Summary of Research

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

BSF reference number: 004
Cost centre code: 10021516
Date: 1st November 2024
[redacted]
[redacted]
Proposed start date: 08/01/2025
Proposed end dates: 30/06/2025
Title: User testing and awareness baselining for the Mandatory Water Efficiency Label
Contract reference: C27818

The specification must not exceed 10 side of A4.

1. Objectives

1.1 Project Background

What work has been done in the area previously, where is the evidence gap?

- By 2050, England is projected[1] to need an additional 5000 million litres of water per day due to climate change, population growth, drought resilience and to enable nature recovery. Managing water usage is key to addressing this.
- Under the Environment Act 2021, Government has committed to a 20% reduction in water demand (from 2019/20 levels) per person by 2038. To meet this statutory Water Demand Target, Government has committed to a package of policy measures.
- Government has announced that we will roll out a Mandatory Water Efficiency Label (MWEL) for water-using products by 2025. The MWEL is projected to have the single greatest contribution to meeting the target and has been factored into water companies 5 yearly Water Resource Management Plans.
- Government's work includes making regulations - through secondary legislation, with powers from Schedule 6 Section 52 of the Environment Act 2021 - to introduce a MWEL to better inform consumers and encourage the purchase of more water efficient products.
- The MWEL is Action 8 in the Roadmap for Water Efficiency in New Developments and Retrofits, as set out in the Environment improvement Plan (EIP).
- Our consultation on the introduction of a MWEL for water-using products closed on 25 November 2022. We set out our Government response and next steps on 29 September 2023.
- Water demand reduction is central to achieving the government's economic growth mission. Areas across England are unable to accommodate new non-household connections due to water scarcity. Reducing the water impact of new household developments, through tightening the Water Efficiency Standard within the Building Regulations and the MWEL, at the point of delivery supports the security of supply needed for economic growth.

1.2 Policy Context

What is the policy this research intends to inform? What are the risks of not filling this evidence gap?

Successful implementation of the MWEL will require a strong understanding of consumer awareness and understanding of the label and of water efficiency more broadly. We are ultimately aiming to change buying habits by raising the importance of water efficiency to be a factor

[1] A summary of England's revised draft regional and water resources management plans - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

(alongside others including financial, logistical and aesthetic considerations) in consumers' decision-making processes when they are purchasing water-using products.

The products covered under the MWEL scheme will be:

- showers (electric and non-electric)
- taps (kitchen sink and basin)
- toilets (including urinals)
- dishwashers
- washing machines
- combination washer-dryers

In a similar fashion to the UK Energy Label, each product covered under the MWEL scheme will have a label physically attached, with a corresponding version for products purchased online. The label bandings will range from an "A" rating (most water efficient) to an "F" rating (least water efficient).

As well as assessing the proposed label design (prior to launching the MWEL scheme) to determine both how simple it is to understand and its effectiveness in attracting the attention of consumers, this project will form part of a baseline to be compared against for the mandatory evaluation of the MWEL scheme rollout. Without this, we will have a weaker evidence base to assess the overall impact of the label and to determine whether any changes need to be made to the delivery of the policy in future years.

1.3 Stakeholders

Who are the key stakeholders for this project? Include both internal and external stakeholders.

- Domestic water consumers
- Retailers of water-using appliances
- Defra and associated government organisation, EA, OfWat and Consumer Council for Water

1.4 High level project objectives

What are you aiming to achieve through this research project? What behaviours are you seeking to influence or understand?

The objectives of this project will be two-fold:

Part 1 (consumer awareness baselining)
The aim of the MWEL is to change behaviour and encourage consumers to consider water efficiency in their purchasing decisions. To measure the effectiveness of the label, we require a baseline measurement of the awareness and utilisation of information about water efficiency in purchasing decisions. This can be then used to demonstrate how effective the label has (or hasn't) been in changing behaviour when reassessed in five years time.

Part 2 (label design comprehension)
The objective is to explore how the label is understood and interpreted by consumers. This is with the aim of encouraging consumers to use the label to consider water efficiency favourably in their purchasing decisions. We want to understand how they interpret the label and what the barriers would be to them using it in their purchasing decisions.

2. Project Requirements

2.1 Audience Groups

Whose behaviour are you aiming to change and in what context? Include how suppliers will access sample population and any quotas of interest. Please be as specific as possible E.g. dairy farmers in Somerset, UK general population adults aged between 18-35.

