

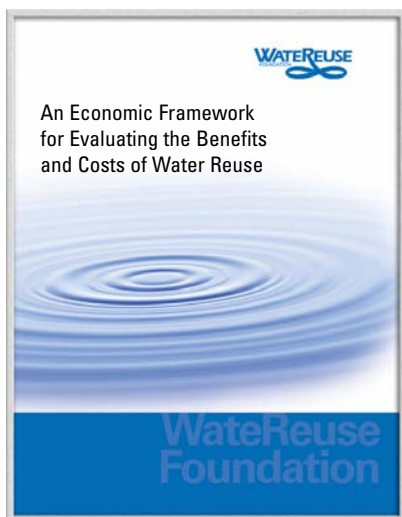
Project PROFILE



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Advancing the Science of Water Reuse and Desalination through Research

An Economic Framework for Evaluating the Benefits and Costs of Water Reuse



Product Number: 03-006-02
WRF Subscribers: \$15
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Project Number
WRF-03-006

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Water reuse is broadly recognized as safe, technically feasible, and increasingly cost-effective. However, there are still obstacles to its broader implementation. Many of these barriers arise because it has been difficult to clearly identify and articulate the full range of water reuse project benefits, and even more challenging to estimate the value of these benefits.

Each wastewater management option—regardless of whether it

reflects discharge and disposal or a beneficial water reuse approach—imposes financial costs on the wastewater agency, and beneficial reuse options in many instances are relatively expensive and potentially controversial.

Therefore, utilities need a systematic and objective manner to evaluate the full range of costs, benefits, and potential risks associated with their array of wastewater management and water reuse options. They also need to consider who might bear those costs, risks, and benefits, because the distribution (incidence) of the impacts raises the matter of fairness (environmental justice) and provides a practical basis for mission-critical dialogue with stakeholders and governing officials.

Objectives

The objective of this report is to provide a practical, user-friendly, yet robust tool that wastewater agencies can use to identify and assess the benefits and costs of their water reuse options. The key is to provide an objective and comprehensive basis for considering all the benefits and costs—both internal and external to the water or wastewater agency—so that utility managers, governing officials, customers, and other stakeholders can better understand the implications of applicable reuse options.

Benefits

This report and the accompanying CD-ROM provide a framework—i.e., a process, templates, and spreadsheet tool—to help water districts identify and estimate a broad suite of water reuse benefits (and beneficiaries) and compare these benefits to the costs of reuse.

Highlights

This report and associated spreadsheet tool provide an objective, credible, and simple way to:

- Distinguish between a *financial* analysis and an *economic* analysis, where the latter enables a more complete view of all reuse benefits.
- *Identify* the full range of potential benefits associated with a reuse project, and *quantify* and monetize these benefits in ways that are objective and credible.
- Assess the *distribution* of benefits and costs so that the beneficiaries of reuse projects can be identified, and thereby facilitate equitable cost recovery, provide justification for grants and other external financial assistance, and enable more extensive stakeholder identification and involvement.
- Document, articulate, and *communicate* water reuse benefit-cost analyses to customers, managers, governing officials, and other important stakeholders.

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About the Foundation

The mission of the WaterReuse Foundation is to conduct and promote applied research on the reclamation, recycling, reuse, and desalination of water.