

Identifying, Quantifying and Upscaling the Benefits of On-Farm Environmental Advice in England, Scotland and Wales

Call for Proposals to Appoint a Consultant

Summary

There is a wide and diverse range of farm advice currently being delivered in Britain under a number of different programmes and delivery mechanisms. WWF has been involved with farm advice delivery for environmental outcomes since 2012; in part through direct corporate support (Coca-Cola and Tesco), and latterly through upscaling mechanisms of the CaBA Water Stewardship Service and the Courtauld 2025 Water Ambition.

We wish to undertake a wide-ranging evaluative consultancy that seeks to identify and quantify the multiple benefits of environmentally-focused farm advice from specific existing programmes; the issues and opportunities associated with encouraging collaborative action across supply chains; and set out recommendations for measuring and scaling-up impact and overcoming barriers to further/wider implementation. This is to include cost:benefit calculations; consideration of interactions with agricultural regulatory regimes in England, Wales and Scotland; and development of advocacy assets for WWF use. Overall, the proposed consultancy will deliver across six interlinked objectives set out in this Call for Proposals.

We request submissions by Wednesday 17th March for a consultancy to run from end March to end August 2021. Consortium proposals are welcome.

1. Introduction

Farm advice is recognised as a key catalyst for the successful delivery of environmental objectives using policy, market and social levers of change. The Government, supply chain actors, the Rivers Trust movement, academics and the agricultural sector itself all recognise the importance of trusted advisors in influencing farmer attitudes, behaviours and the successful delivery of environmental outcomes.

WWF recognises there is a wide and diverse range of farm advice delivery in England, as well as the devolved nations. For the purposes of this consultancy, farm advice is defined as involving at least one direct advisory visit to the recipient farm; with follow-on advice potentially provided by non-face-to-face means and/or further farm visits. The following programmes are major – but by no means exclusive - examples of ones that aim to improve farm and landscape environmental outcomes in some form:

- Rivers Trusts and other organisations (e.g. Wildlife Trusts), mainly operating as Catchment Partnership leads in the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA).
- Regional FWAG initiatives.

- Catchment Sensitive Farming.
- Water company initiatives: mainly operating as Payments for Ecosystems Services schemes, e.g. South West Water's Upstream Thinking.
- Natural England/Environment Agency advice e.g. for Countryside Stewardship.
- Scotland's Farm Advisory Service (and an equivalent in Wales?)
- Farmer Clusters: mostly (initially) established with Natural England Facilitation Fund support, although they are not predominantly advice-led initiatives.

Other advice-led programmes also exist, mainly at smaller local and sub-regional scales, e.g. in national parks and AONBs. Additionally, there is a wide range of private-sector provision of farm advice: some of it environmentally-focused; much of it business-focused. In recognition of this plethora of advice, The Rivers Trust and WWF are leading the creation of a Farm Advice Hub: an online database resource that can direct farmers to sources of local farm advice and related initiatives and grants.

WWF has been involved with farm advice delivery for environmental outcomes since 2012; through corporate partnerships with Coca-Cola and Tesco, the development of the CaBA (Catchment Based Approach) Water Stewardship Service, and the collective action aims of the Courtauld 2025 (C2025) Water Ambition. More information on each of these initiatives is provided in Annex 1.

WWF held a Farm Advice conference in May 2018, involving a broad range of stakeholders. It identified a range of ways to enhance farm advice provision, and the successful consultant will be provided with the conference write-up and outputs.

2. AIM, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE OF CONSULTANCY

2.1 Consultancy Context

All three of the Partnerships / Initiatives described in Annex 1 have a concurrent requirement to undertake their own evaluative / consultative pieces of work. Whilst these could be undertaken as separate consultancies, WWF, Tesco and The Rivers Trust / C2025 believe there is reasonable overlap between the individual objectives of each piece of work. Consequently, we believe these overlapping pieces are best combined into one consultancy contract, delivered by a consultancy with the necessarily broad range of skills and experience to undertake all of the work elements in one contract.

2.2 Aim

The aim of this consultancy is to identify and quantify the multiple benefits of environmentally-focused farm advice from specific existing programmes; the issues and opportunities associated with encouraging collaborative action across supply chains; and set out recommendations for measuring and scaling-up impact and overcoming barriers to further/wider implementation.

The consultancy will focus on three "sub-aims" or "chapters" of work:

1. An evaluation of the Coca-Cola-supported Farm Advice programme in East Anglia. This will focus on lessons learnt, drivers and barriers to advice engagement and uptake, and also opportunities for new / amended / similar delivery for a renewal of the WWF -Coca-Cola Partnership (due the second half of 2021). Best practice

examples from Tesco and/or C2025 advice programmes within four other geographic locations (Wye and Usk, Soar, Tamar and Medway catchments) and also to be considered.

