

# Benchmarking Methodology

## Part II: Priority Setting

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## ■ Half-way through the benchmarking exercise:

- ✓ 1. Prepare for benchmarking at institutional level: (*italics=leadership*)
  - ✓ a. *Identify purpose, goals and perspectives for the benchmarking exercise*
  - ✓ b. *Clearly define area of benchmarking*
  - ✓ c. *Gain commitment*
  - ✓ d. Providing resources (staff, funding)
  - ✓ e. Select partners (here: through ESMU)
  
- ✓ 2. In the benchmarking partnership: conduct benchmarking exercise:
  - ✓ a. Choose a methodology for the data-gathering exercise
  - ✓ b. Collect data
  - c. **Produce Report**
  - **Set priorities**
  - **Prepare summary reports for senior management**
  - **Identify targets**
  
- 3. At institutional level: (with support from ESMU): define action to be taken, following analysis:
  - a. *Set priorities, define standards*
  - b. *Define goals and targets, immediate and long-term*
  - c. *Gain commitment*
  - d. Design framework and precise action plan to convert the result of the benchmarking
  - e. Design and carry out a structured process with milestones and deadlines
  - f. *Provide appropriate resources for the change process to take place effectively*
  - g. *Ensure implementation*
  - h. *Monitor increase in performance*
  -
  
- 4. Optional: In the benchmarking partnership:
  - a. evaluation of benchmarking experience
  - b. best-practice exchange

## From data to action:

- Indicators
  - reconsider relevance, clarify meaning
- Data
  - Discuss availability, comparability
- **Priorities**
- **Targets**
- **Indicators**
- **Benchmarks**
- **Action Plan**
- Implementation, milestones and deadlines
- Follow-up



## ▪ Benchmarking concepts

- Gather and compare data as performance indicators for institution  
= Benchmarking as governance tool without institutional learning
- Exchange information on good practice  
= Peer learning without institutional governance
- Best of both worlds:  
performance indicators + peer learning  
= benchmarking as a governance tool for maximum benefit of all institutions involved

# Step 1



- **Gathering information**
  - **“Produce well-structured, transparent and comparable information with a view of identifying good practices and gaps in performance which can lead to future target setting” (ESMU Practical Guide)**
  - **Prepare summary reports for senior management, with focus on good practice, performance and target setting**
  - **Discuss targets, indicators and benchmarks at institutional level**
  - **Prepare to design action plan**

## Step II

- **Focusing**
  - **Priorities**
    - Key figures
    - Key aspects of good practice
  - **Targets**
    - Those priorities on which to focus in each university
    - Quantitative or/and qualitative

- **Prepare for Action**

- **Indicators**

- Best practice exchange
    - Action taken/proposed by partner institutions to achieve targets

- **Benchmarks**

- To be set individually by each School/university
    - Derived from comparison with performance of other institutions, chosen as standard for development.
    - Influenced by context (e.g. legislation) and institutional profile (e.g. size, funding, Strategy)

- **Action Plan**

- Institutional strategy to introduce change

- **Coherence** of the benchmarking process:

**Priorities:** relevant for the whole group



**Targets:** chosen by each university individually



**Indicators:** based on good practice



**Benchmarks:** measurable level of performance in areas identified as targets

**Action-plan for implementation, involves milestones, deadlines.**



**Comparable, measurable**  
**indicators !**

# Example

## 1. Priority

- Improve student mobility (quality of teaching, curriculum)

## 2. Targets

- Improve valid database with key indicators
- Identify areas of curricula suitable for mobility
- Increase number of these areas
- Improve recognition of credits and degrees

## 3. Indicators for change

- Best practice models
- Peer learning

## 4. Institutional standards (benchmarks), Action Plan

- Contextual data...

- will have an impact on priority setting within the group (comparability)
- should be more relevant for setting targets and benchmarks (standards)

**Thank you, and have a good  
discussion!**



