

Benchmarking Training Manual

**AN APO
BEST PRACTICE NETWORK
PUBLICATION**

2005
ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION
TOKYO

Benchmarking Training Manual — a publication of the APO Best Practice Network.

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ISBN: 92-833-7036-8

Revised Edition 2005

Second Printing 2005

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Foreword

The Asian Productivity Organization (APO), with its aim of enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises located in its member countries, has established a Best Practice Network (BPN). The BPN will generate, share, and transfer knowledge on best practices for the purpose of performance improvement.

Knowledge on best practices provides a competitive advantage for organizations in the knowledge-based economy. Whether in manufacturing or services, in the private or public sector, enterprises must benchmark themselves against the best standards or practices worldwide to achieve a competitive advantage and business excellence. The knowledge gained could also be used to adapt and innovate the best practices and thus introduce methods that are “better than the best.” Such best practice benchmarking, however, is not very easy for an individual organization to carry out on its own. Some major difficulties faced include:

- Enterprises may not be familiar with sources of best practices, especially those in other countries.
- Best practice organizations may be reluctant to share knowledge on best practices.
- The cost of gaining best practice knowledge could be prohibitive.

The APO BPN has been established to help organizations overcome the above difficulties and undertake international benchmarking. The network is designed to solve accessibility problems, enabling its members to learn from, adapt, and innovate on the best practices in other countries. The knowledge gained will also be disseminated more widely in participating countries. The BPN will leverage its linkages with NPOs located throughout Asia and with other productivity and quality organizations worldwide.

As a start, the APO BPN will conduct benchmarking projects in key areas that NPO client organizations identify as useful. It will support the transfer of best practice knowledge to those clients across countries and position NPOs as leaders in this knowledge transfer. A “sharing and learning methodology framework” has been designed to achieve this purpose (see Appendix 1). This methodology framework is consistent with comprehensive methodologies used for best practice benchmarking internationally. Each participating organization in the demonstration project will receive a best practice benchmarking kit, and project participants will be briefed on using the methodology. The methodology covers the following four phases:

- planning;
- analysis;
- integration; and
- action.

The planning phase identifies the scope of the project topic for benchmarking, the development of the data collection instrument, the briefing of participants on the approach to be adopted for best practice benchmarking, and the collection of data. The analysis phase

determines the strengths and learning needs of participating organizations and they initiate sharing and learning and identify external benchmark organizations for learning purposes, if required. The integration phase consolidates the sharing of knowledge and learning from best practices and the development of action plans by the participating organizations based on the learning. Finally, the action phase involves the implementation of action plans developed by the participating organizations, monitoring of improvements made, and review and improvement of the benchmarking methodology.

This benchmarking training manual is designed to help NPOs:

- recognize the usefulness of the APO BPN methodology framework;
- learn how to apply the steps in the methodology;
- understand their role as well as the role of other parties in applying the framework;
- understand the deliverables for each step of the methodology; and
- brief and train their participating client organizations.

This benchmarking training workshop manual is structured as a practical “how-to” guide that will help NPOs and their clients (supported by the NPO Working Group) adopt the methodology framework. The manual is restricted to the “learning and sharing” aspects of benchmarking, which is the basis for the APO BPN. Other platforms of support will be available to NPOs that would like more assistance in benchmarking. Application of the benchmarking principles and methodology will be via interactive classroom discussion and syndicate group activities. Participants are encouraged to complete the activities. Finally, this manual is intended to be a useful reference for participation in the APO BPN.

SHIGEO TAKENAKA
Secretary-General

Tokyo
March 2005

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 APO Best Practice Network

Background

At the APO study meeting on the establishment of a Best Practice Network (BPN) held in Singapore between 24 and 27 April 2001, the participants agreed that a BPN could be set up among APO member countries.

Objectives

The APO BPN will assist client organizations of NPOs and NPOs themselves to:

- Identify where global best practices reside
- Gain useful knowledge on global best practices that will help to achieve superior performance
- Support the transfer of best practice knowledge to countries and clients of NPOs and position NPOs as leaders in knowledge transfer
- Acquire and apply best practice knowledge, including how to do benchmarking.

During the second meeting of the APO BPN, participating NPOs and some invited client organizations were trained in the draft methodology framework of the APO BPN. During the four days of training, three syndicate groups, one for each of the first three topics, discussed the various steps and substeps in the draft methodology framework and provided feedback. This feedback was used to improve the methodology framework and the training manual. Example case study templates as a result of the syndicates' work are given in the Appendices.

How the APO Best Practice Network works

- Leader organizations are nominated by NPOs to learn from one another and from experts and share their leading practices on a specific topic.
- Leading practices to share and learning needs are identified through initial benchmark data comparisons.
- Workshops and optional site visits to leading organizations show how to carry out benchmarking.
- Best practices reports are prepared for dissemination through NPOs.
- Participating organizations are able to make well-informed recommendations to improve their performance.
- NPOs and leader organizations learn how to do benchmarking.

Desired outcomes from the training

An outcome from the APO BPN meetings was an understanding of the agreed approach and outline methodology. Training will provide NPOs and NPO client organizations with the skills to conducting benchmarking, find best practices, and share and learn through knowledge exchange between NPO member countries as part of the APO BPN.

The training will help participants to:

- Recognize the usefulness of the APO BPN methodology framework
- Learn how to apply the steps in the BPN methodology
- Understand their role as well as the role of other parties in applying the methodology
- Understand the deliverables from each step of the methodology.

1.2 Benchmarking Training Manual

This manual is a master training manual to assist NPOs and their client organizations to participate in the APO BPN. The manual is a practical “how-to” guide for NPOs dealing with the basic concepts of benchmarking and approaches and supporting the NPO Working Group (WG) in conducting, managing, and facilitating a group of NPO client organizations to share and learn as part of the APO BPN.

The manual is a hands-on benchmarking guide explaining how to conduct benchmarking to improve processes and practices and accelerate improvement within NPO client organizations. The manual also guides the identification of best practices for wide dissemination by all NPOs and the APO.

This NPO manual first briefly describes benchmarking basics: what benchmarking is, types of benchmarking, benchmarking in context, guidelines for NPOs and NPO clients, knowing how to get started in forming a network, establishing and launching a marketing strategy, and assessing market feedback. The manual then guides the NPO to support the WG to conduct benchmarking with their client organizations from project group formation, briefing, and initial planning meeting, through to data collection, providing data analysis comparisons, sharing and learning workshops, reporting the best practices within client organizations for knowledge exchange, and reviewing the benchmarking process. The manual also provides guidelines for NPO coordination within the APO BPN, enabling open knowledge exchange between NPOs in member countries.

The manual follows the BPN framework methodology and includes not only NPO roles but also NPO WG roles and supporting roles for other stakeholders.

CHAPTER 2

BENCHMARKING IN CONTEXT

2.1 What Is Benchmarking?

Benchmarking is a process for finding, adapting, and implementing outstanding practices. Benchmarking commences with identifying what you need to improve, followed by learning how to improve by partnering in learning and sharing with leading client organizations. After implementing change, reviews track performance and identify further opportunities for improvement.

What Is Benchmarking?

A business excellence tool for finding, adapting, and implementing leading practices to achieve superior performance.

Benchmarking comprises some initial measurement (what) and practices (how). Remeasuring allows comparative tracking of performance improvement.

Benchmarking is a powerful performance management tool that can be used to generate both incremental change and wide-ranging strategic reform for the client organization. Benchmarking is a learning process in which information, knowledge, and experience about leading practices are shared through partnerships between organizations. It allows a client organization to compare itself with others and, in the process, step back from itself and reflect. Comparative measurement through benchmarks helps to identify problems and opportunities and also tests hypotheses and “gut feelings” about performance. Benchmarking offers a client organization an opportunity to change and to improve.

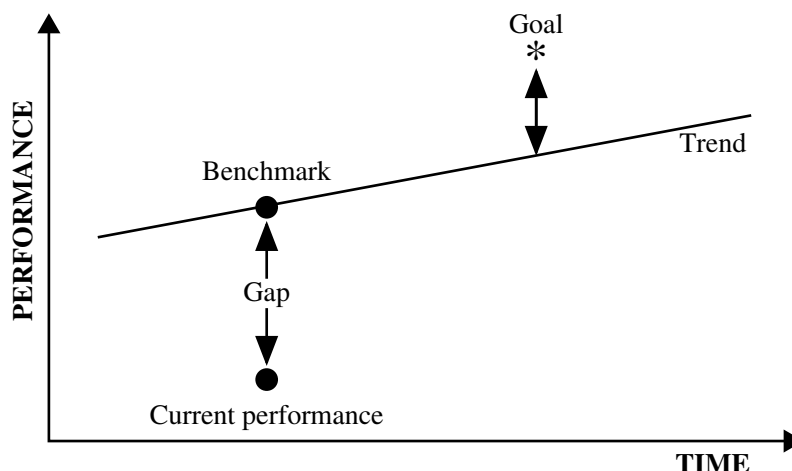
Benchmarking

- **Aims to examine, compare, and improve performance of processes used in business operations (frequently processes are generic)**
 - **May examine process flow, efficiency, effectiveness, adaptability, cycle time, or cost**
 - **Is about sharing how things are done**
 - **Requires a thorough understanding of one’s own processes**
 - **Results in recommendations for change to improve performance**
-

Benchmarking is not a single event. It is an ongoing process for finding improved ways of doing things linked to the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Once desired benchmark levels are identified and the client organization applies learning from

partners to adapt and improve the performance of targeted processes, it is important to understand that in time benchmark levels will rise and there will be a need to monitor process outcome performance to determine potential opportunities to improve against partners with higher performance. As an example, an airline in the USA wanted to improve its turnaround time from when a plane landed to when it took off again. It was running shuttle-type services between two airports. Clients were saying that they wanted a greater frequency of service and were using longer-haul airlines as an alternative to the shuttle airline. Who could it use as a benchmarking partner? What types of operations must turn around quickly? The airline developed a benchmarking partnership with an Indianapolis 500 car race pit crew. It learned from the pit crew how to organize the work better during the turnaround phase and approximately halved the turnaround time. One example of improved workflow is the fact that the flight attendants commenced cleaning up the plane while landing to help the cleaning crew.

Most client organizations set improvement goals based on past performance. The result has tended to be a conservative set of plans and activities which is inadequate when compared to the rate of improvement required to remain successful. One of the intended outcomes of benchmarking will be an enhanced ability to set realistic improvement goals relative to effective performance.