2. An independent evaluation of C2025 Collective Action projects in the UK, to shape the next phases of development for this initiative.
3. The creation, for the WWF and Tesco Partnership, of a broad advocacy asset that will demonstrate convincingly to public and private sector funders the value of investing in farm advice and the contextual conditions in which that advice is most impactful. Two specific elements of this work are:
 - a. Calculations of the cost:benefit ratio of investment in farm advice in different circumstances.
 - b. To compare environmental farm advice – focused on its uptake and relative successes – and its interactions with agricultural regulatory regimes, assurance schemes, etc. in England, Wales and Scotland.

The “sub-aims” are not totally separate areas of work and a challenge for the appointed consultant will be to identify and deliver the best synergies between these three areas across the overall consultancy.

2.3 Objectives, including Main Areas of Activity and Outcomes Sought

1. To undertake an evaluation of environmentally-focused farm advice in England, focused on Norfolk Rivers Trust delivery in East Anglia, and drawing on experiences and expertise from the four other named catchment locations, plus wider if appropriate.

This will:

- Follow the basic principles for programme / project evaluation set out in the WWF Network Standards Guidance doc 5.3 – Evaluation Guidelines (to be made available to successful consultant, or earlier on request, and which follow the OECD DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation¹). The focus will be on effectiveness (of delivery of outcomes), impact, sustainability and adaptive capacity (especially learning).
 - Involve identifying delivery barriers, and obtaining learnings and best practice that can be used to extend the uptake of advice, and the benefits derived from good farm advice, in a national setting.
 - Generate case studies that illustrate key points (we anticipate a minimum of five).
2. To undertake evaluative analysis of the composition, aims, effectiveness and (potential) impacts of catchment-scale Water Stewardship Business Boards, where they have been created.

This will:

- Focus on the CamEO WS Business Board in East Anglia, established in 2016.
- Also engage with at least the more newly established Tamar Business Board and Wye Agri-Food Partnership for further learnings.

¹ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

- Provide the advocacy case for food and drink sector, supply chain business support for farm advice and interventions – both political and financial.
 - Propose (if it can be determined) an ideal structure, composition and governance arrangements for a Business Board model that can be rolled out to other catchments / locations.
 - Generate case studies that illustrate key points (we anticipate a minimum of two).
3. To understand how WWF, Tesco, the CaBA Water Stewardship Service and C2025 can individually, and in collaboration, best support farm advice and the contextual conditions that drive greatest uptake of that advice and improve the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

This will:

- Guide and provide the necessary evidence for our advocacy work on sustainable agricultural production.
4. To undertake new, and augment and compare existing, analyses of investment in farm advice at programmatic and farm-based levels.

This will:

- As far as possible, have a focus on cost:benefit analysis and consider multiple-benefits. But we also recognise that qualitative comparisons may be the best approach to some evidence, including those in the next bullet.
- Identify and illustrate other social and environmental benefits of advice that cannot necessarily be quantified through a financial metric, e.g. peer to peer learning; follow on changes in farming practice resulting from a business-focused mind shift by the farmer, etc.
- Incorporate a literature review and appraisal of existing knowledge / examples in this area, and to include an appraisal of the similarities and differences across the three nations of England, Wales and Scotland.
- Propose what might be the “perfect mix” of farm advice for multiple benefits / outcomes (e.g. farm business health, soil health, climate change mitigation, landscape-scale collaboration between several landowners) and how commissioners should define objectives and principles of environmental farm advice provision.
- Generate materials that deliver an evidence pack to support our specific advocacy in this area, centring on the actions governments and private organisations (e.g. retailers/water companies) can take to support impactful advice. These materials will include a written report, case studies and cba calculations.
- Compare and contrast the different interactions of farm advice and the regulatory regimes (or other differences like assurance schemes) in England, Wales and Scotland, and draw conclusions on how these affect the impact of environmental farm advice.
- Identify and illustrate the good practice that exists, and also highlight any weaknesses or failings in particular nations.
- Generate case studies that illustrate key points (we anticipate a minimum of three).

5. To understand the effectiveness of the Courtauld 2025 commitment on water in driving collaborative action to improve sustainable agricultural practices through supply chains and deliver outcomes that contribute to reducing water stresses in the C2025 pilot catchment areas.