We are interested in household/domestic water users. We would look to have a random sample of around 2000 participants from England who are representative in terms of:

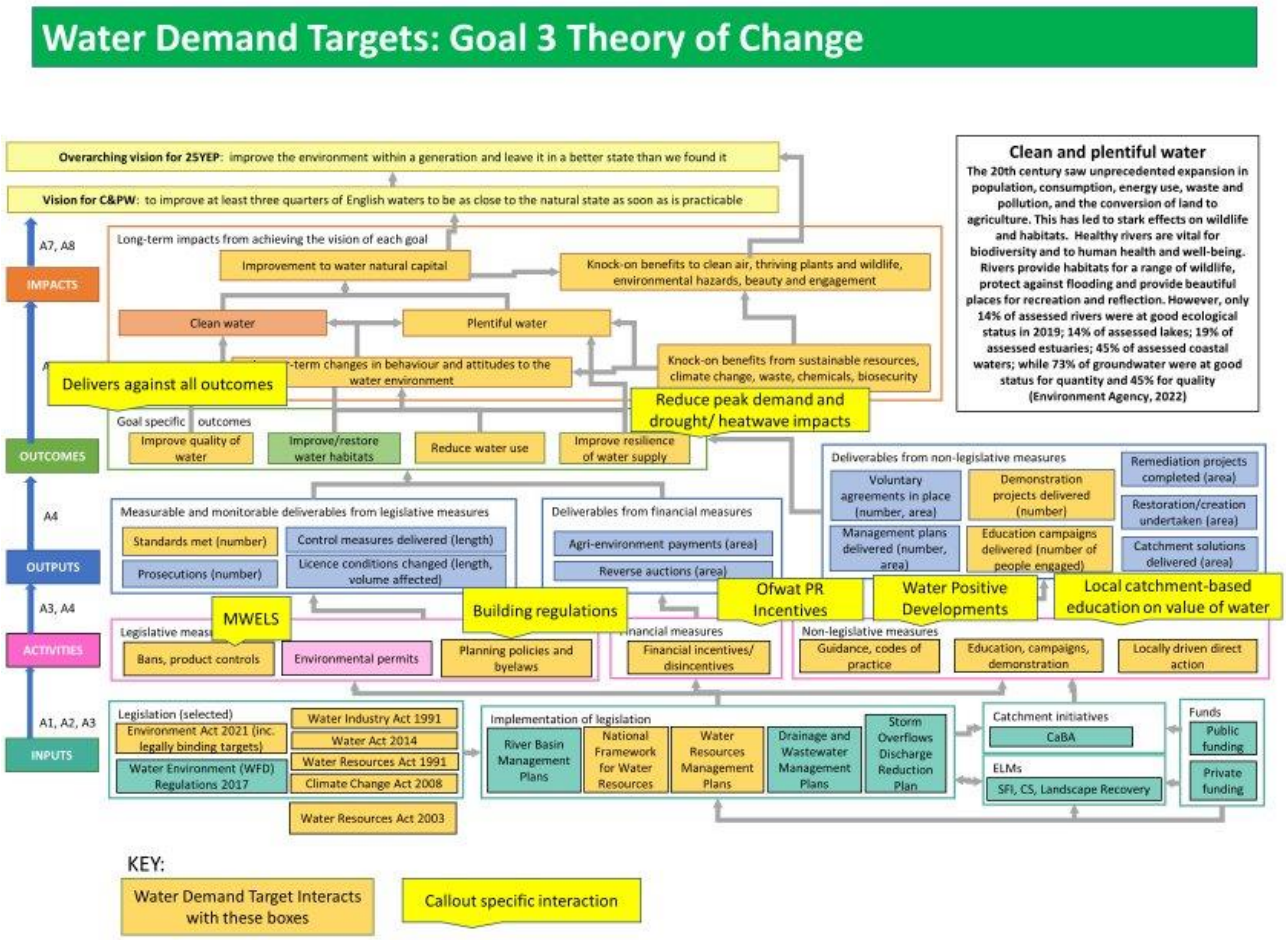
- Household size and property type e.g. two inhabitants in a flat or a family of four in a semi-detached house.
- Homeowners, landlords and tenants.
- Age, but for those older than 25 (younger people judged to be outside the target audience)
- Urban/rural dwellers in geographies with varying water scarcity risk.
- English regions
- Income level

We have chosen for a random sample over a quota sample as it is likely to be more representative for the purposes of baselining awareness and testing comprehension.

2.2 Theory of Change / Logic Model

If applicable… Do you need support with creating a Theory of Change or a Logic model? If you have already developed one, please submit a copy with this call-off form. If you wish to commission a Theory of Change, please use Defra's Theory of Change toolkit.

Not required for this project



2.3 Research Questions

What are your detailed research questions?

<u>Part 1 (consumer awareness baselining)</u>

- To what extent do consumers consider water efficiency in their purchasing decisions?
    - What is their understanding of what water efficiency means?
    - Would they consider it at all, and if so how would it rank compare to other considerations?

- If consumers wanted to look for information on water efficiency, would they know how to do so?
    - How would consumers approach looking for water efficiency information at present?
    - How will consumers engage with the QR code on the label?
    - Would they feel comfortable making decisions on the basis of the how information is currently presented (prior to the label's introduction)?

<u>Part 2 (label design comprehension)</u>

- Is the proposed label design engaging and comprehensible to consumers?
    - Do they understand the content?
    - Would they attend to the label in a purchasing decision, in competition with other qualities of the product?
    - What additional information would be required to supplement the content to ensure they engaged with the label?

