



BENCHMARKING IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ESMU, European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities

- **International non-profit organisation promoting Good Practices (GPs) – strategic management of universities:**
 - Networks – HUMANE, DEAN, MODERN, EDUPROF
 - Benchmarking exercises
 - Seminar and training Programmes (Winter School for Senior Administrators, Erasmus Mundus Study Tours)

- **Past activity:**
 - Technical assistance to the EC – management of major HE programmes**
 - COMETT(1987-1995)
 - SOCRATES, LEONARDO, YOUTH for Europe III (1995-2006)



ESMU – BENCHMARKING ACTIVITIES SINCE 2000

- Focus: Management processes
- Methodology: Questionnaires, workshops, reports (confidential to HEIs)
- Each year four “topics” (groups 10-15 HEIs), examples:
 - Commercialisation of academic activities
 - Human Resources and Staff Development
 - Research Management
 - Financial Management
 - Marketing the University
- Strategy, management, monitoring – more qualitative than quantitative benchmarking
- Mutual learning focus



BENCHMARKING CONCEPTS

- **Intra/Inter-organisational learning**
 - One-to-one benchmarking (databases)
 - Collaborative benchmarking approaches (internal/external benchmarking)

- **Improving performance of an institution**
 - Identifying gaps of performance
 - Setting targets for improvement



“OUR” DEFINITION

***“Benchmarking is
a process inside an organisation
with the aim to improve its performance
by learning about possible improvements and processes
by looking at those processes
in other better-performing organisations.”***

- Voluntary Process
- Self-evaluation
- Systematic & collaborative comparison of practices



BENCHMARKING IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

- **EU-funded project**

- **Phase I**

- Partners: ESMU, CHE, UNESCO-CEPES, Aveiro
- Timeline: 2006-2008
- Exploring benchmarking concepts and practices

- **Phase II**

- Partners: ESMU, CHE, ICHEM, Institute of Education (London)
- Timeline: 2008-2010
- European platform – Benchmarking
- Four benchmarking groups



EU-FUNDED PROJECT: 1st PHASE (2006-2008)

Objective

- Understanding the concepts & practices of benchmarking - improving and increasing its use in higher education

Methodology

- Desk research: Analysis of 18 collaborative benchmarking in HE
- Symposium and workshops

Outputs

- An online tool (examples, advice and an online bibliography)
- A practical handbook (a review of the literature and a step by step approach)
- A report on benchmarking in HE
- Guidelines of good practices for effective benchmarking





EU-FUNDED PROJECT: 2nd PHASE (2008-2010)

- **Four benchmarking groups:**
 - Governance
 - University-enterprise cooperation
 - Curriculum reforms
 - Lifelong learning

- A broad **online collaborative learning community**

- **Benchmarking tools**
(online questionnaire, reports, handbooks of GPs)

- **Conference** – Dissemination of results



TIMETABLE

- **KICK-OFF WORKSHOP**
(Ghent, 27-28 April 2009)
 - Finalising questionnaires
 - Input to online questionnaires (by mid-June)
- **1. WORKSHOP**
(Berlin, 8-9 September 2009)
 - Discussion on data compilation and analysis
 - Setting priorities
- **2. WORKSHOP**
(Bath, 12-13 November 2009)
 - Improvement, setting new targets
 - Preliminary action plans
 - Input by external experts
- **3. WORKSHOP**
(Alicante, February/March 2010)
 - Comparative analysis of the action plans
 - Input by external experts
- **4. WORKSHOP**
(Brussels, June 2010)
 - Results of action plans/implementation
- **DISSEMINATION CONFERENCE**
 - Combined with the 4th Workshop in Brussels, June 2010



APPROACH

- Definition of indicators
- Data gathering (online questionnaire)
- Data analysis
- Collaborative action planning with participating universities



BENCHMARKING UNIVERSITY- ENTERPRISE COOPERATION (UEC)

- **National / regional context**
- **Institutional data**
 - Contextual data
 - Institutional autonomy
- **Indicators for UEC**
 - University governance, strategy and policy
 - Support structures and staff
 - Finances
 - Curricular and extra-curricular support
 - Exchange of expertise
 - Knowledge transfer



NATIONAL / REGIONAL CONTEXT

- **Type of region** (industrial, etc.)
- **Number of higher education institutions** in the region
- **Population** in the region (compared to national population)
- **Employment** (compared to the national profile)
- **Size of businesses** (SMEs, large enterprises) in the region
- **Occupational structure** of employment (employment skill profile)
- Amount of regional **private sector investment in R&D** per capita compared to the national average
- **Regional infrastructure supporting innovation and UEC**
(e.g. specialised technology transfer institutions, regional private venture capital companies, chambers of commerce, employers' organisations, etc.)



INSTITUTIONAL DATA

- **Contextual data**

- Academic profile
- Key areas / Disciplines
- Number of students and staff

- **Institutional autonomy –**

Ability to

- Invest in for profit business
- Buy and sell land
- Rent campus space to private business
- Make financial surpluses
- Determine staff salaries / recruitment
- Appoint members to its own governing bodies

- **Explicit reference to UEC in the university mission and in strategic plans**





UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND POLICY

- The proportion of **external members** (e.g. private, public or third sector) **on university boards**
- Number of **strategic partnership agreements** with enterprises (SMEs and large companies) for joint research and joint continuing education
- Policy on ownership of **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)**:
 - Strict institutional ownership and control
 - Encouraging individual risk taking in specific areas



SUPPORT STRUCTURES AND STAFF

- Science Park
- Technology Transfer Office
- Career Centre
- Lifelong learning Centre
- Incubators
- Full time Knowledge Transfer professionals



FINANCES

- **Third stream income** from
 - (1) continuing education activities,
 - (2) contract research,
 - (3) other services (consultancy, etc...)in relation to the overall university budget
- **Funding from regional / national external agencies** available to invest in business engagement



CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR SUPPORT

- Number of **student placements in enterprises** (minimum one-month length)
- Number of **degrees, modules and lectures** (entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility, etc...) **directly related to enterprises**
- Type of **extra-curricular activities** supporting UEC:
 - External mentoring
 - Business plan competition
 - Scholarships
 - Others
- **Alumni activities**



EXCHANGE OF EXPERTISE

- Number / percentage of **academic staff** temporarily **contracted to enterprises** (in relation to overall academic staff)
- Number / percentage of **private company professionals** in relation to overall academic staff) (e.g. on short contracts, for teaching purposes)



KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

- **Research and consultancy contracts with enterprises** (with a value above 10 000€)
- **CPD** (continuous professional development) **courses** contracted with private companies (with a value above 10 000€)
- **Start-ups**
- **Patents**



MORE INFORMATION?

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- ESMU

www.esmu.be

- Benchmarking in European Higher Education

www.education-benchmarking.org