This will:

- Gather feedback from a range of participants on what has worked well to date and what could be improved going forward.
 - Gather feedback from those major food & drink businesses that have yet to engage in the projects as to what the barriers are to them actively engaging and supporting catchment projects.
 - Review the approach to resourcing, governance and reporting in terms of efficacy (delivering the right outcomes), leverage and scalability.
 - Assess the value of using a consistent outcome-related metric as a means for driving collaborative action and sustainable agricultural practices (with the assumption that “replenish” (as used by Coca-Cola²) could be the metric as a form of Volumetric Water Benefit Accounting³).
 - Generate case studies that illustrate key points (we anticipate a minimum of two).
6. To generate project output materials that will support and drive our advocacy, as well as shape future delivery of farm advice through Water Stewardship approaches.

This will:

- Enable Coca-Cola and Tesco to maximise the impact of their investments in farm environmental advice.
- Facilitate advocacy with UK governments on the importance of adequately resourcing farm advice programmes.
- Facilitate advocacy with UK governments on the policy contexts that best support ongoing changes in practice achieved through farm advice.
- Facilitate advocacy with retailers and other relevant stakeholders on the cost:benefits of funding farm advice and/or supply chain actions and/or buying standards that boost the impact of farm advice.
- Facilitate advocacy and evidence of the most appropriate and efficient approaches to delivering farm advice to support the transition to the Environmental Land Management (ELM) Scheme and wider adoption of commercial PES (Payments for Ecosystems Services) opportunities.

2.4 Scope / Definitions

The geographic scope for this consultancy is England, Scotland and Wales and the differing contexts presented by this should be compared and contrasted, where appropriate.

Whilst we are specifically interested in environmental advice, we recognise that integrated business, technical and environmental advice can be at least as effective a form of advice. However, we are keen to differentiate between the provision of advice

² [Collaborating to Replenish the Water We Use - News & Articles \(coca-colacompany.com\)](https://www.coca-colacompany.com/news/articles/collaborating-to-replenish-the-water-we-use)

³ [volumetric-water-benefit-accounting.pdf \(wri.org\)](https://www.wri.org/publications/2016/01/volumetric-water-benefit-accounting)

that improves the environmental resilience of the farm, and advice that just leads to the accurate completion of grant applications.

We also recognise that a “farmer” receiving advice could be: an owner-occupier; a tenant with tenancy rights ranging from one year (e.g. for potatoes, cereals, etc) to lifetime; or a contract farming business.

Consultants are asked to show in their submission how they will consider both of these scope factors in their delivery.

3. Evaluation Approach, Deliverables, Timeline and Budget

3.1 Anticipated Tasks / Methodology

As part of the consultant’s submission, we require a proposal with a reasonably detailed approach to the consultancy and a proposed methodology set out for assessment in the selection process.

The consultancy will commence with an Initiation Meeting at which (and/or in preparation) WWF will supply any relevant background material required.

There will be regular update / progress meetings with the Consultancy Steering Group; chaired and minuted by the consultant.

3.2 Deliverables

Initially, the consultant will produce a detailed workplan and methodology to deliver the consultancy. This can be discussed in detail at the Initiation Meeting and submitted for approval to an agreed timescale afterwards.

At present, we anticipate requiring one single report that presents results and findings across all three sub-aims / six objectives. This should be a maximum of 60 pages, plus appendices, and additionally have an executive summary of max. 4 pages. It shall initially be presented in draft format for revisions and agreement by the Consultancy Steering Group.

Should, during the contract, the consultant advise the Steering Group that a single report is undeliverable due to the wealth of findings obtained, then we will consider breaking this into smaller reports in discussion with the consultant. The guiding principle we will follow is that we want to obtain consultancy deliverables most suited to our advocacy needs.

The report(s) shall include:

- A basic outline of the final methodology followed, with all interviewees and evidence / literature review sources detailed in appendices.
- The advocacy cases, and arguments / evidence for these, as set out in Section 2.3.
- The advocacy materials / assets also as set out in Section 2.3 that deliver the evidence pack referenced. These should demonstrate convincingly to public and

private sector funders the value of investing in farm advice and the contextual conditions in which that advice is most impactful.

- Case studies to illustrate key points and findings – the numbers proposed within Section 2.3 being suggested (minimum) numbers.
- The magnitude of the costs and benefits of farm advice provision in different contexts, with an explanation of the relative importance of the drivers of variation between them. This should generate recommendations for maximising the benefits from providing environmental farm advice.
- Details of the cost:benefit analyses and work to compare them - provided in a mutually agreeable format such as an Excel spreadsheet.

The final report is to be delivered in Word and pdf formats, with agreed wording / branding recognising the financial support delivering the report and the target audiences agreed with the Consultancy Steering Group during its production.