2.4 Proposed Methodology

Please see supplier prospectuses for a range of methods suppliers can offer. You can specify a methodological requirement or ask suppliers to propose an appropriate methodology.

Part 1 (consumer awareness baselining) will be explored through a survey with a sample of approximately 2000 consumers representing the groups previously discussed. Survey can be delivered online with majority multiple-choice/closed-text questions.

Part 2 (label design comprehension) will be conducted with a combination of a focus group(s) and survey. The methodology should test comprehension in isolation and in the context of additional information (e.g. price). We would welcome the input of the supplier on an appropriate approach and what is achievable with the budget available.

2.5 Interventions to design or test

If applicable… Do interventions require designing? Are interventions already designed and requiring testing, in which contexts or through which channels?

Not applicable

2.6 Outcomes to measure

What is the behavioural outcome measure? E.g. participants sign up to a new service, or participants buy local produce.

Part 1 (consumer awareness baselining)

The main outcome will be to set an accurate baseline of consumer awareness of water efficiency, prior to the label launch. Specific outcomes would include:

- An overall view on what proportion of consumers are currently aware of (the issue of) water efficiency when purchasing water-using goods.
- Related to the above bullet, what proportion of consumers state water efficiency as one of the final factors (alongside cost, aesthetics, function etc.) when making a purchase.
- An overall view on how far consumers feel they have sufficient information currently to understand how water efficient a product is.
- What is assessed as an appropriate level of information around water efficiency which should be provided to consumers, to enable them to make an informed purchase. I.e. too little information could diminish the label's effectiveness but equally too much information may confuse consumers.
- For consumers who want to find out information on water efficiency, where and how might they do this currently? E.g. online internet searches when browsing kitchen/bathroom retailers; social media information pages; industry newsletters/journals/magazines; institutional information e.g. from government, water/energy sector, eNGOs; at the point of sale.

Part 2 (label design comprehension)

The main outcome will be both an overall assessment of consumer understanding of the label design and to identify any specific gaps in consumer understanding of the label which Defra can aim to address ahead of the label launch. Specific outcomes would include:

- Assessing the overall level of understanding of the rating system on the label (A-F).
- An overall view around what information the QR code should link to.

- An overall view on how helpful the flow rate/volume (in litres) is to consumers and whether there is further information government could provide to put these in greater context.
- A view on how much the label is attended to in the context of other information

2.7 Outputs and deliverables
How should findings be reported? Please see supplier prospectuses for a range of presentation methods. Consider documents for both public and internal government use. For publishable documents, ensure your findings comply with accessibility requirements and use Defra templates wherever possible.

- A written report summarising findings. This should comply with the accessibility and publication requirements from Defra. The report will be peer reviewed (organised by Defra) and the supplier will be required to respond to comments
- A sample of transcripts (if applicable) for use in quality assurance
- Anonymised survey data
- A presentation to be delivered to the Defra policy team on findings (<1hr in length)

3. Project Management

3.1 Timings
What are the expected start and end dates for the project? What are the key milestones and dependencies to be aware of?

Stage and completed by:
Commissioning – start of December
Surveys on awareness - end of January
Focus groups/survey on label content – end of February
Write up of findings and presentation – end of April/May

3.2 Budget
What is your maximum approved budget for this project?

£110,000

4. Sustainability and Social Value

4.1 Sustainability considerations
Are there any sustainability risks or considerations the supplier needs to know?

This research will contribute to wider sustainability policies set out below, by ensuring we evidence that we have reached those targets.

The Greening Government Commitments, which set out actions for departments to reduce their impacts on the environment, with targets for 2025. We are seeking for departments to buy MWEL rated products through the Government Buying Standards.

The National Adaptation Programme which sets out actions for government to take to adapt to impacts of climate change by 2028. This project relates to sections I8 and H10 of the programme.

Net Zero targets:

Approximately 90% of water related emissions are from how we use water in the home. The rest are emissions from water companies supplying water and removing and treating wastewater. The water sector has recently committed to reaching Net Zero by 2030 for its operational emissions.

Modest reductions in household water use of 5-6% can deliver annual emissions savings of around 1.3 MtCO2e. This is a bigger saving that was achieved in the whole UK housing sector in 2017-18 or in 2018-19.

4.2 Social value considerations

Are there any social value risks or considerations the supplier needs to know?

N/A

Supplier name: Ipsos
Date: 27th November 2024

The proposal must not exceed 10 sides of A4.

1. Proposed Methodology

1.1 Summary

The project is being commissioned to provide a baseline measurement of consumer awareness of water efficiency and to explore how well consumers understand, interpret and would use the proposed water efficiency label.
Throughout the project, we will use the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) as a structure to assess consumer's level of awareness and engagement with the water efficiency label and purchasing behaviours. By understanding where consumers are across the stages in the TTM, from precontemplation to maintenance, we can tailor strategies to facilitate consumers' progression through the stages to change their behaviours.

