisory Group: Cost-Benefit Analysis

Meeting notes, Wednesday 8 September 2021, 10:05-12:00 on MS Teams

Defra and Environment Agency (EA) attendees

Expert Attendees: Penny Johnes (Chair); Paul Withers; Nicci Russell; Kevin Hiscock; Karen Hudson-Edwards (guest expert); Charlotte Braungardt (guest expert); David Johnstone (guest expert); Adrian Collins (guest expert)

1) Defra Presentation

Defra presented the background on how cost-benefit analysis is calculated for water policies including the National Water Environment Benefits Survey (NWEBS).

2) Discussion

Discussion between Defra and members of the Water Expert Advisory Group included the following topics:

- The components of NWEBS, how they are valued and for whom (namely, society as a whole) and how local specifics are accounted for.
- How the data are collected, how surveys are conducted to inform NWEBS, and the relative weight placed on the different factors used to calculate the costs and benefits.
- Recommendations from experts on data sources that could strengthen the cost-benefit analysis methodology, assumptions and uncertainties.

A summary of the advice and discussion from the Water Expert Advisory Group has been incorporated into the Detailed Evidence Report which accompanies our Environment Act 2021: environmental targets.