Benchmarking

Will tell you:

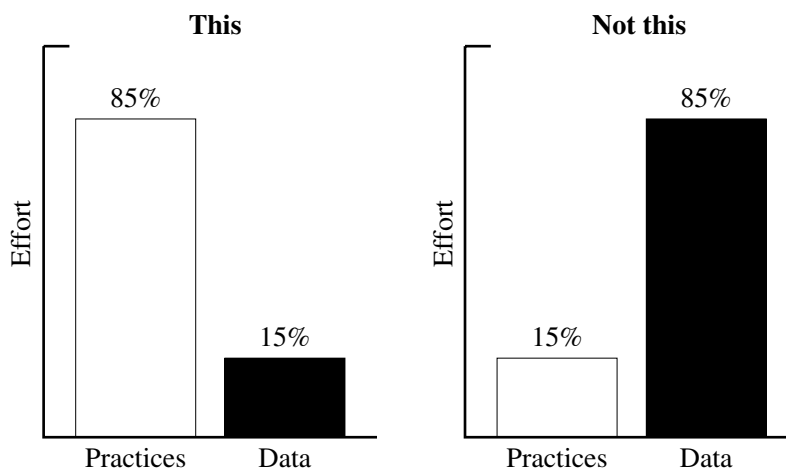
- How well you are performing
 - How good you need to be (it will give a practical vision)
 - How to get there (a roadmap)
 - And therefore help you to achieve your mission, vision, and goals
-

2.2 What Benchmarking Is Not

There is an important distinction between benchmarking as a process and specific benchmarks. Many client organizations regard the benchmarks as benchmarking, when this is only a small part of the benchmarking process. Benchmarking is the process that starts from identifying an area for improvement and ends in enhancing the quality of products and services. Benchmarks are data comparisons, such as performance output figures. They can be a pointer to what you should be improving and from whom you should be learning.

Benchmarking does not mean simply collecting and comparing benchmarks or other performance figures with client organizations. Performance is invariably measured in different ways by different client organizations and figures alone are not a reliable basis for comparison. However, it can be valuable for NPOs to facilitate partnering of client organizations with each other on a regular basis to compare performance figures and discuss the merits of alternative management practices and systems.

When benchmarking you will not spend most of your time on the data; rather you will spend most of your time learning the best practices and how to apply them.



Benchmarking is NOT a:

- Program
 - Cookbook process looking only at the ingredients or numbers
 - Fad, like TQM, MBO, etc.
 - Mechanism for resource reductions
 - Organizational tourism
 - Adopting or copying
 - Catching up
-

Activity 1

Define benchmarking in your own words.

2.3 Types of Benchmarking

You can choose different kinds of partners for benchmarking with client organizations.

Sector benchmarking

Sector benchmarking refers to benchmarking across other organizations in the same sector.

Industry or functional benchmarking

Comparing yourself and your processes against other organizations in search of better or world-class practices of the same industry is called functional or industry benchmarking. It involves partners in the same functional area, strategic planning, human resources, finance, and client service, in the private or public sector.

Generic benchmarking

Generic benchmarking consists of partnerships across functional areas, for example, benchmarking communications with operational communications in a private-sector client organization. The range of comparisons is usually very broad within a common theme (client service, internal communications, strategic planning, turnaround times, etc.).

The airline example given earlier is a classic example of how turnaround time from the airline industry compared to the car racing industry can be effective. Often large gains in improvement can be made from generic benchmarking because the innovation paradigm is stretched to “best in class” across all client organizations and sectors for a specific focus. Generic benchmarking is most effective when a structured benchmarking process is followed to optimize the learning and opportunities to adapt practices from different industries.

Internal benchmarking

Internal benchmarking involves partnering between different areas within one client organization. For example, a business unit within an organization could develop a balanced performance measurement system and compare it with those of other business units. The benefits are that potential benchmarking partners are easy to identify and information sharing is usually straightforward and can result in improved strategies and processes within the organization. The opportunities for learning from better practice are, however, limited to the scope of the internal partners.

Competitive benchmarking

Competitive benchmarking involves partnering with potential competitor client organizations. The willingness and openness of competitors to share sensitive information determines the extent of benefits. However, when there are common interests, competitive benchmarking can be very useful.

Generic benchmarking often produces the greatest benefits because it highlights ways of working outside existing paradigms. However, this demands a sound knowledge of the benchmarking process and client organizations must be specific about where improvements are needed to ensure that relevant benchmarking partners are selected.

NPOs will determine their client network type based on the marketing potential and business environment of their own client organizations.

Activity 2

Describe the potential relevance of each of the benchmarking types for organizations. If your organization is currently using any type, describe its application. If not, in what areas/ways could these types of benchmarking be used?

2.4 Benchmarking as an Improvement Tool

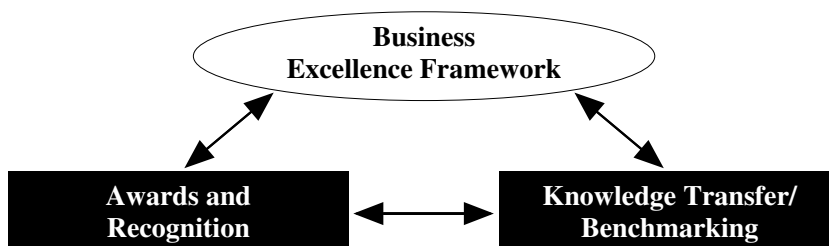
Benchmarking is one tool in the set of improvement tools available to assist strategically driven organizational change. Other tools include flow-charting, Pareto analysis, cause and effect diagrams, Gantt charts, etc.

Benchmarking in Context

What are the practices of the best performance?	Tools:
How well are the processes performing?	Benchmarking
How well are the systems being managed?	Process improvement or innovation
Does an enterprise have a quality system in place?	Assessment of performance against business excellence framework
	Client surveys
	Staff surveys
	ISO9000 series

The topics to be identified for benchmarking can be linked to the results of the assessment of an organization's performance based on the business excellence framework adopted by the organization. The business excellence framework adopted could be based on the national award criteria in the country. Knowledge transfer through benchmarking will help the organization to address the areas for improvement or enhance its strength based on the assessment.

Benchmarking: The Linkages



Business process improvement or innovation is also very useful as a lead into benchmarking as it can allow a client organization to understand its own strategies and processes and help determine what specific areas to benchmark. The outcomes of business process improvement therefore can provide the valuable "front-end" question of deciding what

to benchmark. The important point of business process improvement or innovation is understanding the business and breaking it down to identify where performance blockages are most serious. This often helps in identifying which areas to benchmark.

Benchmarking provides optimum improvement opportunities when processes to be benchmarked are defined, so that a reference for a comparison of performance is understood. The evaluation of the organization's management system or looking beyond functional needs, i.e., supplier/client organization priorities for the business, can identify priorities for benchmarking that will have the most impact. Process improvement or innovation efforts can be very useful to focus on specific areas for benchmarking.

Case Study: South East Water Ltd

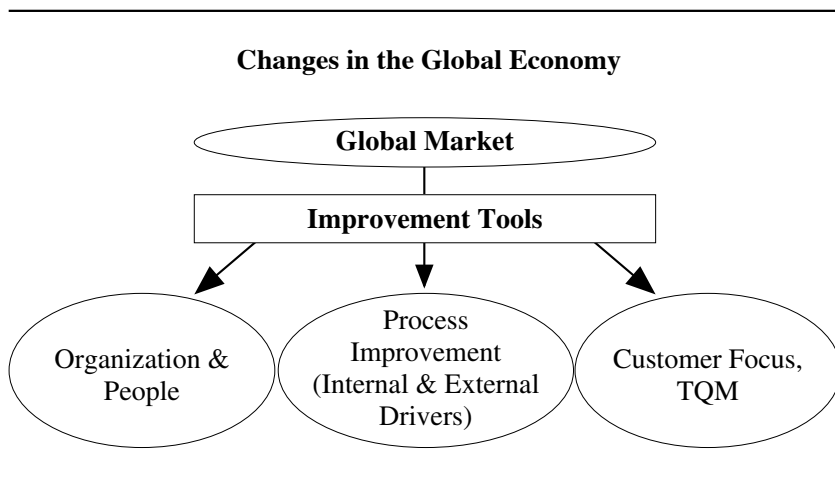
(Results of benchmarking in partnership using the framework)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec 1995 - ISO9001 • Jan 1996 - CI Program • Nov 1996 - AQA Achievement • Nov 1996 - ISO14001 • Feb 1997 - Intranet Q System • Nov 1997 - AQA Commendation • 1999 - Award Gold • Future aim - AQA prize? | <p>1996–1999 participated in the following benchmarking networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>-ISO 9000 series</i> • <i>-Internal communications</i> • <i>-Integral Energy Strategic Planning</i> • <i>-NRMA Call Centre Management</i> • <i>-Energy Australia Debt Management</i> • <i>-Senior Executive Leadership</i> |
|---|--|
-

2.5 Business Strategy and Benchmarking

Strategy selection from prior determined needs is of strategic importance, and urgency is a fundamental cornerstone for optimizing any process improvement that may follow. Improvement must be driven by business strategy.

All high-risk areas or where the potential benefit is significant within a business strategy should be considered and compared in benchmarking before diving into specific process improvement. There is a trend developing where leading client organizations are focusing on a flatter organizational structure and specifically a horizontal model of organization in which end-to-end workflows link internal processes with suppliers and clients. Through a flattened structure, there is minimization of both workflow division and nonvalue-added work activities.



Increasing competitive pressures and outsourcing with client organizations providing a similar service are forcing organizations to achieve breakthroughs rather than incremental improvements. Demands in service delivery times, service levels, costs, and product and service quality are at the top of most client organizations' priorities. Benchmarking can assist with breakthrough initiatives and process innovation.

As a result of the focus on improving business strategies, client organizations are progressing through three phases of structural change: Phase 1) traditional, vertical hierarchy of departmental management; Phase 2) a combination of the vertical hierarchy and business process management; and Phase 3) development of an organization with no divisional/departmental structure.

The achievement of this is dependent upon a number of factors including the type and maturity of industry, and employee relations within the client organization.

2.6 When Should Benchmarking Be Undertaken?

Ideally benchmarking should be a continuous process from the point of constantly learning and sharing with other client organizations new and improved ways of doing things. Benchmarking on any particular strategy or process should begin with the client organization knowing its own performance and the priority of benchmarking opportunities, i.e., which particular strategy and supporting processes are of greater importance.

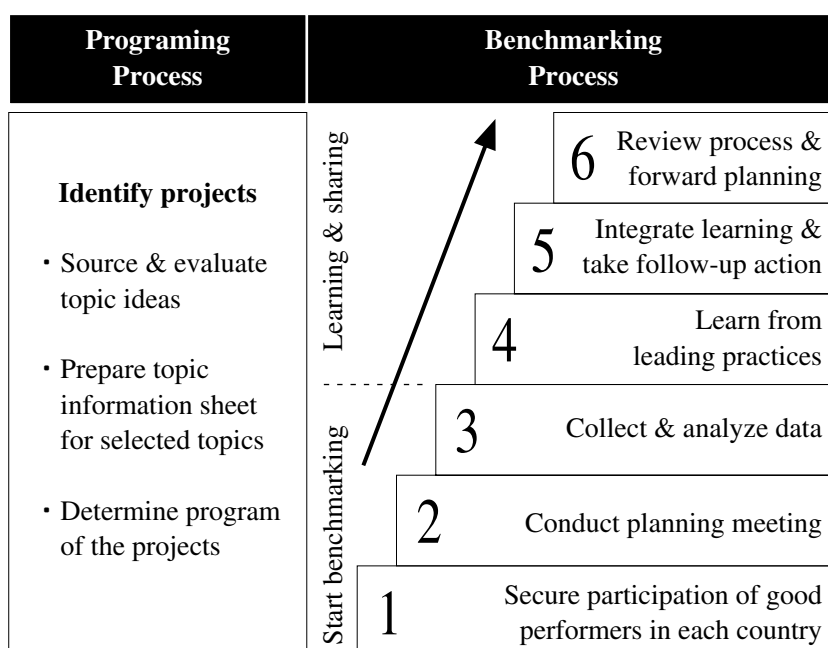
It is unrealistic to benchmark everything in a diverse client organization. One must prioritize initiatives based on strategic importance and urgency. Success factors for the specific benchmarking tasks include resources allocated to the benchmarking team and having a supporting sponsor of the improvement initiatives.

CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW OF THE NETWORK METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK

The intent of the BPN is to facilitate sharing and learning of best practices in specific areas of interest among participating countries, so that there is rapid and efficient transfer of those practices. The methodology framework is not an assistance methodology whereby individual participating enterprises are trained and assisted by NPOs to identify benchmarking needs and to internalize and adapt best practices so that they can improve as individual entities.

APO Best Practice Network Methodology Framework



The whole BPN process for each topic is led by the NPO WG nominated to undertake the role of “driving” the sharing and learning process. The NPO WG will be made up of representatives from some NPOs that have client enterprises participating in the network.

The tasks to be accomplished under the methodology framework for the APO BPN are described in Appendix 1. While the APO can offer support for NPOs, it is the NPOs themselves that need to put local benchmarking on their strategy agenda and allocate the necessary resources to it to ensure that their country maximizes improvements in productivity through benchmarking. NPOs can seek assistance under the DON Program to build skills in benchmarking for themselves and their clients through APO-designated resource persons.

Key Steps and Key Roles

Step A: Identification of topics and a program for sharing and learning across countries by the NPO WG (Appendix 1, Figures 1 and 2). The topics and scope selected must be based on NPO client needs within each country and then prioritized between countries.

Step 1: Securing good performing participating enterprises in each country (Appendix 1, Figure 2 and Table 1). This includes identification of good performing organizations for the specific topic; briefing those organizations on the purpose, draft scope, methodology, and deliverables; and maintaining their commitment to participate while the network is being formed by NPOs using support materials provided by the NPO WG. A subject matter expert is to be appointed by the APO to assist the NPO WG on each topic as part of a qualifying panel established by each NPO WG for the respective topics.

Step 2: Conduct planning meetings among participating client enterprises to adjust and finalize the scope and set timelines to suit client needs (Appendix 1, Figure 2 and Table 2). This then leads to the design and development of data collection tools and a data collection and analysis strategy to enable identification of leading practices by the NPO WG. The scope must be based solely on problem areas that are being experienced by client organizations in the participating NPO countries to avoid the topic becoming too broad.

Step 3: Collect and analyze data (Appendix 1, Figure 2 and Table 3). The participating enterprises collect data in accordance with the guidelines and tools issued by the NPO WG. The data tools should reflect the limited scope of the topic and should not be made too broad, so that the best practices identified address the learning needs of NPO clients. The NPO WG arranges for analysis and reporting on the data, and the reports are issued to NPOs and to NPO clients by the NPO WG.

Step 4: Learn from leading practices (Appendix 1, Figure 2 and Table 4). A learning workshop is planned and conducted so that best practices (as identified and confirmed by the data analysis reports) are shared among participating enterprises and other known leaders. As a result, the NPO WG prepares a draft best practices report that is approved by client enterprises and then finalized by the NPO WG.

Step 5: Integrate learning and take follow-up action (Appendix 1, Figure 2 and Table 5). NPOs disseminate the report and the findings within their own countries. Client organizations that participated in the benchmarking use the findings to develop and implement action plans to improve their performance. NPOs can, if they wish, follow up with their own clients to extend the learning and sharing within their own countries. This step primarily involves NPOs and their clients.

In the review and forward planning process, the NPOs report on the benefits and outcomes from the BPN and local benchmarking in their own countries, and the NPO WG consolidates these reports and evaluates the methodology to identify improvements for the next BPN project (Appendix 1, Figure 2 and Table 6). NPOs also will aim for ongoing interna-

tional collaboration on the topics and determine new topics (including scope, composition of project teams, and topic information sheets) for the next APO BPN project.

Note that the NPO WG has primary responsibility for Steps 2, 3, and 4, while NPOs have primary responsibility for Steps 1 and 5. The responsibility for Steps A and 6 is shared between NPOs and the NPO WG. Other key features of the framework methodology for the BPN are the availability and roles for support from APO benchmarking experts and specific topic experts.

After the identification of topics and scope and compilation of the topic information sheet, the activities of each topic working group can be coordinated through e-benchmarking in preparation for a workshop to share and learn best practices. This workshop will also compile best practice case studies, review the methodology, share NPO benchmarking initiatives, and plan for the next BPN topics. Thus only one face-to-face workshop should now be required for each set of three BPN topics. Each set of topics should thus be finalized within 12 months.

NPOs are encouraged also to collaborate on other benchmarking initiatives using e-benchmarking at the same time as the BPN is being conducted. Malaysia has offered its e-benchmarking facility to support benchmark analysis for the BPN, for ongoing collaboration on the demonstration project topics, and for general collaboration between NPOs. NPOs can apply for access for a minimum number of clients to provide data and receive results online for the key performance indicators already identified by Malaysia, from the BPN projects, or through the initiative of NPOs.

The guidelines and roles for the NPO WG, NPOs, and NPO client organizations are described in each section of the training manual. These guidelines and roles are reinforced in Appendix 1, showing the APO BPN methodology. The deliverables from each step of the methodology framework are also described.

NPO client responsibilities include learning about and sharing best practices to adapt and improve in their own enterprises and showing a willingness to share their practices with other NPO clients. Responsibilities are articulated at each stage to assist the client organization in gaining maximum value from the benchmarking process. The NPO WG is the “engine room” of the BPN, driving the whole process and arranging for key steps to be carried out. However, the NPO WG cannot do this without input and support from NPOs.

Availability of APO Experts

Securing expert assistance from the APO was an issue of concern among NPOs during the pilot phase.

- An NPO may apply to the APO for expert assistance to participate in benchmarking through the DON Program. This may include assistance with any step of the APO BPN, including:

- o training in benchmarking
 - o briefing/workshop with client organizations
 - o identification of best practice organizations
 - o convincing client organizations to participate
 - o skills transfer to people in the NPO and in NPO clients
 - o local benchmarking projects in the NPO's country.
- Do not hesitate to send e-mail messages to the APO benchmarking expert for advice on how to perform benchmarking in any of the BPN steps at any stage.
- Examples of recent expert benchmarking assistance include Malaysia, Thailand, and the ROC. e-Mail advice has been given to the Philippines and Mongolia.

Summary of Roles of NPOs in the APO BPN

In the APO BPN, NPOs will be responsible for:

- Providing input regarding their country and their client enterprises' needs concerning topics and scope for benchmarking;
- Developing and conducting local marketing to encourage participation in the BPN;
- Participating in the working group for the topic in which the local NPO clients are interested, perhaps as working group leader;
- Identifying best practice organizations to participate in the benchmarking in the country;
- Seeking client commitment to participate in the project;
- Briefing client representative(s) on the project;
- Following up and maintaining commitment from client enterprises to participate;
- Assisting client enterprises to collect data and helping them identify best practices for sharing;
- Working with their client organizations in their own country with approval of the report on best practices;
- Disseminating the best practice reports in their own country including to participating organizations that did not attend the learning workshop using their own existing dissemination channels or developing new channels with their clients;
- Following up with their participating client organizations to identify and meet further learning needs if required, and to monitor and assist clients in developing action plans for improvement and implementation;
- Planning for and participating in ongoing networking and collaboration on the topic;
- Managing or assisting in managing the BPN; and
- Encouraging and facilitating local benchmarking linked to the BPN as appropriate.

In addition, each NPO has the specific functional role of sustaining the APO BPN as follows:

- Publicity/promotion (newsletter, publications)—Pakistan (Bangladesh, Nepal, Mongolia)
- Competencies: training and development needs and how they can be resolved—Singapore

(Fiji, India) Measurement/APO e-Forum—Malaysia (Sri Lanka, Iran)

- Case study management—Philippines (India, Fiji)
- Knowledge management—Web site structure, e.g., manual, surveys, case studies, linking with other NPOs—Thailand (ROC, Iran).

(NPOs in parentheses support the lead NPO for the specific function.)

CHAPTER 4

STEP A: PROGRAMMING PROCESS

Under the APO BPN programming process, the NPO WG, with inputs from NPOs, will (Figure 4.1 and Appendix 1, Figure 1):

Step A1 Source and evaluate topic ideas (NPOs to submit ideas)

Step A2 Prepare topic information sheets for selected topics to assist NPOs

Step A3 Determine a program of projects for each defined period

Step A4 Develop project action plans and finalize topic information sheets

Step A1 Source and Evaluate Topic Ideas

The NPOs will propose topic ideas to the BPN based on the learning needs for best practices **among their client enterprises**. The NPO WG will then determine the relative potential value of topics identified for the purpose of cross-country benchmarking.

Activity 3

Brainstorm ideas in the topics selected for scope, i.e., what are key issues for improvement in your country and what are the key learning needs within those issues?

Step A2 Topic Information Sheet

The WG will develop a topic information sheet for each selected topic covering:

- Title of topic;
- Rationale for selection of topic (reasons why cross-country benchmarking should be done in this topic area);
- Outcomes of benchmarking on the topic (the outcomes or impact of benchmarking in the topic area for participating client organizations and NPOs);
- Scope (specific key areas or issues to be covered under the topic); and
- Likely participating industries and/or client organizations that are good performers.

The inputs from NPOs interested in benchmarking on the topic will be sought by the WG to develop the topic information sheet. NPOs can use the topic information sheet template to provide information to the WG.