The project will begin with an inception meeting to finalise objectives, approach, and outputs. Stage 1 will involve a quantitative survey using Ipsos's UK KnowledgePanel to target 2,000 respondents in England, assessing consumer awareness and consideration of water efficiency in purchasing decisions. Due to the crucial importance of understanding the degree to which different factors influence consumer choice, we propose using a MaxDiff exercise to tease out their relative importance. Stage 2 will include qualitative research with three online focus groups and 10 depth interviews. Focus groups will explore attitudes towards water efficiency and the label design, while interviews will involve a mock website showcasing products with the water efficiency label. Both stages will feed into a final report and presentation, including findings, the baseline measurement of consumer awareness and clear recommendations for Defra to take forward around the roll out of the MWEL.

1.2 Detail

Research questions

Defra has identified key research questions for the project to address. These have been set out below and have been numbered for ease of reference throughout this proposal.

Part 1 (Consumer Awareness Baselining)

Research Question 1: To what extent do consumers consider water efficiency in their purchasing decisions?

a. What is their understanding of what water efficiency means?
b. Would they consider it at all, and if so how would it rank compare to other considerations?

Research Question 2: If consumers wanted to look for information on water efficiency, would they know how to do so?

a. How would consumers approach looking for water efficiency information at present?
b. How will consumers engage with the QR code on the label?
c. Would they feel comfortable making decisions on the basis of the how information is currently presented (prior to the label's introduction)?

Part 2 (Label Design Comprehension)

Research Question 3: Is the proposed label design engaging and comprehensible to consumers?

a. Do they understand the content?
b. Would they attend to the label in a purchasing decision, in competition with other qualities of the product?
c. What additional information would be required to supplement the content to ensure they engaged with the label?

The draft label has been designed and developed and therefore the focus of this project is around its use, engagement and awareness rather than consulting on its content – however, we will record any views on the label itself and feed these back to Defra.

Behavioural framework/model/approach

We propose using the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) for this project. Developed by Prochaska and DiClemente in the late 1970s,[2] it is a well-established behavioural framework that outlines distinct stages individuals typically go through when changing behaviour. TTM has been widely applied in various domains, including health promotion and environmental sustainability.

This model offers a structured approach to designing, implementing, and tailoring labelling strategies and educational initiatives to effectively engage consumers throughout each stage of behaviour change. It is likely that consumers will be at varying stages within the TTM when it comes to water efficiency. For instance, consumers who are completely unaware of water efficiency labels will be in the precontemplation stage, while those who are aware of the label but uncertain of its importance will be in the contemplation stage. By understanding where consumers are within the TTM, we can strategically align the presentation and communication of the label to their specific stage in the behaviour change journey.

Application of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) to MWEL

We will apply this model to determine the extent that consumers will engage with the water efficiency label and purchasing behaviours. We will also augment each of the stages with behavioural principles from the wider literature to provide guidance on how to drive change (e.g., raising awareness from stage 1, thinking about benefits from stage 2 etc).

TTM Stages	How this applies to water efficiency label and purchasing behaviours	Project stage/Methodology to assess TTM Stages
1. Precontemplation: Individuals are not considering change and may be unaware of the need for change.	Need to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable choices and the role of labels.	• Baseline Survey • Focus Groups
2. Contemplation: Individuals recognise need for change and begin to consider it but yet to commit.	Need to encourage consumers to think about the benefits of sustainable choices and the use of labels.	• Baseline Survey • Focus Groups
3. Preparation: Individuals are ready to act and may begin making small changes.	Need to support consumers in planning to use labels and make sustainable choices.	• Baseline Survey • Focus Groups • In-depth Interviews
4. Action: Individuals actively modify their behaviour and environment to implement change.	Need to facilitate the actual use of labels in decision-making and promote immediate behaviour change.	• Focus Groups • In-depth Interviews • MaxDiff Analysis
5. Maintenance: Individuals work to sustain the behaviour change.	Need to sustain the use of labels and ensure adherence to sustainable behaviours.	• Focus Groups

Alongside the TTM, several factors could influence how MWEL impacts purchasing behaviours:

- Water efficiency labels aim to influence purchasing behaviour by addressing knowledge gaps, but barriers (e.g., cost) must be addressed through other means (e.g., additional campaigns). The baseline survey will identify other barriers e.g., importance of water efficiency.
- We conceptualise new information by aligning it to our existing knowledge. Consumers may draw parallels from energy efficiency labels to understand MWEL's role and significance.
- Purchasing water using products tend to be larger, infrequent and more involved. These purchases are less habitual, meaning consumers will encounter the label less frequently.

[2] Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1983). Stages and processes of self-change of smoking: Toward an integrative model of change. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 51(3), 390–395. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.51.3.390

However, they may lead to more reflective thinking and greater attention to the label. In-depth interviews will aim to simulate real-life purchasing experiences to assess the label's impact.

- In real-world settings, the MWEL will compete with multiple labels and information, risking information overload. In-depth interviews with simulated shopping experiences and MaxDiff analysis will evaluate consumer attention on the label compared to other information.
- Owning a water meter will likely impact motivation for engaging with efficiency information. Tracking water meter ownership in future repeat studies will also be important as it is likely to increase, having a knock-on effect on engagement with the MWEL.

