

## Comments on Dale Rothman's paper

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- The paper by Dale Rothman provides an excellent discussion of the “options appraisal” of international climate change policy. In particular, the author’s proposed approach of assessing different holistic policy scenarios against a “laissez-faire world” would better exemplify the actual trade-offs implied by different climate change strategies. In practice, several “combined worlds” of mitigation and adaptation policies are presumably relevant in policy terms. As Dale Rothman remarks, ancillary impacts from climate policy should also be considered within this framework to avoid an incomplete assessment of potential benefits and/or costs of any climate policy.
- Dale Rothman also raises the related issues of different concepts of value and of different lenses through which it is possible to look at climate change impacts. At Defra and more generally in the UK Government we embrace an idea of sustainability that puts people’s well-being at the centre, and therefore is inherently anthropocentric. We also think that the most appropriate “lens” for benefit assessment is the economic one. We think however that the economic lens should be applied widely, covering all relevant impacts under the three pillars of sustainable development (or different forms of capital using Dale Rothman’s definition) and ideally addressing the Total Economic Value (TEV) of damages. The ecosystem domain is one where the economic lens should perhaps be applied more closely than it has been so far, given the risk of severe impacts even for relatively low increases in Global Mean Temperature (see paper by Rick Leemans).
- We also believe that aggregation of impacts in monetary terms has an important role to play in spite of the inevitable value judgements and uncertainties that it implies. As rightly pointed out by Rothman, money is only a measuring rod. What we are really interested in is utility. This in our view should suggest care when handling the monetary metric, for instance by applying equity-weighting when aggregating impacts across individuals and regions to reflect decreasing marginal utility of income. Also, when looking at strategic policy choices monetised impacts should ideally be presented alongside quantified impacts within an integrated approach to policy assessment. Nevertheless money is a convenient metric that allows immediate comparison between policy costs and benefits and is more likely to ensure in practice that costs and benefits of climate change policy are assessed on a level playing field by policy decision-makers.