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

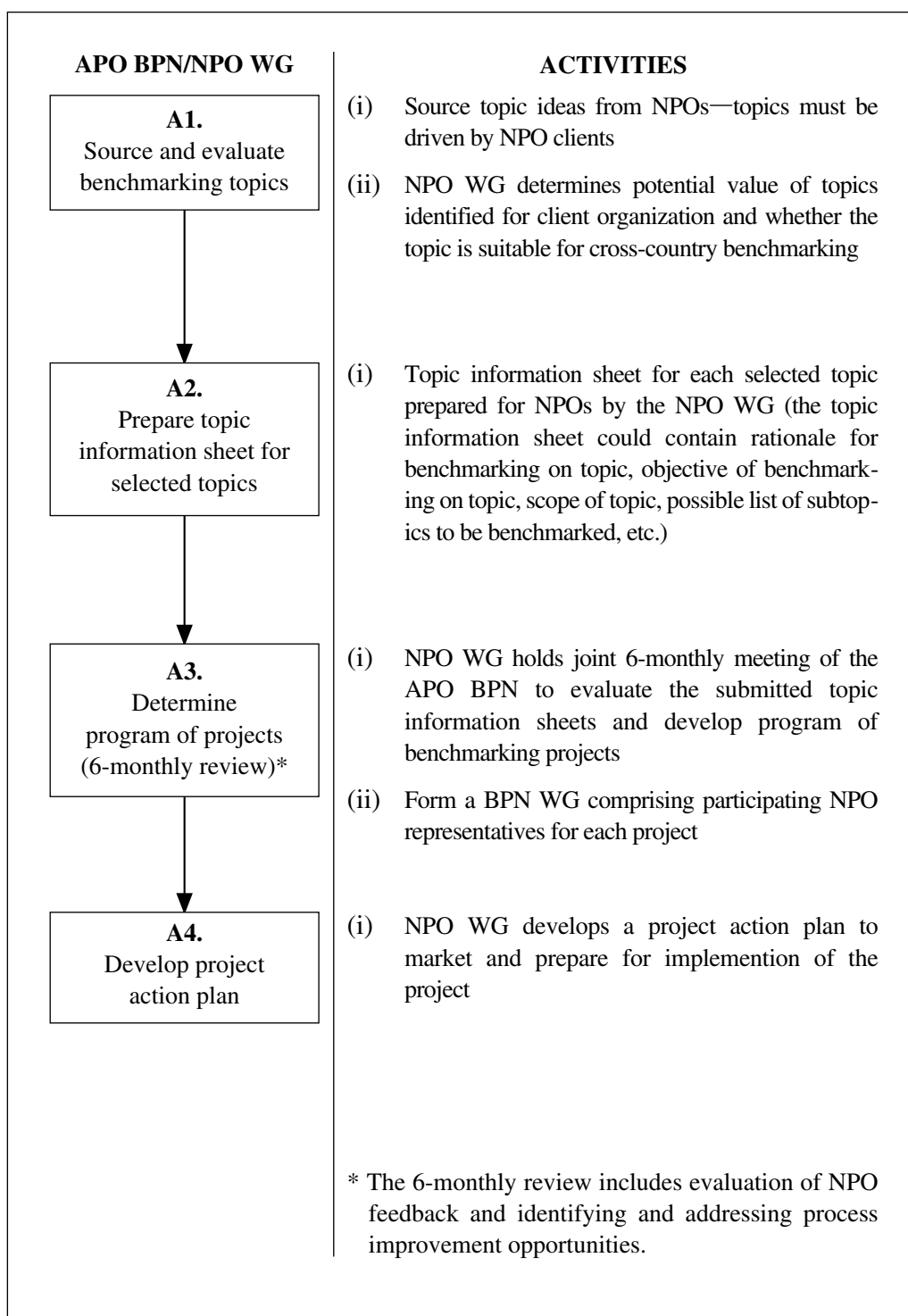


Figure 4.1. Best Practices Network Programming Process

STEP A2 TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET

Topic Title

Country: _____

1. Title of topic
2. Rationale
3. Outcome of benchmarking on the topic (end result for organization)
4. Scope (specific areas or issues to be covered under topic)
5. Likely participating industries and/or clients that are good performers
6. Likely industries to benefit from findings (optional)

Activity 4

Complete the above template for your country/group of countries for a given BPN topic.

Steps A3 and A4 Program of Project (Topics) and Project Action Plan

The NPO WG will then develop and prioritize a program of projects (topics) over a six-month period. At the same time, project action plans for each topic should be made by the NPO WG. The action plan can use the overview framework methodology template (Table 3.1) with supporting deadline dates added.

Resource considerations in developing and implementing action plans

During the pilot meetings of the APO BPN a number of issues arose:

- Realistic timeframe to be adopted in completing each step
- Clear definitions of roles of project team members
- Proper handover process for new members
- Reduce cycle time, e.g., to develop and gain approval on questionnaires
- Ensure effective communication among project team members and regular progress reports during the implementation of the projects.

When developing the action plan, the WG must be realistic:

- It would be very helpful if the NPO management for the WG leader could allocate some of normal working time (say one day per week on average) during the life of the benchmarking project to coordinate WG activities. This time demand will vary throughout the project and will be highest during the planning and data collection and analysis phases and in the lead-up to the learning workshop and other meetings.
- Participating NPO personnel should also be allocated resource time (say four hours per week) due to the benefit the NPO's country and clients will obtain from the best practice knowledge generated.
- Part of the action plan should include a communications plan. This plan should include:
 - o weekly e-mail updates from all participating NPO representatives to the WG leader and other NPO representatives
 - o progress on current activities of the WG and the NPO depending on the current step of the methodology framework and any issues due to changes in personnel
 - o timely "catch-up" telephone calls from the WG leader to NPO representatives, since discussion on the telephone resolves difficulties much quicker than e-mail. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone!
- Any change in personnel at the NPO should result in a thorough briefing by the departing NPO representative.
- The WG should have an up-to-date "electronic" kit of all materials developed for each step of the methodology framework (compiled by the WG leader) to enable briefing of new personnel. This kit should include an updated contacts list circulated to all participants.

Research report

The NPO WG could also conduct some desktop research on agreed topics and compile a research report from the various research findings and case studies. The purpose of this report is to gather information and get a feel for the general need for the topic information in the industry. This report is a deliverable when client organizations join the APO BPN. The report should have an executive summary of issues and findings and then detail specific industry issues, alignment if any with business excellence frameworks, recent research findings, case studies by known organizations, recent benchmarking findings, and library and Internet search reports/abstracts. A bibliography at the end of this report would also be helpful. This report could also form a part of the final best practices report. It would be worthwhile to arrange all this material in a presentation folder with appropriate sections for quick reference by client organizations when they join the BPN.

Marketing to participating client organizations by NPOs

The WG will develop an overall BPN brochure as outlined below, in preparation for marketing. However, it is the responsibility of each NPO to develop its own specific marketing write-up or brochure that works well in the country to induce their best practice client organizations to participate in the network's projects. The marketing write-up or brochure should be based on the topic information sheet and the overall BPN brochure (which needs to be developed by the WG).

It is, however, useful to have consistent communication with clients, possibly outlining some of the following elements, which will also be outlined in the BPN brochure developed by the WG:

- Introduction and background
- Scope (what client organizations will learn by participating)
- Network partners
- Deliverables for network partners
- Other benefits
- Benchmarking Code of Conduct
- Benchmarking methodology and resources (step by step)
- A value proposition statement (how do I know this is of great value?)
- Testimonials from previous participants in benchmarking networks
- How to register interest (to make it easy for the client organization to respond).

In general, if an NPO client organization needs convincing before committing to a benchmarking project, there is a need to demonstrate its relevance to its business and how it supports and aligns with organizational objectives. This can also be done at the APO BPN level across countries.

Contact list/keeping up to date

It is important by this stage to develop and maintain a contact list of people in participating NPOs and in participating organizations. As new people join the network they should be sent a kit of all available information up to that point (including the BPN brochure) and also have their details added to the contact list.

Contact list to include:

- Name of person;
- Title/role;
- Organization;
- Postal address;
- e-Mail address;
- Phone number; and
- Fax number.

It is the responsibility of the WG leader to keep this contact list up to date. It is important that any changes in personnel are promptly informed to the WG leader and that new people are sent an updated kit of available information. It is useful to circulate this list every few weeks for updating.

PEOPLE VACATING THEIR ROLE WITH THE WG MUST BRIEF THE NEW REPLACEMENT.

Roles in Steps A1 to A4

NPO WG

- Determine the relative potential value of topics identified for the purpose of cross-country benchmarking.
- Develop a topic information sheet.
- Develop and prioritize a program of topics over a six-month period.
- Develop project action plan for specific topics.
- Prepare (optional) research report.
- Develop marketing brochure.
- Develop and maintain contact list.
- Develop and maintain continuously updated information kit to brief new people as they join the network.

NPOs

- Provide input to NPO WG regarding their country and their client organizations' needs concerning topics and scope using the topic information sheet.
- Develop local marketing brochure.

- Maintain as far as possible consistency of representation of the same person throughout BPN activities.
- When changes in NPO representative are necessary, the NPO should ensure that the new representative is fully briefed on and up to date with BPN activities.

Client organizations

Provide advice to NPOs regarding improvement needs concerning topics and scope.

Topic experts

Provide advice regarding industry improvement needs or scope within the topic.

Deliverables in Steps A1 to A4

Topics selected for NPO countries for benchmarking and an action plan for each topic. The topic information sheet and marketing brochure should be available for each topic to assist NPOs in securing good performers as participants.

CHAPTER 5

STEP 1: SECURE PARTICIPATION OF GOOD PERFORMERS

Introduction

Marketing is a very important part of the planning stage for the NPO and the NPO WG. If the marketing is not adequately resourced and evaluated and the value proposition to NPO clients is not clear, then there can be wasted effort and disappointment because client organizations do not commit or are not reached. Miscommunication of expectations can also cause problems later on if the benchmarking outcomes, roles, and responsibilities have not been stated in clear language.

The NPOs will be responsible for:

- **Identifying organizations to participate in the benchmarking in their own country**
 - **Seeking client commitment to participate in the project**
 - **Briefing the client representative(s) on the project**
 - **Following up and maintaining commitment from client enterprises**
-

In starting the marketing, we advise that there is no prescription for a successful outcome in seeking commitment from clients in forming the APO BPN. There is, however, an approach that in general reduces risk and optimizes opportunities in the local environment and culture to give client enterprises every chance to become involved in this initiative (Table 5.1 and Appendix 1, Table 1).

STEP 1.1 NPOs Identify Organizations to Participate in Benchmarking

The NPOs should use the screening criteria (see below) to identify best practice organizations to participate in the projects.

Screening criteria for identifying best practices

- Organizations that have a culture for improvement. These organizations could have implemented various improvement initiatives such as TQM, ISO certification, or human resources development programs and are actively engaged in a journey toward organizational excellence.
- Organizations that are committed to improving their competitiveness (for example, organizations looking toward global/regional markets for their growth or facing intense competition from foreign players in their own markets).
- Organizations that have a good reputation, image, or influence in the industry or indus-

try association in the country and can help promote the concept of benchmarking and the role of the NPO/APO in this context.

- Organizations that have conducted benchmarking before.
 - Organizations that are business excellence award winners or have gained other industry recognition.
 - Look at the organization's mission, vision, and goals to determine whether the topic for benchmarking/scope items would be key drivers for achievement of the mission, vision, and goals.
 - Check for subsidiaries of multinational organizations that have been recognized in other countries in the literature or by other NPOs, e.g., business excellence winners, subjects of case studies in books.
 - Conduct brainstorming among staff in the NPO or client organizations.
 - Think about organizations that must do well to survive, e.g., the pharmaceutical industry must have good performance measures to maintain product safety; banks must have good client service to survive in their highly competitive market; and recruitment agencies must know organizations with good people performance evaluation practices.
 - Ask contacts and others or consult apex bodies on the topic of interest.
 - To justify inclusion as a best practice organization, it must excel in at least two aspects of the scope for the benchmarking topic. Show a potential participant the scope in the topic information sheet and ask it to respond briefly, even over the telephone, to the survey.
- Typical questions:
- o What do you do (refer to the topic scope)?
 - o How do you do it?
 - o How do you know how well you do it?
 - o What have you improved recently or what are you about to improve?