Project Inception

At contract award, Ipsos will arrange an inception meeting with the Defra project team. James Wickett-Whyte (Project Director), Mia Fennimore Holdsworth (Project Manager) and Leanne Chan (Behavioural Science Delivery Support) will attend from the Ipsos project team. This meeting will provide an opportunity to ensure a shared understanding of the project objectives, discuss and finalise the proposed approach – including core behavioural models, and the final outputs (synthesised report and presentation to Defra team) as well as wider project admin (such as timeline, risk register and invoicing schedule).

The meeting will also finalise project management processes and communication arrangements (we propose weekly update meetings between our Project Manager, Mia Fennimore Holdsworth and Defra – with the wider Ipsos team joining when necessary). Following the inception meeting, we will finalise and circulate the agreed project plan.

Stage 1 – quant survey

To address all the Research Questions but focusing on Part 1 (RQ1 & RQ2), we intend to use Ipsos's proprietary random probability online panel, the UK KnowledgePanel (KP) to achieve a national sample of 2,000 respondents in England; sufficient to provide robust statistical analysis and allows for meaningful subgroup analysis across the key demographics.

The UK KnowledgePanel is the UK's largest online random probability panel, offering access to over 25,000 participants selected at random from households across the UK. Panellists are recruited using random probability unclustered address-based sampling, considered the gold standard in UK survey research. This means every household in England has a known chance of being selected to join the panel.

As a random probability panel, the KnowledgePanel does not employ quotas. Instead, the sample will be stratified by key population metrics relevant to the survey, obtained from the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid-year Population Estimates and the Annual Population Survey. We will stratify by education as we have found that education correlates with most surveys' key questions and balancing the education profile in the sample ensures a higher weighting efficiency is achieved.

By leveraging KnowledgePanel, we also benefit from existing demographic information about panellists, for the purpose of profiling and subgroup analysis. These include 15 standard demographics which include age, gender, region, ethnicity, employment status, household composition, education level, income, and whether they live in urban or rural areas. This means we do not need to ask these standard profiling questions within the survey itself as this information is already collected and maintained by the panel. The survey can therefore focus on key research questions while still being able to perform detailed subgroup analyses.

The panel facilitates swift data collection, with fieldwork typically completed within a week and data delivered shortly thereafter. This rapid turnaround is essential for timely analysis and reporting in view of the project timelines and the use of random probability sampling ensures that our survey results are both reliable and replicable.

The survey will mainly focus on the first half of the TTM, exploring the extent to which consumers are aware of and consider water efficiency in their purchase behaviours, and how they currently

prepare to buy, choose and purchase water using products, including other factors they consider beyond water efficiency. To provide a baseline measurement of the awareness we will include spontaneous and prompted awareness questions. To efficiently analyse the open-ended responses from the spontaneous awareness, we propose employing Ipsos's proprietary AI-powered tool, Ipsos Facto for coding. This approach offers a faster and more cost-effective alternative to traditional manual coding methods. To obtain a high-level overview of initial reactions to the label, the survey can include a Defra-provided mock-up of the water efficiency label. This will allow us to gauge respondents' understanding of the label's content and its likely impact on purchasing decisions, touching upon elements of Part 2 (label design comprehension). More nuanced insights of consumer perceptions of the label will be explored through qualitative interviews.

To enhance our understanding of consumer priorities when making purchasing decisions, we will integrate a MaxDiff[3] exercise into the Stage 1 quantitative survey. MaxDiff is a robust methodological tool that allows us to ascertain the relative importance of various factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Rather than asking respondents to rate items in isolation—which can lead to all factors being deemed equally important and is prone to scale bias - MaxDiff requires participants to make trade-offs between items. This forced preference approach provides a clear hierarchy of importance among the factors.

Participants will be presented with a series of choice tasks, each displaying a subset of factors related to purchasing decisions for water-using products. In each task, they will be asked to select the most important and least important factors from the set. The factors to be assessed may include (but are not limited to): Price, Aesthetics/Design, Functionality, Brand Reputation, Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Ease of Installation, After-Sales Service/Warranty.

By repeatedly presenting different combinations of these factors across tasks, we can derive precise estimates of the relative importance of each attribute to the consumer - quantifying how water efficiency ranks relative to other purchase considerations. This provides actionable insights into whether water efficiency is a primary, secondary, or minimal concern for consumers and identifies which subgroups are more likely to prioritise water efficiency.

To understand the more nuanced trade-offs consumers might make between specific attributes, such as the extent to which a high water efficiency rating offsets a higher price, would require a conjoint analysis. A conjoint exercise captures how different feature combinations affect consumer choice, providing insights into which attributes drive purchasing decisions. While a full conjoint analysis is beyond the current project's scope, the exercise can be simulated during qualitative interviews. Conducting a quantitative conjoint analysis offers the advantages of quantifiability and future replicability. If Defra considers this important at this stage, we could explore reallocating resources from the qualitative component or consider incorporating a conjoint analysis in future studies to build upon our findings.

