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Scottish Assessors Association

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Public Buildings Committee

Practice Note 14
Valuation of River Gauging Stations

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Practice Note deals with the valuation of river gauging stations occupied by Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Government Departments, Universities and Colleges. Gauging stations occupied by Hydro Electric Boards and Water Authorities and used for operational purposes should not be entered in the local Roll.

1.2 Gauging stations are designed to monitor the state of the waterway on which they are located and assist in the collection of statistical information. They can range from a simple post which can be inspected as required, to equipment which will automatically record river levels, flow, temperature, pollution, etc.

1.3 The majority of gauging stations are operated by SEPA. Details of gauging stations operated by other bodies should be available from SEPA.

1.4 The most common gauging stations operated by SEPA comprise a small hut on the riverbank over a vertical concrete well, connected by horizontal pipes to the river. Water enters the well and variations in level, etc. can be recorded on instruments in the hut. It is understood that instrumentation has been moving in the direction of electronic and smaller scale equipment with automatic signalling to a "centre". Many have a cable extending over the river from which instruments can be suspended to measure mid-river flow, etc. SEPA stations can be divided into four main groups as are detailed in section 5.0 below.

2.0 Basis of Valuation

2.1 Subjects covered by this Practice Note are valued on the Contractor's Basis.

3.0 Survey and Measurement

3.1 Building areas should be calculated on a gross external basis (GEA).

4.0 Valuation

4.1 Valuations should be carried out in accordance with SAA Basic Principles Committee Practice Note 2 (Contractor's Basis Valuations).

4.2 Due to the size and nature of river gauging stations the recommended unit cost rates include adjustment for contract size, professional fees and external works.

5.0 Estimated Replacement Cost (ERC)

5.1 Due to the considerable degree of civil works involved in construction and the individual nature of each location, actual construction costs may vary considerably. It is therefore recommended that these actual costs be used where available, adjusted as necessary to April 2015 levels.

In cases where no costs are available, comparison should be made with similar stations where costs are known and appropriate adjustments made for variations.

5.2 Unit Cost Rates (Entire Station)

5.2.1 **Modern** built since mid-1970s. Hut is usually of timber measuring 6m² - 9m² covering a well 900mm internal diameter and connected to the river by two 100mm internal diameter pipes. The riverbed and banks often require stabilisation, usually with concrete or fibreglass. Any cableway across a river is usually supported at one end by the hut and at the other by a metal, concrete or timber post set in concrete and stayed to concrete anchor blocks. This tensioned steel wire allows a travelling block and trapeze to be winched across for velocity measurement of river flow.

It is anticipated that this style of station, assuming no adverse site conditions, would cost approximately £14,500 and this rate should be adopted.

5.2.2 **Basic modern** variant of 5.2.1 built in 1990s. Thought only present on the River Tay. Smaller hut, usually of timber (but one example in a town provided with a brick and concrete building to resist vandalism). Well of PVC, 400mm in diameter, connected to the river by a PVC pipe of 100mm diameter. Otherwise similar.

It is anticipated that this style of station, assuming no adverse site conditions, would cost approximately £8,250 and this rate should be adopted.

5.2.3 **Built in 1960s**. Smaller hut than 5.2.1 above. Well only 760mm internal diameter, restricting use of some modern instruments (possibly overcome by the use of electronic equipment).

It is anticipated that this style of station, assuming no adverse site conditions, would cost approximately £14,500. This rate will be subject to a functional allowance as detailed in section 6.2 below for narrow well etc.

5.2.4 **Ex-DAFS stations**, taken over by River Boards (who were superseded by SEPA) in 1970. Small hut approximately 3m² over 380mm diameter well, incapable of accommodating modern instruments. Cable across river, but no winch.

It is anticipated that this style of station, assuming no adverse site conditions, would cost approximately £8,250. This rate will be subject to a functional allowance as detailed in section 6.2 below for narrow well etc.

5.2.5 **Other bodies** - Gauging stations operated by other bodies such as universities normally comprise a box mounted on posts over river. A copper capillary tube fitted with a rubber diaphragm is suspended into the river. The diaphragm is affected by variations in water pressure and an instrument in the box records the effect of this. These stations usually also have a cableway.

There are no unit costs available for this style of station. Regard should be had to the cost of any rateable parts and whether any site rent would be payable. Where considered appropriate a valuation based on these elements should be carried out. It may be in some cases the answer derived will be deminimus and no entry should be made in the Valuation Roll in that circumstance.

5.2.6 **Basic gauging station** The most basic gauging station type will comprise of a post in the river on which the water level can be visually measured, as required. Unless substantial siteworks have been undertaken, such as a separate channel or river, these stations are considered to be of little value and should not be entered in the Valuation Roll.

5.3 Adjustments to ERC

As outlined in section 4.0 above, no further adjustments in respect of contract size or additions for professional fees should be made as these are already reflected in the rates recommended.

6.0 Adjusted Replacement Cost (ARC)

6.1 In applying age and obsolescence allowances reference should be made to guidance in SAA Basic Principles Committee Practice Note 2 (Contractors Basis Valuations). In particular it should be noted that allowances in respect of age in excess of 50% should only be given to buildings and plant in exceptional circumstances. It is recommended that the buildings table of allowances is used throughout.

6.2 Further allowances of a functional (and technical nature should be considered in accordance with SAA Basic Principles Committee Practice Note 2 (Contractor's Basis Valuations).

6.3 In addition to any functional obsolescence allowances that may be felt to be warranted from section 6.2 above a further functional obsolescence allowance should be granted to stations built in the 1960's and ex-DAFS stations, if appropriate, in line with the table below:

Station Type	Functional Obsolescence Allowance
Built in 1960s	-25%
Ex DAFS	-45%

7.0 Decapitalisation Rate

7.1 The appropriate statutory decapitalisation rate should be used.

8.0 Land

8.1 It is understood that a right of access, a right to build the station and to gauge the river was commonly granted free of charge, or for a nominal rent, by the owner of the land. In the absence of local rents, it is suggested that a figure of £220 per annum may be used.

9.0 End Allowance

9.1 Any factors or circumstances which might affect the value of the occupation of the lands and heritages as a whole should be reflected at this stage.