What Is a Best or Leading Practice?

- **something that demonstrably contributes to excellent business outcomes/results**
- **something unique or different that others do not do**
- **not only a plan or intent, but also something that is well deployed or utilized throughout the organization**
- **something that the organization is continually improving**
- **something that is looked up to by peers and experts**
- **something that your clients would view as very useful to learn**

NOTE: Often leading organizations are unconsciously competent in leading practices and therefore you must explore thoroughly with them what they do and how they do it.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK your peers, clients, suppliers, industry experts, apex bodies on a specific topic, other NPOs, etc.

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

Table 5.1. Securing good performers

Comments/Tasks													
	A Accountable for C Communicated with and involved I Informed after	NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other	
		1.1 Identify organizations	A				C						
		1.2 Secure commitment to participate in project	A				C	C					
		1.3 Brief representative(s) on project / 1.4 Maintain commitment	A				C	C	C	C	I	I	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conduct a short briefing session for representatives from participating organizations to cover:<ul style="list-style-type: none">concept of benchmarkingmethodology and scopeCode of Conductdata collection process and toolsThis may include planning meeting (see Step 2) and trainingStep 1.4 involves the NPO maintaining client commitment to benchmarking while the network is being formed													

Usually an invitation to participate is sent via e-mail, fax, or mail to targeted clients to solicit initial interest. The marketing approach may involve specific face-to-face meetings or telephone calls to interested client enterprises. NPOs should be aware of trade journals and associations, including marketing flyers by other organizations, providing names of process owners and leading organizations to target.

NPOs must secure best practice organizations and must be sensitive to competitors of those organizations. They also need to be constantly aware of best practice organizations of other NPOs who join the network and communicate this to their own participating organizations as appropriate.

Convincing client organizations to participate

A key issue raised during the pilot meetings was how to convince client organizations to participate in the project and address their fear of releasing data and information:

- communicate the benefits of participating to client organizations using the marketing kit and emphasize:
 - o their ability to influence the scope to suit their needs
 - o their interaction and learning with other leading organizations (name the other participants)
 - o how they can learn to get ahead of their competition from different industries
 - o they will gain knowledge in much more detail than what the final report can offer to assist with their improvement
 - o network contacts that they will gain;
- the Code of Conduct and how the confidentiality of their information will be protected by confining it to network participants:
 - o the information in any report will be approved by them
 - o they have the right to veto the participation of competitors
 - o their data will be “blinded” if requested
 - o information presented at workshops/site visits will be controlled by them; and
- benchmarking will accelerate national recognition in the form of awards and, if they wish to be named, international recognition through participation in the APO BPN.

Identifying Best Practices

See tips in Chapter 7, Step 3.2

Roles in Step 1.1

NPOs identify client organizations in their own country that are good performers.

The NPO WG provides advice and support to NPOs as required and continuously updates the contact list of NPOs and participating client organizations.

The APO benchmarking expert supports NPOs to brief, train, and secure participation by enterprises.

The APO offers incentives to assist NPOs in securing the participation of good performers such as invitations for participation in other APO programs, in addition to participation in the BPN Sharing and Learning Workshop (if selected) and access to the the APO Web site, as well as access to the BPN case study best practice reports.

Deliverables from Step 1.1

NPO client organizations are identified as participants in the BPN.

Step 1.2 Follow-up with Client Organizations to Ensure Their Commitment

It is the responsibility of each NPO to follow up with their client organizations where there was an earlier interest and seek commitment to join. The timing for follow-up is a judgment call. However, if the initial communication and/or briefing material indicated a due date to join, then a week or two after the due date is timely for follow-up.

Some client organizations will want to know who else is in the network before making a commitment. It is worthwhile keeping in touch regularly with the NPO WG to find out which other organizations are participating. Also make it clear to the interested organizations that they will not be bound to a final decision to join until the BPN is ready to proceed. Sometimes this eliminates the fear of being the first to join.

NPOs should give feedback on prospects to the NPO WG. The NPO WG will synchronize the NPOs and their client organizations to begin the process. The start times may be staggered to allow for groups that are ready to begin first, without waiting for other NPO groups to join. Continual communication and feedback will help committed clients to sustain enthusiasm.

Roles in Step 1.2

NPOs

- Secure commitment from client organizations that are good performers to participate in the BPN.
- Advise the NPO WG on progress.

NPO WG

- Provide advice and support to NPOs as required.
- Continually update topic information sheet and disseminate to NPOs.
- Continually update contact list and disseminate to NPOs.

Client organizations

Respond to requests for participation in the BPN from their NPO.

Deliverables from Step 1.2

NPO client organizations committed to participate in the BPN.

Step 1.3 NPOs Brief Interested Client Organizations on the Benchmarking Project

A briefing to potential participating client organizations will generally cover the following areas (see the template agenda for briefing in Appendix 5).

- Welcome/introductions (the NPO staff introduce themselves, the purpose of the briefing, the timing, and the agenda and ask participants to introduce themselves)
- Overview of the benchmarking process (brief presentation of benchmarking basics, what benchmarking is, types, pitfalls, success factors, etc.)
- Topic and scope (specific outline of the APO BPN opportunity, feedback on key scope items, and additional scope items that could be added)
- Code of Conduct (the facilitator ensures an understanding of the Code of Conduct enabling free sharing and knowledge exchange in the benchmarking process without jeopardizing confidentiality or competitive position)
- Benchmarking partners and roles, responsibilities, and project outcomes/benefits both locally and across the APO BPN group, and introduction of the methodology to be used

- Discussion of resources required for client organization to conduct benchmarking
- Action plan and timeline discussion, seeking feedback
- Other business. The briefing might conclude with a general feel of whether the client organization(s) is interested in joining and an agreed timeframe for all client organizations to reply

If the NPO is briefing a number of clients together, a coffee/tea break usually about halfway between the 3-hour estimated overall briefing time allows prospective clients to network with each other.

A handout kit of the outline network, any presentation material, the Code of Conduct, a client contact sheet, and a joining form to allow clients to respond easily is helpful. You could use the marketing kit developed for your country.

Appendix 3 provides an example of topics and issues that can be covered at the briefing session with interested client organizations. Appendix 5 gives a sample briefing agenda template.

Roles in Step 1.3

NPOs

- Brief representatives from client organizations in their own country that are good performers regarding the BPN (client organizations are encouraged to provide input to the scope and timelines; this often helps to secure their commitment).
- Give feedback to the NPO WG on additional scope requests from clients.
- Advise the NPO WG on progress and on general feedback from client organizations.

NPO WG

- Provide advice and support to NPOs as required.
- Continually update topic information sheet and contact list and disseminate to NPOs.

Client organizations

Respond to requests for participation in the briefings from the NPO and provide input on scope, timeline, etc.

Topic expert

Be available to assist NPOs at briefings and to assist the NPO WG with the selection of good performing organizations to share their best practices.

Deliverables from Step 1.3

NPO client organizations briefed and able to participate in the benchmarking network.

Template

TITLE OF BENCHMARKING PROJECT STEP 1.3 BRIEFING AGENDA

DATE: _____

TIME: From _____ to _____

WHERE: _____

PURPOSE: To brief potential participating clients

- Welcome
- Overview of benchmarking process
- Topic and scope: discussion of learning needs/scope items for organizations being briefed
- Code of Conduct
- Benchmarking partners and roles
- Resourcing
- Action plan
- Any other business
- Closing

Activity 6

Discuss the criteria for identifying best practice organizations.

Plan and deliver a briefing for clients (part of the planning should include a kit for the clients to take away).

Step 1.4 NPO Follow-up to Maintain Client Commitment

NPOs need to keep in touch with their clients to maintain their interest and commitment to the benchmarking process while other partners in other countries are signing up. This can be done by helping the clients identify their needs, conducting special training, etc.

Deliverables from Step 1.4

NPO client organizations are ready to start the benchmarking network.

CHAPTER 6

STEP 2: CONDUCT PLANNING MEETING

The NPO WG will arrange a planning meeting to ensure that the project scope and timeline meet the needs of participating client organizations (Table 6.1 and Appendix 1, Table 2). This may be combined with the briefing session discussed in Chapter 5.

The key task for client organizations is to select the most appropriate topic for participation in the benchmarking project. To do this, organizations must ensure that the selected topic and subtopics support their business objectives and goals. Their participation will provide value to the organization and gain ownership from stakeholders.

Client organizations should:

- Refer to the organization's corporate plan to understand the future priorities and where the benchmarking improvement focus is needed organizationally.
- Assess the progress of business plan objectives/strategies and contributions to the organization's corporate plan.
- Evaluate current business unit structures, strategies, processes, and management systems to identify potential areas for improvement and their relative urgency. One way of doing this is to use the rigorous structured assessment tool provided by international business excellence frameworks.
- Consult with clients and other stakeholders to determine their view of strengths and weaknesses.

Steps 2.1 and 2.2 Planning Meeting among Client Organizations by the NPO WG to Confirm Scope (Subtopics) and Finalize Plans, Scope, Measures, and Definitions

A planning meeting is usually coordinated by the NPO WG, in conjunction with the NPOs and their client organizations, to:

- Confirm scope/subtopics
- Seek clarification and agreement on methodology adopted
- Confirm project timelines, role of project participants, and benefits of participation
- Develop the data collection process and identify key issues to be covered in the data collection tool (refer to Step 2.3 for more information)
- Decide on the data analysis report format (refer to Step 2.4 for more information).

While the coordination of the planning meeting is the responsibility of the NPO WG, client organizations need to consider the draft items in preparation for the planning meeting. Sometimes some client organizations may not be able to attend the planning meeting, in which case NPOs must collect the relevant information in preparation for the meeting.

The NPO WG determines the planning meeting date based on the level of commitment and interest from NPOs in beginning the benchmarking process. Generally a face-to-face meeting or

sometimes a telephone meeting is called. Appendix 5 gives a sample planning meeting agenda template.

Roles in Steps 2.1 and 2.2

NPO WG

- Convene and conduct planning meeting.
- Appoint expert assistance to provide input on the benchmarking process and data collection tools.
- Draft scope, timelines, data collection process and tools, and report format prior to planning meeting if possible.
- The scope must be based solely on problem areas that are being experienced by client organizations in the participating NPO countries to avoid the topic becoming too broad.

NPOs

- Work with their participating client organizations to ensure that client needs in the scope and subtopics are reflected in the overall confirmed project scope of the APO BPN.
- Represent the needs of clients by gaining information prior to the planning meeting from those who cannot attend the meeting.
- Provide input to the NPO WG regarding local client needs.

Client organizations

Respond to requests for participation in the planning meeting and information required.

APO benchmarking expert

Be available to assist at planning meeting and in preparation for planning meeting.

Topic expert

Be available to assist at planning meeting if required.