While the initial specification suggests focusing on individuals older than 25 (as younger people are judged to be outside the target audience), we recommend expanding the age range to include all adults aged 18 and over. This approach makes the survey representative of the entire adult population in England, facilitating easier replication in future surveys and allows us to explore whether younger adults might also be influenced by the Mandatory Water Efficiency Label (MWEL).

We have allocated a total survey length of 12 minutes which is efficient to cover all essential questions, including the MaxDiff exercise.

We will develop an output from the quantitative research, which is outlined in more detail in 2. Deliverables.

[3] Maximum Difference Scaling (MaxDiff) is used to understand the relative preference of a number of items or features

Stage 2: Qualitative Research on Label Design Comprehension

Following the initial survey to establish a baseline of consumer awareness and current approach to searching for water efficiency information, Stage 2 of the research will explore consumers' attitudes, understanding and interpretation of the proposed water efficiency label design – and address Research Question 3 and its sub-questions. To achieve this, the qualitative stage will include three online focus groups and 10 online depth interviews, with the stages of TTM used to identify key question areas in the topic guides.

Sampling Approach

We will recruit a total of 34 participants in the qualitative stage – 24 for the focus groups and 10 for the in-depth interviews. As Stage 2 will be delivered entirely online, participants will be recruited from across England.

While the exact sampling approach will be agreed with Defra, due to the small sample size in the qualitative stage, we suggest prioritising a diverse mix of participants over attempts to try to make it representative. This approach also allows for specific consumer groups to be boosted in the groups or interviews. Some examples of groups who could be boosted include: those with water meters and/or those who live in water-stressed areas (recognising the likely overlap) or specific age groups.

Online focus groups

We propose conducting three online focus groups to explore participants' understanding and perceptions of water efficiency; and to get their feedback on the proposed label's clarity, visual appeal and effectiveness in conveying water efficiency information. The groups will also explore potential barriers to engaging with the label and identify any additional information that participants feel would enhance their understanding and encourage them to consider water efficiency in their purchasing decisions. The focus groups will allow us to assess the whole TTM model in relation to the label design understanding and comprehension, and use of the label.

Each focus group will last 90 minutes, with eight participants and will be delivered online.

Throughout the focus groups, we will employ projective techniques to elicit authentic and immediate reactions. This approach aims to uncover the different barriers of engaging with the label and purchasing water efficient products – for example, an emotion tree to understand and associate emotions with behaviour or a sacrifice chain to understand where water efficiency ranks compared to other competing factors on purchasing behaviour.

Online Depth Interviews

In addition to the online focus groups, we will deliver 10 online depth interviews to observe how participants' interact with different information when making product decisions. The interview would be split into two parts, mainly focusing on the 'preparation' and 'action' stages of the TTM. Participants will receive a link at the start of the interview, taking them to an Ipsos-designed draft website mimicking a real-life website, where they would purchase water-using products with a variety of product information, including the water label. This will demonstrate whether they engage with the label spontaneously. The second part of the interview will reflect back on the process, exploring why they did or didn't engage with the water label; and to what extent it impacted their decision-making.

Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes, conducted on MS Teams and will cover 2-3 products from the ITT.

By combining the in-depth exploration of individual experiences through the mock-up website with the semi-structured interview focusing on the research questions, the online depth interviews will provide rich, qualitative data to complement the findings from the online focus groups and the Stage 1 survey.

Analysis
Following the workshops and interviews, all fieldwork will be recorded and transcribed using Ipsos' secure, proprietary AI-tool Ipsos Facto and checked by a member of the Ipsos team. The transcribed data will then be carefully reviewed and entered into a transcription grid.

The Ipsos project team will then develop a detailed coding framework that stems from the TTM behavioural model, covering each research question, sub-question and the options discussed. This coding framework will then be used to code and analyse all the qualitative data in Stage 2.

We will develop an output from the qualitative research, which is outlined in more detail in 2. Deliverables.

2. Deliverables

2.1 Project outputs

The primary deliverable for this project will be a comprehensive report that effectively communicates the key findings, answers the research questions outlined in the ITT and provides clear, meaningful recommendations to inform Defra's roll out of the MWEL in 2025.

The Stage 1 chapter will outline the methodology used and the findings, including the awareness figure, establishing the baseline level of consumer awareness and utilisation of water efficiency information in purchasing decisions prior to the introduction of the MWEL. The chapter will be based around Research Questions 1 and 2, with some high level insights on Research Question 3.

The Stage 2 chapter will follow the same overall structure – outlining the methodology and the findings from the focus groups and depth interviews and addressing Research Question 3, providing a nuanced understanding of consumer perceptions, understanding, and engagement with the proposed label design.