We also require a presentation and slide-deck(s) to communicate the main findings to senior stakeholders in our target audiences. The exact target audiences will be agreed during the consultancy with the Steering Group.

3.3 Skill Set Required for Consultant/Consortium

- Expert knowledge and experience across all three sub-aims and ability to integrate the sub-aims to achieve maximum benefit across the whole consultancy.
- Experience of undertaking participatory evaluations, using the DAC, or similar, criteria.
- Expert knowledge of agricultural advice provision in Britain and its interfaces with supply chains, funding sources and enforcement.
- Specifically:
 - o in-depth interviewing expertise
 - o ability to undertake research on sensitive subjects
 - o in-depth expertise on cost:benefit analysis specific to agriculture and/or the environment
 - o ability to synthesise and communicate complex findings and results into clear language suitable for diverse audiences.

Given the range of skills required, consortia proposals will be welcomed, provided they have a clear, lead consultant.

3.4 Proposed Timeline

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| - Return of submissions: | Midday, Wed. 17 th March 2021 |
| - Appointment of consultant: | Friday 26 th March 2021 |
| - Contract Initiation meeting: | Wednesday 31 st March 2021 |
| - Final completion: | Friday 27 th August 2021 |

3.5 Budget

The indicative budget is £55,000–70,000, including VAT and any associated costs, e.g. travel. Indicative allocations for the 3 sub-aims are:

- 1: £10,000 - £15,000
- 2: £10,000 - £15,000.
- 3: £35,000 - £40,000

4 Application Process and Appointment

4.1 Submission of Proposals

Please submit your proposal electronically by midday, Wednesday 17th March 2021 to Simon Aguss, the WWF-UK contact named below. Your proposal must contain:

- Your approach and proposed methodology to address the Aim, Objectives and Scope.
- A timeline to deliver the consultancy across the start and completion dates.
- An analysis of how you fulfil the required skill set, with supporting evidence.
- Names and CVs of all staff who will work on the consultancy, and proposed roles.
- An all-inclusive fee proposal including:
 - o Total days and day rates for each member of staff who will work on the consultancy.
 - o Any travel/ancillary costs.
 - o Your VAT status with VAT, if applicable, clearly identified.
- Acceptance of, or comments on, WWF-UK's standard terms and conditions

4.2 Assessment of Proposals

WWF will consider proposals and appoint the successful consultant through a mix of qualitative and quantitative assessment, to include:

- Quality of the submission and adherence to the brief.
- Expertise and skills of staff in relation to the brief.
- Cost and overall resource inputs, including value for money.
- Quality and effectiveness of the proposed methodology and ability to deliver the brief.

4.3 Appointment of Consultant

We plan to select and verbally appoint the chosen consultant by Friday 26th March. WWF will be the formal client for the consultancy contract and a Purchase Order will follow through WWF's electronic Panda Purchasing system, on which the consultant will need to be registered. The appointment will use WWF's standard Terms and Conditions.

Consultants submitting proposals are requested to keep the afternoon of Wednesday 31st March free for an Initiation Meeting.

4.4 Consultancy Steering Group

Appointment of the chosen consultant, and delivery of the consultancy, will be overseen by a Steering Group consisting of a minimum of:

- Simon Aguss, UK Catchment Manager, WWF-UK
- Tom Stuart, UK Landscapes Manager, WWF-UK and/or Callum Weir, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, WWF-UK
- Alex Adam, CaBA Water Stewardship Manager, The Rivers Trust
- Karen Fisher, Special Advisor, WRAP
- plus a farmer behaviour change specialist and, potentially, a Tesco representative.

Contacts:

WWF-UK:

Simon Aguss, UK Catchment Manager, saguss@wwf.org.uk T: 01483 412514

Tom Stuart, UK Landscapes Manager, tstuart@wwf.org.uk. T: 01483 412397

The Rivers Trust:

Alex Adam, CaBA Water Stewardship Manager, alex@theriverstrust.org

T: 07498 066920

WRAP (for C2025):

Karen Fisher, Special Advisor, WRAP, karen.fisher@wrap.org.uk

1 WWF and Coca-Cola Partnership

[WWF-UK and Coca-Cola](#) have been working together since 2012, initially to move English rivers towards Water Framework Directive (WFD) Good Status, under a Water Stewardship approach. In the first three years, the partnership focused on two chalk stream catchments directly linked to Coca-Cola operations: the River Nar in Norfolk and River Cray in SE London. From 2015 - 18, a renewed partnership sought to scale up the Nar delivery by supporting farmers to deliver water sensitive farming in areas directly linked to the Coca-Cola supply chain (of sugar from sugar beet). Farmer engagement, advice provision and behaviour change - in order to drive changes in agricultural practice - were undertaken predominantly in the Broadland Rivers and Cam and Ely Ouse (CamEO) catchments in East Anglia (with some delivery also in the North Norfolk and North-West Norfolk catchments). Also under this three-year partnership, the CaBA (Catchment Based Approach) Water Stewardship Service was established (see below)

In 2018, a renewed three-year WWF and Coca-Cola Partnership provided further, significant support to this on-ground, exemplar landscape delivery, to end June 2021.