Deliverables from Steps 2.1 and 2.2

NPO client organizations have contributed to the scope and timetable for the BPN and the scope and action plan are finalized.

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Table 6.1. Conduct planning meeting

	NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APQ bench-marking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APQ	Clients & NPOs globally	Other
2.1 Confirm subtopics	C	C	C	A	C	I	C	C	I	C	
											<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPOs meet to confirm subtopics or scope issues to be covered to suit needs Some target organizations could also attend the meeting
2.2 Finalize plans for network	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	I	C	
											<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans, process inputs, outputs, and boundaries scope measures and definitions data collection tools aligned to business excellence frameworks data collection process timeline for entire project
2.3 Develop data collection process & tools	I		I	A	I	C	I	C	I	I	
											<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop data collection process and tools based on 2.2 above to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparison of which output performance metrics are used by participating organizations and how they measure these perception survey of employees focused on the importance and performance of practices that comprise the process/topic management survey of how leading practices are done in the organization Gain feedback from some organizations participating in the project
2.4 Decide on data entry/analysis strategy	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	I	C	
											<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and decide on the approach to be adopted, as well as the templates to use for data analysis after the data collection stage

PLANNING MEETING AGENDA

DATE: _____

TIME: From _____ to _____

WHERE: _____

PURPOSE: To finalize the topic, scope (subtopics), and timelines for the benchmarking and prepare to commence data collection

1. Welcome
2. Overview of benchmarking process
3. Draft scope
4. Discussion of topic and scope
5. Benchmarking partners and roles
6. Code of Conduct
7. Resources required
8. Action plan/timeline
9. Discuss data collection process and identify key issues to be covered in the data collection tool(s)
10. Discussion of data analysis report format
11. Any other business
12. Closing

Activity 7

Work with client organizations to achieve the deliverables for steps 2.1 and 2.2 using the agenda template. Why did you choose this topic/process for a benchmarking study? What potential impact does it have for the client organization and the APO BPN? What are the scope (learning needs) items? What is the timeline?

Code of Conduct

It is important to stress that a prerequisite for being an APO BPN member is to abide by the Code of Conduct. A summary of the Code of Conduct is shown here and a sample full Code of Conduct is given in Appendix 4.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- **Keep it legal**
 - **Be willing to give what you get**
 - **Respect confidentiality**
 - **Keep information internal**
 - **Use benchmarking contacts**
 - **Do not refer without permission**
 - **Be prepared from the start**
 - **Understand expectations**
 - **Be honest**
 - **Follow through on commitments**
-

Responsibility of the NPO WG and NPOs

NPOs and the NPO WG must ensure that partners abide by the Code of Conduct, constantly reinforcing it at every opportunity throughout the APO BPN.

Steps 2.3 and 2.4 NPO WG Develops Data Collection, Process, and Data Collection Tools and Determines Data Entry/Analysis Strategy

The planning meeting of client organizations provided the opportunity for client organizations to consider key issues, scope items, and other input for the data collection process. Below are some pointers for deciding which data to collect and practical data collection issues. Refer to Appendix 6 for templates for the data collection process and data collection tools.

Deciding which data to collect

Two types of data are collected in a benchmarking project: numeric (quantitative) and qualitative. The numerical data are indicators of relative performance. Selected numerical comparisons are a good guide to comparative performance and should help to identify the high performers. The qualitative data describe each organization's practices. They describe the systems and processes behind the performance described by the numerical data.

Step 2.3 – Data Collection

Two types of data to collect:

- **Numerical (quantitative) data are indicators of relative performance**
 - **Quantitative data describe each organization's practices**
-

Guidance on how to select appropriate and useful data

General points about selecting data

Partners need to discuss numerical and qualitative performance measures bearing in mind the project's intent. Make sure the performance data you select are measures for products and services that relate to client requirements. The focus of all benchmarking should always be on alignment with corporate goals and outcomes for the organization.

The data you gather should present an integrated and balanced view of performance in the topic area. Take care to select data that will provide a holistic picture rather than an unrepresentative view of the topic area. Make sure that you have both numerical and qualitative data for each topic area. Measure your strategic success as well as the efficiency of your processes.

Data collection can be time-consuming and expensive and you need to ensure that it is focused correctly. Take care when selecting the data to be collected. Make sure that you know how the analysis will be undertaken. If you will require assistance with the analysis, seek this help before you define and commence data collection. Never undertake data collection without keeping the end purpose in mind and knowing how you will use and analyze the data. Be careful not to spend too much time on quantitative data, since it is easy for the data collection activities to dominate the process and consume large amounts of time and resources. Too much detailed data will make it difficult to “see the forest for the trees.”

Selecting numerical data

Numerical data are quantitative measures of performance or importance. They are collected either as raw numbers or ratios. They can include measures of speed and accuracy in processing transactions, as well as client satisfaction data.

When using numerical data to assess relative performance, be certain that you are comparing “apples with apples.” Different organizations have different methods for compiling what appear to be the same data. If you want to compare numerical data, you may have to modify the way you collect, compile, or analyze them. At the very least, you should understand the differences so that you know how real the differences in performance are. Include a definition page in your survey to specify exactly how the performance data must be calculated and collected.

Quantitative data can help identify differences in performance among organizations and hence priorities for improvement. However, quantitative data provide little insight into the reasons for those differences and do not indicate how to achieve better performance. Benchmarking (as distinct from the numerical benchmarks) will enable you to identify the practices and processes behind the numerical data and the differing performance and then to work toward a better way of doing things.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data comprise descriptive information about processes, systems, and practices that provide insight into the reasons for the quantified differences in performance and explain how the better practices work. Qualitative data enable you to learn how to improve. Qualitative data describe the “how-to” of various practices, such as the process and content of your partner’s strategic planning function or how your organization communicates performance management goals.

Data collection tools

Numerical and qualitative data can be obtained from a variety of sources, including published information such as annual reports or by using a benchmark data supplier with a historical databank drawn from a range of organizations. In most cases, however, you will need to compare performance results with benchmarking partners through specific data collection exercises. Some forms of data can be drawn from each partner’s system reports or existing management reports. Other methods for gathering information include mail surveys, telephone interviews, focus groups, research groups, and site visits.

A mail survey is a traditional data collection method that is relatively inexpensive. It suits large groups and situations where respondents are dispersed. Clear instructions are essential, particularly when dealing with regional stakeholders. Survey instructions should include a brief project summary, anticipated outcomes, when and how the data are to be returned, what will happen to the data, how the findings will be shared with respondents, and how the organization will involve staff in the project. This enhances shared understanding and the level of commitment and improves respondent return rates. Mail surveys are not interactive and often do not provide the opportunity for feedback and free expression.

Telephone interviews provide a quick snapshot of performance and are inexpensive. They are more interactive than mail surveys but have a number of potential pitfalls, such as finding the right person, limited time, and incomplete information. Telephone interviews are good for collecting some quantitative measures of performance, such as rating client perceptions on a scale of client satisfaction or knowledge.

Focus groups work well with a skilled facilitator and suit projects focused on very specific topics with a small number of stakeholders. They can verify information, soft issues, and relationship measures, but they can be expensive and time-consuming. A good supplement to focus groups is a survey. Asking participants to complete the survey before leaving the room

will improve return rates.

External research groups or consultants can facilitate data collection where large amounts of data are involved. External comparisons can be made using a consultant's comparative database. Impartiality makes collection of the softer issues easier, but this method can be expensive and reduce staff ownership.

Site visits provide a forum for the collection of numerical and qualitative data. They are addressed in detail in the following section as a means of sharing information with partners. However, they can be equally useful for the collection and definition of data.

Other measures using new technologies may be useful, including videoconferencing or Internet surveys. These are useful for linking geographically dispersed respondents, but they may demand compatible equipment and/or software.

Practical collection issues

Collecting, collating, and analyzing data from different sources can be a complex logistical exercise. The table below contains the key practical issues benchmarking partners need to address before signing off on their data collection design.

Steps in finalizing data collection tools:

- Draft survey
- NPO WG for each topic completes draft survey
- Draft survey discussed with client organizations by NPO WG
- Clients examine survey and give NPO WG the new survey and NPO feedback
- NPO WG finalizes printing of survey and distributes to clients (via NPOs) for clients to complete.

Develop Data Collection Process and Tools, and Decide Data Entry/Analysis Strategy: Issues for Consideration

- Cover scope and enablers of scope in data collection tools
- Understand the form of analysis and reporting first
- Care with numerical data (compare apples with apples, not apples to oranges)
- Reach the best practice enablers
- Useful to compare and contrast which numerical measures are used and why, rather than try to compare the results
- Include collection of qualitative data (how practices are done related to scope)
- Tools include surveys (staff and client) by mail, telephone, self-completed questionnaire, focus groups
- Keep it simple, effective in achieving objectives, with logical flow and low resources
- Have all partners agreed on the numerical and qualitative data to be collected?

- Is each partner able to contribute the agreed data?
- Do any of the data, particularly the numerical data, need more detailed definition to ensure that all partners have a clear understanding of the measures to be collected? Is the language clear?
- Can all the data be collected from existing processes in all partner organizations or is process modification necessary?
- Are data collection methods and instructions defined? For example, has a sampling approach been agreed on?
- How will the data analysis be undertaken? Does the data collection method support the intended analysis?
- Have data analysis report formats, graphs, and statistical methods been discussed and agreed on by the partners?
- Has each partner's role in the data collection and analysis phase been agreed on?
- Who will coordinate the data gathering and collect the data from all other partners?
- Who will coordinate the analysis and feedback on findings to the partners?
- Have the partners agreed on any necessary confidentiality, privacy, or anonymity provisions? (see Code of Conduct, Appendix 4)
- Is the timing for the data collection agreed on?

Roles in Steps 2.3 and 2.4

NPO WG

The NPO WG will guide the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools as described above.

Survey instructions/guidelines to communicate the instructions to ensure that the data collection process is consistent are necessary. Comparable returned survey sample sizes and a reasonable data collection period are also of importance to ensure that no special-cause variation influences the returned survey data.

The NPO WG is required to listen to the scope and key issue needs of the client organizations and reflect them in the design of the data collection tools in conjunction with the NPOs. Expert facilitators in this area can assist where appointed.

APO Benchmarking Expert

Be available to assist in the design of data collection tools and the data analysis strategy as required. Can also offer comparison with international historical data.

Topic Expert

Be available to interpret the scope feedback from clients.

Deliverables from Steps 2.3 and 2.4

Data collection tools consistent with the scope developed and agreed on and data entry and analysis strategy agreed on.

Activity 8

Work with client organizations to decide on the most appropriate types of data collection tools to use and also decide on the data analysis strategy. Why did you choose these tools and this strategy? What potential impact does it have for the client organization and the APO BPN?

Appendix 6 shows the pros and cons of adopting the following three different types of data collection tools:

- Qualitative process owner survey
- Staff perception survey
- Key performance indicator (KPI) survey covering the KPIs or measures that client organizations are using and defines how they are measured.