The report will conclude with a clear list of recommendations built primarily from the Stage 2 findings, but informed by Stage 1. These recommendations will provide actionable insights for Defra to take forward for the MWEL roll out, how to maximise its effectiveness with wider stakeholders (such as water companies) and help deliver the water demand reduction that is central to achieving the Government's economic growth mission.

In addition to the written report, Ipsos will deliver a workshop for the Defra team to present and discuss the key findings. Following the presentation, a dedicated Q&A session will address any immediate queries. The workshops will then transition into a facilitated discussion, encouraging Defra colleagues to explore how the findings can be practically applied to inform policy and future initiatives around water efficiency and labelling.

3. Timelines

3.1 Timings

Stage	Activity	Delivered by
Inception	Inception & project kick off	8th January
Stage 1 – survey	Fully designed survey	22nd Feb
	Survey fieldwork*	13th March
	Survey output completed & anonymous survey data shared	7th April
Stage 2 – focus groups and interviews	Stage 2 materials and discussion guides agreed	11th April

	Focus groups completed	26th April
	All interviews completed	26th April
	Stage 2 output completed & transcript sample shared	16th May
Reporting	Synthesised output completed	6th June
	Presentation drafted	6th June
	Presentation to Defra team	6th June

* Ipsos' KnowledgePanel works with set fieldwork windows – we have booked this on the earliest available space. A detailed timeline at project inception will set out the specific deadlines around the finalised questionnaire.

[redacted]

4.1 Arrangements

Ipsos utilises a proven project management approach, honed through extensive experience with diverse projects. We are proposing a dedicated, multi-disciplinary team, bringing together expertise in behavioural science, methodological specialists, and domain knowledge that will mean we can hit the ground running on this project.

The team will be led by Project Manager Mia Fennimore Holdsworth and Director James Wickett-Whyte, overseeing all project phases. Both sit in Ipsos UK's Energy & Environment team, with James also working as the Framework Lead. Alongside this, the project team pulls from Ipsos's Behavioural Science team, and our wider consortium to ensure both methodological and subject matter expertise are accounted for in the core project team. An organogram showing an overview

[redacted]

[redacted] **Strong**, Head of Behavioural Science, Quality Director for this project. He will review key outputs for the project, including the final report to complement James' overall sign-off and approval of materials and deliverables. Colin brings leadership on the application of behavioural science to a wide range of research projects, and led on the development of a system that delivers sustained understanding of changing behaviours in a wide range of contexts.

[redacted]

qualitative and quantitative research projects for clients including Defra and the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU).
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] er utilities to co-design and test behaviour change preventions to promote water saving

Ipsos maintains rigorous quality assurance procedures throughout the project lifecycle, adhering to international standards (ISO270001, ISO20252, and ISO9007), and national standards around GDPR, UK Data Protection Act, and the MRS Code of Conduct. We have our own internal Business Excellence System (BES), used on all projects, which align with these standards and Ipsos's accreditations. This is measured regularly by internal and external audits.
All sub-contractors who will be used as part of this project – including Lorraine Whitmarsh, and the recruitment agency, have undergone rigorous checks, and adhere to Ipsos's quality and ethical commitments and data protection standards.
As part of this project, we will have a dedicated Quality Director, [redacted], who will review key deliverables. Any issues will be escalated within the project team to James and, if needed, to the wider framework management team, in line with our commitments within the framework itself.

4.2 Risks

A full risk register will be consolidated at the outset of the project, alongside a workplan, quality assurance processes, and a detailed timetable of key tasks and milestones. These will all be agreed with the client. Examples of some project risks and mitigations are outlined below.

Risk	Impact (I) / Likelihood (L)	Mitigations
The behavioural model selected does not provide a suitable framework to analyse the findings	I: High L: Low	We have carefully considered the different models in responding to this brief and feel the TTM model is most appropriate. However, we would be open to discussing alternative approaches with the Defra team at the inception meeting.
Label requires substantive development due to low comprehension	I: High L: Low	In the unlikely event that the quantitative findings indicate the label is proving too difficult for consumers to engage with, we will regroup to discuss how the approach to Stage 2 of the project should be delivered.
Survey samples are not representative, or	I: Low	For the survey, we will use Ipsos's proprietary KnowledgePanel which recruits panellists using random probability unclustered address-based

there are problems recruiting participants for qual fieldwork in timeframe	L: Medium	sampling, ensuring that every household in England has a known chance of being selected. This method is considered the gold standard in UK survey research for achieving representativeness. The panel includes individuals who are digitally excluded by providing them with tablets, free data, and technical support. This ensures that all segments of the population, including those without prior internet access, are represented in the survey. For the qualitative strand, we will develop clear materials that support efficient and accurate recruitment, including a clear information sheet so participants fully understand and engage with the research. Our approach also enables flexibility given the small sample size.
Sensitive or private behaviours or awareness are hard to measure	I: Medium L: High	Focus groups will have careful and tactful framing, with specific wording to encourage open communication of participants. The TTM model will be helpful here, contextualising these behaviours and awareness within different stages of change, and ensuring we are meeting participants where they are already. Facilitator briefings will also focus on this wording to avoid any 'judgements' being implied that might put off participants from being open. Recruitment will ensure a range of attitudes and behaviours to vary the response to these subjects, and enable participants to hear from one another. In-depth interviews will be held with groups (to be discussed in inception stage with Defra) who may be more reluctant to discuss as part of a group.