Since inception in 2012, Norfolk Rivers Trust (NRT) has led this [water sensitive farming](#) delivery on the ground, through a grant-aided relationship with WWF. Delivery incorporates broad engagement with relevant Catchment Partnerships and other stakeholders, including the [CamEO Water Stewardship Business Board](#) established by key businesses and Anglian Water. NRT's skills and expertise mean they have also been commissioned to deliver farm advice work under the WWF-Tesco Partnership.

2 WWF and Tesco Partnership

"Sustainable agriculture" is one of three components within the "Restoring Nature in Food Production" pillar of the [WWF - Tesco Partnership](#), launched in November 2018. The overall aim of the Partnership is to halve the environmental footprint of the average shopping basket.

The Partnership is addressing the environmental impacts that the UK agricultural sector has on soil health, water quality, biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions. It is seeking to drive the uptake of more sustainable agricultural practices through farm advice on the ground and by engaging in policy-, market- and finance-based advocacy, as well as social means to shift behaviour. To achieve this, a pilot landscapes approach has been adopted in three key Tesco sourcing regions in England and Wales: to deliver water stewardship projects in collaboration with Tesco's producers. This farm advice work is delivered through local rivers trusts to specific supply chain focuses in each of the following locations:

- The Wye & Usk catchments on the England / Wales border: delivery by the Wye and Usk Foundation, focusing on dairy, free-range poultry, and coir re-use from polytunnel soft fruit.
- The Soar catchment in the East Midlands: delivery by Trent Rivers Trust, focusing on beef and dairy.
- The Broadland Rivers and Cam & Ely Ouse catchments in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire: delivery by Norfolk Rivers Trust with a focus on potatoes, root vegetables, salads and outdoor pigs, as well as sugar beet.

Lessons learnt from the pilots are being used to help shape agricultural policies in England, and also Scotland and Wales through WWF-UK's devolved offices, using joint advocacy by WWF and Tesco.

3 CaBA Water Stewardship Service / Courtauld 2025 Water Ambition
The WWF – Coca-Cola Partnership work in East Anglia (see above) fundamentally sought to work with and influence the private sector to work collectively within a catchment to become water stewards; and in turn improving the resilience of their supply chains and address the water stress resulting from their supply chains.

In 2017, the Partnership sought to upscale this regional Water Stewardship (WS) work to a national scale and to integrate with the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA). Consequently, the [CaBA Water Stewardship Service](#) was established, led by the CaBA Water Stewardship Manager (Alex Adam) based in The Rivers Trust. A twin-track, bottom-up and top-down approach was created:

- Bottom-up would support the development of private sector and civil society relationships at the catchment level (with both catchment-scale and national/international-scale businesses).
- Top-down would signpost corporates that are interested in becoming good water stewards; to match their interests with suitable local projects that will improve the resilience within the targeted catchment(s).

The Water Stewardship Service is very aligned with the Courtauld Commitment 2025 (C2025), and specifically the target around collective action which was being developed at the same time. The specific [C2025 Water Ambition](#) has two aims:

- Business signatories are monitoring water use in their own operations and have improved efficiency.
- Business signatories are participating in collective action to improve the quality and availability of water in key sourcing areas.

At its core, the C2025 Water Ambition includes a programme of pilot collective action projects that aim to improve the quality and availability of water in key sourcing areas for the UK's food & drink sector. Within the UK, there are four geographic areas that are the focus of delivery work to date:

- East Anglia: i.e. the areas of delivery by Norfolk Rivers Trust under the WWF – Coca-Cola and WWF – Tesco Partnerships.
- The Wye and Usk catchments on the England / Wales border: i.e. as the WWF – Tesco Partnership delivery landscape.
- The Tamar catchment in the West Country: delivery by Westcountry Rivers Trust.
- The Medway catchment in Kent: delivery by South East Rivers Trust.

The aim of these pilot projects is to reduce the water stresses within these key catchment areas, and to test and learn with the aim of developing best practice approaches that can be scaled up to other catchments across Britain. As the projects have now been running for approximately 3 years, we are keen to evaluate their success, or otherwise, in order to inform any next steps and future approaches.