

## Quantifying the Savings, Costs and Benefits of Water Efficiency UK Water Industry Research

The water industry in England and Wales focused much activity in the late 1990s on distributing water efficiency devices to customers, but were generally unsure of the actual savings in consumption achieved. This resulted in UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR), who provide a framework for research for UK water operators, commissioning Entec to undertake a study to define best practice in water efficiency research.

Proper guidance on how to measure the effectiveness of water efficiency campaigns will improve the industry's understanding of how much water is actually saved, and at what cost. This in turn will ensure that such schemes could seriously be considered alongside more traditional water resource options, such as reservoirs or boreholes.

Entec began the three year study by looking at what research had already been undertaken and drawing out the most effective aspects of existing work. This helped us to develop a set of ten best practice guidelines, which covered all aspects of a study, from project management issues to methods of data analysis. These generic guidelines could be applied to any area of water efficiency research.



Entec also produced best practice guidance for several of the most commonly researched water efficiency activities, such as cistern devices and water audits. These guidelines were presented at a project workshop and were refined, based on industry feedback. This ensured we maintained consensus throughout the process.

The second (current) phase of the project is based around 12 demonstration projects, which are implementing the best practice guidelines for the first time. The demonstration projects are benefiting from the application of the guidelines, and by applying the guidelines to real-life projects, Entec is ensuring that the final product will be genuinely useful to water companies, after the end of the project.

This ongoing project is bringing real benefit to water companies, by providing a greater understanding of the benefits of water efficiency and by giving them the opportunity to review water efficiency in parallel with other resource options. The industry's financial regulator, Ofwat, has also praised the project, stating that the study will 'provide robust information on the cost effectiveness of water efficiency, to the benefit of the industry as a whole'.

*Defining best practice  
in water efficiency  
research*