5. Costs

5.1 Cost overview

Our approach splits the project into 3 core stages, shaped around the deliverables – alongside inception and ongoing project management – this is outlined in the costs overview table below.

Project stage	Cost
Inception & Project Management	£4,948.75
Stage 1 Research: Survey	£70,455.25
Stage 2 Research: Qual (focus groups and interviews)	£27,332.50
Outputs	£7,157.50
TOTAL	**£109,894**

5.2 Cost breakdown

		Staff days – (including framework Grade)						Costs		
	Task	**JWW (SC)**	**MFH (Con)**	**LC (Con)**	**NN (Jun. Con)**	**CS (Dir)**	**LW (Dir)**	**Staff costs**	**Non-staff costs**	**Total**
	Inception & PM	2.25	4	0.25	0.5			£4,948.75		**£4,948.75**
Stage 1 Research: Survey	**Survey hosting**		1					£685	£56,350	**£57,035**
	MaxDiff								£1,592.75	**£1,592.75**
	Design	0.75	1.75	0.75	2.5	1.25	0.5	£5,162.50		**£5,162.50**
	Analysis & output	0.75	3	1	4	1.5		£6,665		**£6,665**

Stage 2 Research: Qual	**Screener**	0.25	0.5		0.5			£880.00		**£880.00**
	Recruitment								£2,880	**£2,880**
	Incentives								£2,460	**£2,460**
	Design	1	1.75	0.75	2.5	0.5	0.5	£4,160		**£4,650**
	Focus groups	0.75	0.75		0.75			£1,960		**£1,470**
	Interviews	1.25	1.75		1.75			£3,030		**£3,030**
	Draft website design								£4,500	**£4,500**
	Analysis & output	1.5	2.75	1	3.75	0.75		£6,262.50	£1,200	**£7,462.50**
Outputs	**Final report**	1.5	1	0.25	1.5	0.5	0.5	£3,718.75		**£3,718.75**
	Drafting presentation	0.5	1.25		1.25			£1,850		**£1,850**
	Presentation to Defra	0.75	0.75				0.5	£1,588.75		**£1,588.75**
	Total days	**11.25**	**20.5**	**3.75**	**19**	**4.5**	**2**			
	Total cost									**£109,894**

5.3 Cost assumptions

The budget detailed above is based on a number of assumptions made – crucially around both the research stages:

- Stage 1 (survey)
  - 'Survey hosting' row in the table above includes scripting, fieldwork & data processing.
  - No groups will be boosted in the sample.
  - Survey would take 12 minutes to complete.
  - The survey would be largely text-only – with space for one image (e.g. of water-using products).
- Stage 2 (focus groups and depth interviews)
  - Recruitment would be fresh – i.e. not built from the survey respondents).
  - Focus groups participants would receive £65 in vouchers as a thank you for participating; interview respondents would receive £40 in vouchers.
  - Focus groups would last for 90 mins & budget includes time for briefing, prep and write up.
  - Interviews would last 45 mins & includes time for briefing and write up
  - All fieldwork will be delivered online.
    - We would be open to doing focus groups in person, (which would help with observation of water efficiency) but travel and logistics cost would likely mean the number of participants and/or groups is reduced.
- Outputs
  - Each research stage will have a single output, which will act as a chapter in the final report.
  - The final report will be drafted in PowerPoint format and the final version will be delivered as a pdf – approximately 50 slides in length.

5.4 Invoicing schedule

Invoice & deliverable	Date	Fee
Completion of survey	13th March	£38,463
Completion of focus groups & depth interviews	26th April	£38,463
Completion of final report	6th June	£32,968

[redacted]

[redacted]

This Order Form is for the provision of the Call-Off Deliverables and dated **20/01/2025**. It is issued under the Behavioural Science Call-off Framework Agreement with **Ipsos** Atamis Contract reference **C27818** for the provision of User Testing and Awareness Baselining for the Mandatory Water Efficiency Label.

On agreement of the Proposal, this Order Form should be uploaded to Atamis and signed by Defra Group Commercial and the supplier. When completed and executed by both Parties, this forms a Call-Off Contract.

Call-off Contract incorporated terms: The following documents are incorporated into this Call-Off Contract. If the documents conflict, the following order of precedence applies:

1. Defra's Behavioural Science Call-off Framework Terms and Conditions
2. Specification
3. Proposal

No other Supplier terms are part of the Call-Off Contract. That includes any terms added to this Order Form or presented at the time of delivery.

Call-off contract start date: 08/01/2025

Call-off contract expiry date: 30/06/2025

[redacted]

Please return this form to the Framework Mangers via behavioural.insights@defra.gov.uk for signatures from Defra group Commercial and the Supplier.