CHAPTER 7

STEP 3: COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA

Steps 3.1 to 3.3 Working Group to Arrange Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

The NPO WG (with support from NPOs) must maintain constant liaison with client organizations during the data collection phase (Table 7.1 and Appendix 1, Table 3) to ensure that none is lagging behind as this will delay the data analysis stage and be unfair to those clients who submitted data on time. Ensure that the directions for the return of data are clear and ask clients to keep a copy of submitted data in case they are lost during the delivery process.

After the data are collected, they are returned to a central location as advised by the NPO WG for data entry, collation, and analysis. Combining the data to compare performance should be straightforward, provided that the data formats and methods are determined by the partners prior to data collection. The NPO WG will arrange for analysis. Blind historical data may also be provided. The client organizations will receive benchmark reports from the quantitative and qualitative survey data showing their comparative performance.

NPO support may be required to facilitate the timely transfer of data to the NPO WG for analysis. The analysis should draw on outstanding or leading practices for other partners to learn. A customized report should be provided to NPO client organizations showing specific strengths, opportunities, and recommendations to consider in the sharing and learning process. NPOs should ensure that their local participating clients have received and understand the reports.

Steps 3.2 and 3.3 Data Analysis and Report on Leading Practices

The data analysis is to be conducted by the NPO WG with the support of the NPOs for the purpose of reporting comparative strengths/opportunities and guiding partners to focus on closing performance gaps and ensuring that learning needs are met.

What is a best or leading practice?

- A best practice will initially be identified by a strength identified during data analysis will need to be verified and explored in more detail.
- Best practices are often “best” in the eyes of others. Ask client organizations and your colleagues in your NPO/NPO WG/topic experts.
- It is something that client organizations view as useful to learn about.
- It can be something unique or different that others do not do.
- It is not only a plan or concept but something that is used well throughout the organization.
- It can be something that is demonstrated by measurement to contribute to business outcomes or the achievement of the organization’s goals and strategies.

- It is something that the organization is continually improving.
- Often organizations are unconsciously competent and you must ask them to explain their practices because they often “just do it.”
- Do not be afraid to ask your peers, co-workers, clients, other NPOs, or apex bodies to identify best practices.

Some questions you can ask:

- What do you do to accomplish the topic/scope of benchmarking?
- How do you do it?
- How do you know how well you do it?
- What have you recently improved about what you do and how you do it?
- Describe what you do
 - Describe your practices
 - How are the practices implemented?
 - What are the key factors for the successful implementation of the practices?
- How has the organization benefited?
- Which problems has the organization experienced in implementing and using the system, and how have these problems been overcome?
- How does the organization measure the results/effectiveness of the system (which measures / metrics are used?)
- Which recent improvements has the organization introduced to the system, and why were these improvements carried out?
- What further improvements has the organization planned for the system, and why are these improvements needed?

Step 3.3 – Data Analysis Reporting

Data analysis report to include:

- **Executive summary**
 - **Background**
 - **Survey tools**
 - **Methods of collection**
 - **Representation of responses**
 - **Description of analysis**
 - **Results**
 - **Priority performance gaps to consider**
-

Roles in Steps 3.1 to 3.3

NPO WG

The NPO WG will arrange for the data to be returned for analysis and will arrange for the analysis and reporting to be carried out. It will then distribute reports to all participating organizations and relevant NPOs.

APO Benchmarking Expert

Be available to assist in the analysis and reporting. Can also offer comparisons with international historical data.

NPOs

Be familiar with own clients' reports.

Deliverables from Steps 3.1 to 3.3

NPO client organizations have collected data, the data have been analyzed, and reports on leading practices have been developed and communicated.

Appendix 7 provides examples of the types of data analysis reporting that can be considered.

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

Table 7.1. Data collection and analysis

Comments/Tasks														
A Accountable for C Communicated with and involved I Informed after														
	3.1 Collect data	NPO's own country	C			C	A	I	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other
		NPO clients												
		NPOs globally												
		NPO WG	C											
	3.2 Analyze data						A		C					
	3.3 Prepare report on leading practices	I	I		A	I	C							

CHAPTER 8

STEP 4: LEARNING FROM LEADING PRACTICES AND SHARING

The next specific steps (steps 4.1 to 4.3) in the methodology framework involve the sharing of best practices and the facilitation of learning among the NPOs and their client organizations (Table 8.1 and Appendix 1, Table 4). This is carried out through a learning workshop.

STEP 4 – Learning & Sharing

- **Strengths & opportunities**
 - **Sharing knowledge**
 - **Site visits**
 - **Reporting**
-

The steps for the NPO WG are:

4.1 Plan for learning workshop.

4.2 Conduct learning workshop.

4.3 to 4.5 Compile and distribute report on best practices after receiving client agreement.

Client organization partners will review their own data collection reports. The reports can provide the numerical data of the higher-performing partner(s), and partners can study these to determine the corresponding qualitative data to determine if they explain the context and how the organization achieved its results. Client organizations, by reviewing the reports, determine whether the partner organization's leading practices are relevant to their own organizations. If there are insufficient supporting qualitative data, they seek more information from the benchmarking partners via the NPOs and NPO WG. Client organizations are asked to verify the strengths and advise the NPO WG if the data collection reports are in any way misleading.

The NPOs should ensure that clients approach this part of the process objectively. They should recognize their organization's opportunities for improvement as well as comparative strengths. They should determine the better practices that they would like to learn.

Step 4.1 Plan for Learning Workshop

The NPO WG can facilitate collection of learning needs and communicate an agenda of

learning themes and processes for sharing strengths via a learning workshop. A meeting should be held with client organizations and facilitated by NPOs in their own country to discuss strengths, opportunities for improvement, and learning needs. The NPOs themselves will also input learning needs of other organizations in their country who are not participating in the BPN. The learning needs and strengths from each participating country are to be submitted to the NPO WG by each NPO.

The NPOs should identify which key participating client organizations should attend the learning workshop to ensure that their best practices are identified and shared. The NPO should also take steps to ensure that their key participating client organization attends the learning workshop. This could include gaining sponsorship from within the country for attendance costs and helping clients to structure and prepare their presentations.

Strengths and opportunities (gaps) are prioritized among all countries by the NPO WG. This results in an agenda for the learning workshop. The purpose of the learning workshop is for partners to share their strengths based on the predetermined learning needs. A template for the learning workshop Agenda is given under Step 4.2. This is usually a facilitated one- to two-day face-to-face workshop.

Template

Name of participating client organization with strengths :

[illegible]

BENCHMARKING PROJECT LEARNING NEEDS

Template

Name of participating client organization producing the results : _____

Learning opportunity (nature of opportunity in 1 brief sentence)	Priority (L, low/M, medium/H, high)	Participating client organizations (our network partners) who might be able to assist
.		
.		
.		
.		
.		
.		
.		

Step 4.2 NPO WG Conducts Workshop

The purpose of the learning workshop is to understand:

- the partners' strengths
- what they do well
- how they do it
- how staff are involved
- the roadblocks to avoid
- the critical success factors, and
- the measures.

Information sharing should be limited to processes and systems. If confidential or sensitive information is involved, it should be identified and treated accordingly.

The NPO WG will arrange for facilitation of this workshop. Key findings from the workshop are identified and reported, including the benefits for each organization. One activity of this workshop is to determine further learning needs and opportunities for site visits if appropriate. Site visits are optional for client organizations. Site visits can be expensive, but very useful (for some topics like client call centers) to see the environment and meet the people within the outstanding practices. See Appendix 9 for more information on site visits.

Collection of feedback for workshop evaluation is also useful for the purpose of continuous improvement in the way the workshops are conducted and for gathering information on any issues missed or not discussed thoroughly during the workshop so that these can be addressed in the follow-up actions. A workshop report is prepared by the NPO WG and is distributed. A sample report template of best practices arising from the workshop is given in Appendix 7.

Steps 4.1 and 4.2 NPO WG Plans and Conducts Learning Workshop

Roles in Steps 4.1 and 4.2

NPO WG

- Plan and conduct the learning workshop so that best practices can be shared and to support the process for clients to identify best practices.
- Seek feedback on the benchmarking process.

NPOs

- Work with participating client organizations in their own country to ensure that they can adequately interpret the data analysis reports to identify their best practices and learning needs.

- Submit to the NPO WG the learning needs of other nonparticipating clients in their own country.
- Secure leading clients to present their leading practices at the workshop.
- Attend the learning workshop.

Client Organizations

- Identify strengths (and learning needs) so that they can share their best practices (and learn from others) at the learning workshop.
- Present their leading practices at the learning workshop.
- Attend the learning workshop.
- Provide feedback on the benchmarking process.

APO Benchmarking Expert

Be available to assist in the interpretation of the data analysis and to facilitate the learning workshop.

Topic Expert

Be available to assist in identifying best practices and to add value at the learning workshop.

Deliverables from Steps 4.1 and 4.2

Leading practices are shared and learned through a workshop conducted by the NPO WG.

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

Table 8.1. Learning from leading practices

		NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other	Comments/Tasks
		A			A	A	A	C	C				
4.1 Plan for learning workshop													<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPOs in their own country work with participating client organizations to identify strengths for sharing and gaps for learning and also identify gaps for learning among other nonparticipating client organizations in their own country and submit these strengths and gaps to the NPO WG NPOs identify their key participating client organizations, i.e., those with the best practices, and ensure that these organizations attend the sharing and learning workshop NPO WG drafts and finalizes the workshop program at the APO BPN level to learn and share best practices identified
		C			A	C	C	C	C				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop attendees are NPO representatives and some key participating organizations. All participating client organizations and participating NPOs should attend Participants share strengths in a facilitated 1–2–day workshop. Key findings from the workshop are identified and reported Feedback regarding the workshop and benchmarking process to date from workshop participants is obtained and collated
4.2 Conduct learning workshop													<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile and distribute report on the leading practices identified based on workshop findings. The report also covers the guidelines identified for the adoption of best practices by organizations
4.3 Compile and distribute report on best practices		C			A		C		C				

Further workshops/site visits if required, repeating steps above.

LEARNING WORKSHOP: BENCHMARKING NETWORK

Location: _____

Date: _____

List key learning scope for workshop

- A: _____
- B: _____
- Discuss what works well, issues and problems, and how to overcome them

AGENDA

- 09:15 Welcome/introductions/workshop preview
- 09:30 Topic 1, presenter, organization—key learning points
- 10:30 Tea break
- 11:00 Topic 2, presenter, organization—key learning points
- 12:00 Topic 3, presenter, organization—key learning points
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:15 Facilitated workshop discussion of leading practices among participants. You will not only learn from the speakers but also other workshop participants about their leading practices linked to your improvement issues. You will also learn about the issues and leading practices discovered in workshops in other benchmarking networks.
- 15:30 Tea break
- 15:50 Topic 4, presenter, organization—key learning points
- 14:40 Sharing of learning, feedback, next steps
- 17:00 Closing

Structure for Leading Organization Presentations

1. Introduction to the organization: name, key products or services offered, major markets, principal client types, number of employees, turnover last financial year (US\$)
2. Reason for adopting the system in the topic area
3. Objective of the system
4. Overall description of the system

5. Leading practices adopted
 - What are the practices?
 - How are the practices implemented?
 - What are the key factors in the successful implementation of the practices?
6. Benefits to the organization from adopting the system
7. Problems the organization has experienced in implementing and using the system, and how these problems have been overcome
8. How the organization measures the results/effectiveness of the system (measures/metrics used)
9. What recent improvements the organization has introduced to the system, and why these improvements were carried out
10. What further improvements the organization has planned for the system, and why these improvements are needed

Steps 4.3 to 4.5 NPO WG Compiles and Distributes Draft Report on Best Practices, Gains Approval from Clients, and Distributes Final Report

Based on the workshop materials, research report, and detailed information sought from leading organizations and any site visit information, the NPO WG will prepare a report on best practices and distribute this report for approval by clients. A template showing the possible headings for the draft report on best practices is given below.

