



Emanti Management Solutions

Municipal Benchmarking Initiative: Improving Municipal Water Services Provision

For Municipalities, By Municipalities, Benefitting Municipalities and their Communities

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and Water Research Commission (WRC) re-established water services benchmarking in South Africa through the national Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (MBI) for Water Services in April 2011. For municipalities, the key benefits of benchmarking are:

- Support improved efficiency and effectiveness in water services delivery through comparative performance benchmarking, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and iterative performance improvements,
- Strengthen performance measurement, monitoring and management in municipal water services provision,
- Build communities of practice within and between municipalities,
- Forge relationships of mutual respect and trust between municipalities and thereby strengthen the development of performance tracking, reporting and comparative assessment systems.

The MBI offers a bottom-up focus on the performance measurement capabilities of municipalities, with the provision of appropriate support to strengthen performance reporting systems and affirm their importance for effective service delivery. To-date, significant progress has been made in: (i) module and material development, (ii) municipal engagement, support and events/forums, (iii) database and web tool, (iv) business analysis and intelligence, and (v) business management and leadership. The six introductory modules have focused on recognised national priority areas of municipal performance: (1) Water Demand Management, (2) Backlogs and Service Delivery, (3) Human Resource Management and Skills Development, (4) Operations and Maintenance, (5) Product Quality, and (6) Financial Performance. Effective benchmarking will lead to substantial improvements in service delivery efficiencies and associated economic benefits.

To date the work effort and associated progress has been substantial; yet needs to be seen in light of this being a fledgling process which has included a need to test & research approaches and respond appropriately. A gradual start with gathering momentum is a normal situation with Benchmarking processes, and the experience in Europe, Canada and elsewhere is that it takes multiple years before true momentum is in place.

The project team includes experts specialising in water services, benchmarking and performance measurement, information systems and business intelligence from Emanti Management, PDG and Maluti GSM together with the supportive inputs from the Institute of Municipal Engineering of Southern Africa (IMESA) and eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.

Cities Working Groups

WSA interaction is via peer networks, and for a peer network to be successful, the WSAs



must know the strategic purpose of participating. Peer networks are encouraged to start small (low hanging fruit), learn, and build upon successes. Initially peer networks utilise a common framework (i.e. same PIs/modules), but the project team allows these groups to evolve. The MBI Cities Working Groups (CWGs) comprise the same nine municipalities that form part of the already well-established City Water Managers' Forum, and therefore consists of the eight metropolitan municipalities plus Msunduzi. A CWG has been established for each of the six initial modules included in the MBI. Data gathering through the CWGs has been very successful, where the peer group agrees to measuring certain PIs and reporting against these. Feedback regarding these PIs are shared and discussed within the CWGs, with the generation of associated CWG reports.

Benchmarking is about getting serious about measuring and improving performance because YOU want to know how you're doing, and YOU want to perform better!

Water Services Master Class

The MBI seeks to provide peer-to-peer knowledge exchange for senior municipal water services technical and management staff. Taking the best elements of informal networking, benchmarking studies, syndicated research and professional development workshops, each group brings together like-minded municipal practitioners to:

- Share best practices
- Tackle current challenges
- Harness the power of benchmarking to drive performance impact
- Develop lasting, career-enhancing professional relationships



The MBI supports the notion that the best and quickest way to learn is by finding out how other municipalities approach similar issues. Peer group meetings could also seek qualification for continuing education credits. Peer groups bring together municipal water services professionals to share their knowledge and experience within a unique forum that combines meetings, benchmarking studies and, with time, online discussions. Members contribute to the development of the meeting and research agenda and take turns hosting the events. Experienced MBI peer group leaders support the groups with a structured facilitation process and dedicated online community. Because of the groups' relatively small size and practitioner focus, the peer group model fosters a frank discussion, an interactive format and long-term networking relationships.



Contact details:

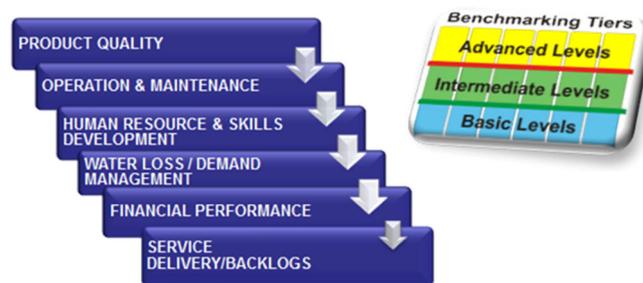
SALGA: William Moraka 012-3698056 / 082-3085519

WRC: Jay Bhagwan 012-3309008

PROJECT LEADER: Grant Mackintosh 021-8802932 / 082-3273357

Munibench

Munibench (www.munibench.co.za) supports benchmarking activities through allowing performance measurement (provision of facilities for data input, comparison of Performance Indicators (PIs) via appropriate dashboards, etc.) and performance improvement (provision of access to material associated with shared learnings, peer networks, case studies, guidelines, methodologies/techniques, training, etc.).



Munibench contains a "shopping list" of South African appropriate water sector PIs (ranging in "difficulty" from basic, to intermediate and advanced). Munibench also allows users to add their own site specific PIs (if desired). During municipal interactions, the MBI team have encouraged all municipalities to start basic (less is more), decide "what are the issues I want to initially concentrate on", entrench such basic participation, and then expand as suits themselves. The Munibench system is initially populated with data from other databases/stakeholders (including the Department of Water and Sanitation, National Treasury, StatsSA, Demarcation Board and Water Research Commission), resulting in a core set of PIs being generated for all municipalities. This process aims to initially limit input of "raw data" by municipalities with the hope that municipalities will be enabled to already engage with data and prompt peer based discussions. Better capacitated municipalities (as demonstrated by the Cities Working Groups) are able to monitor and track additionally selected relevant PIs, and discuss and compare these outcomes with peers.



To access Munibench, a username and password is required.

To register, users need to contact Philip de Souza

(philipds@emanti.co.za) or Warren Retief

(warrenr@emanti.co.za) from the MBI Team or

mbi@emanti.co.za