<i>Template</i>	
TOPIC: BENCHMARKING NETWORK	
Best practices report contents Executive summary Introduction to the topic and benchmarking Key findings Network methodology	
PARTICIPANTS: APO, NPO WG, NPOs, and participating client organizations	
Section 1	Introduction/background to the BPN
Section 2	Scope and learning needs
Section 3	Key learning points by network participants (see structure for leading organization presentations)
Section 4	Challenges, emerging issues, and lessons learned

Appendices

1. Profiles of project participants
2. Network methodology
3. Further reading and references
4. Blinded results from survey analysis

Roles in Steps 4.3

NPO WG

- Draft the report on best practices including the guidelines for identification of best practices.
- Have the report approved by clients and disseminate report to NPOs and clients.

NPOs

- Work with client organizations in their own country to gain approval of the report on best practices.

Client Organizations

Review and approve the report on best practices.

APO Benchmarking Expert

Be available to assist in the writing of the report on best practices.

Topic Expert

Be available to assist in writing of the report on best practices, adding topic expertise value to the report.

Deliverables from Steps 4.3 to 4.5

The NPO WG compiles and distributes a best practices report that has been approved by participating client organizations under the Code of Conduct.

Activity 10

Develop an agenda for a learning workshop and review the headings for the best practices report.

CHAPTER 9

STEP 5: INTEGRATE LEARNING AND TAKE FOLLOW-UP ACTION

The specific steps to be undertaken after the learning workshop are:

- NPOs to disseminate findings
- NPOs and participating organizations to follow up on the findings
- Participating client organizations to develop and implement action plans for improvement.

Step 5.1 NPOs Disseminate Findings

NPOs should make appropriate use of the best practice reports in their own countries (e.g., by sharing the best practices with other organizations in the country) (Table 9.1 and Appendix 1, Table 5). The recommendation part of the benchmarking methodology also encourages participating client organizations to seek feedback and consultation from within for action planning.

Step 5.2 Follow up on the Findings in Client Organizations

NPO client organizations could revisit the range of stakeholders they originally identified for the project. The findings and recommendations may represent a shift in thinking for them and new stakeholders or new impacts may have emerged. It is vital that all key stakeholders accept the recommendations, and client organizations may need to develop a communication plan to address this. In preparing their own final reports, client organizations should consult with all stakeholders, including staff in the benchmarked area. Benchmarking team members should also consult with all those within the client organization who are likely to be affected by the changes recommended. The feedback obtained may result in modifications to the recommendations, the way they are implemented, their timing, and the proposed tasks and actions involved. Consultation will ensure that staff affected by the proposed changes have ownership of the final recommendation plan.

Communication must continue once the recommendations have been approved. Regular progress reports may need to be provided on the implementation of the recommendations. During this phase, NPOs should keep in touch with their clients to try to ensure that the learning is being developed into action plans and to determine whether further learning is required via within-country workshops or site visits.

Step 5.3 Develop Action Plans (Client Organizations with Support from NPOs)

An action plan report to the organization is essentially a business case for implementing recommended changes, based on a report of the benchmarking project's methodology and findings.

Some key points for client organizations are:

Make sure that the client organization considers and discusses the implications of people changing roles and skills and new structures and systems. Its recommended strategies will

be based on the best practices of benchmarking partners, adapted to their organization. The action plan report will provide background on involvement in the network, benchmark status comparisons with others, learning needs, and what was learned from whom. The recommendations component of the report will cover impacts on KPIs and expected improvements. Include the detailed communication plan developed above.

Articulate how the benefits will be realized and what tools will be required (e.g., business process reengineering). Make sure you include a robust cost-benefit analysis for your proposed changes. Specify the people, time, and technical resources needed to implement improvements. If you are proposing significant changes that will require long lead times or substantial resources, it is wise also to propose some short-term improvements that can happen immediately. Include an implementation plan that you can use as a working document, including a realistic timeframe and a monitoring strategy.

Client organizations develop their own action plans for implementation. Clients also submit their action plan presentations regarding learning and action plans to their NPO. These may form a basis for the optional action workshop. Client organizations share their action plans at the workshop, which is coordinated and facilitated by local NPOs. NPOs at respective workshops capture key findings and agree on a remeasurement (if appropriate). Feedback is also collected and evaluated. An action plan workshop report is also prepared and distributed by the NPOs.

Activity 11

Identify ways you might as an NPO disseminate findings from the best practices report and how you might further assist and follow up with clients.

Implementation within client organizations

The client organizations are now in a position to implement the action plan recommendations. A benchmarking project may result in a range of implementation activities which varies in scope. At one extreme, there may be a few simple process changes with minimal impact on staff. At the other extreme, there may be changes in organizational structure or the implementation of new systems. This will have very different implications for the benchmarking team and the organization as a whole.

Roles in Steps 5.1 to 5.3

NPOs

- The NPOs disseminate the best practices reports in their own countries including to participating organizations that did not attend the learning workshop. NPOs use their own existing dissemination channels or can develop new channels with their own clients in their own country.
- NPOs also need to follow up with their participating client organizations to identify and meet further learning needs if required, and to monitor and assist their clients to develop action plans for improvement and implementation.

NPO WG

Support NPOs as required with information and expertise.

Client Organizations

- Ensure that they identify further learning needs and develop improvement action plans for implementation.
- Support local NPOs in disseminating best practice findings in their own countries.

APO Benchmarking Expert

Be available to assist NPOs and NPO client organizations.

Topic Expert

Be available to assist NPO client organizations with topic expertise.

APO

Disseminate best practices report and findings through normal channels.

Deliverables from Steps 5.1 to 5.3

NPOs have disseminated best practice findings in their own country and NPO participating client organizations have sufficient learning, have developed improvement action plans, and have commenced implementation.

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

Table 9.1. Integrate learning and follow-up

Comments/Tasks												
A Accountable for C Communicated with and involved I Informed after												
5.1 Disseminate findings on best practices	NPO's own country	A	C	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other
5.2 Follow up with best practice organizations (if required)	NPO's own country	A	C									
5.3 Develop action plans and implement	NPO's own country	C	A									

A *Accountable for*
C *Communicated with and involved*
I *Informed after*

CHAPTER 10

STEP 6: REVIEW AND FORWARD PLANNING PROCESS

The review will validate the benefits realized for NPOs, their countries, and participating client organizations; suggest other opportunities for improvement; and possibly identify ways of improving future benchmarking projects (Figure 10.1, Table 10.1 and Appendix 1, Figure 2 and Table 6). This structured review will be a formal agenda item at each BPN workshop meeting. NPOs will also be asked to share their experiences in benchmarking locally at each BPN workshop. NPO client organizations may have the opportunity to share the gains and problems encountered in implementation of the action plans, either at a workshop or via a report. The NPOs and their client organizations should also plan for their own ongoing international networking and collaboration so that the momentum of the network is not lost in the future.

Steps 6.1 to 6.4 Reviewing the Benchmarking Project and Process and Forward Planning

An important final step before concluding the benchmarking cycle is to review what went well and what could be improved in the methodology for the next cycle. It is important to do this as soon as possible after Step 5 to ensure that important impressions and considerations are not forgotten. Consider issues such as the cost of the exercise, appropriateness of the benchmarking methodology framework, selection of data for comparisons, usefulness of data analysis, optional site visits, etc. Consult with client organizations to obtain their views, either directly or by means of a simple survey instrument.

Once NPOs have conducted their assessment, the NPO WG can adapt the methodology for the next benchmarking exercise and provide guidance and feedback to others planning to undertake benchmarking. Each NPO should report to the NPO WG on benefits and outcomes based on feedback from NPO clients (see the benefits/outcomes template below). The NPO WG will evaluate the benchmarking process and update the best practices report for that topic as necessary.

Activity 12-1

Review this training in a similar way as you might review the BPN. What are the steps you would take in the review? What are the results?

Activity 12-2

In addition, another important step for NPOs and client is planning for ongoing collaboration in networking and sharing and learning on the topic. In this planning, consideration should be given to the role of the Internet and e-benchmarking.

Activity 13

Discuss and document how ongoing international networking and collaborative sharing and learning might be undertaken and the role e-benchmarking might play. Develop a draft action plan for how NPOs and client organizations might do this on their own.

Roles in Steps 6.1 to 6.4

NPOs review the benefits and outcomes and the benchmarking process itself and report to the NPO WG. This will usually involve seeking feedback from their own local client organizations.

The NPO WG evaluates feedback on the benchmarking process and recommends improvements.

Client organizations provide feedback to the NPO in their own country regarding the benchmarking process and outcomes.

APO benchmarking experts update the methodology framework and training based on the review.

NPOs and client organizations plan for ongoing networking and collaboration on the topic.

NPOs and the APO will determine new topics (including scope, composition of project teams, and topic information sheets) for the next APO BPN project.

Deliverables from Steps 6.1 to 6.4

The NPO WG received feedback from all participating NPOs on the achievement of the project objectives and the benchmarking methodology framework and made recommendations for improvement.

NPOs and their client organizations developed and implemented their own action plan for ongoing international networking and collaborative sharing and learning on the topic, including the use of e-benchmarking.

NPOs and the APO determined new topics (including scope, composition of project teams, and topic information sheets) for the next APO BPN project.

Project Topic: _____

REPORT ON BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES: COMMENTS ON ACHIEVEMENT OF BENCHMARKING OBJECTIVES

- Identify where global best practices reside and what was achieved.
- Which key best practices for your country and clients were identified, and what were the outcomes?
- Support the transfer of best practice knowledge to countries and clients of NPOs and position NPOs as leaders in knowledge transfer by asking:
 - To what extent was this achieved and what were the key things learned in your country/client organizations?
 - What role did the NPO play in the knowledge transfer?
 - How effectively was the role undertaken?
 - What were the outcomes of the knowledge transfer?
 - Are there any other activities/tasks that the NPO can undertake to support the knowledge transfer?
- Comments on the benchmarking process itself, i.e., gain feedback regarding:
 - methodology framework steps;
 - timeliness;
 - facilitation;
 - ability to network;
 - learning about best practices;
 - ability of the NPO to fulfill its role;
 - ability of clients to develop and implement action plans;
 - value of learning to client organizations;
 - what went well; and
 - what should be done differently next time.

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

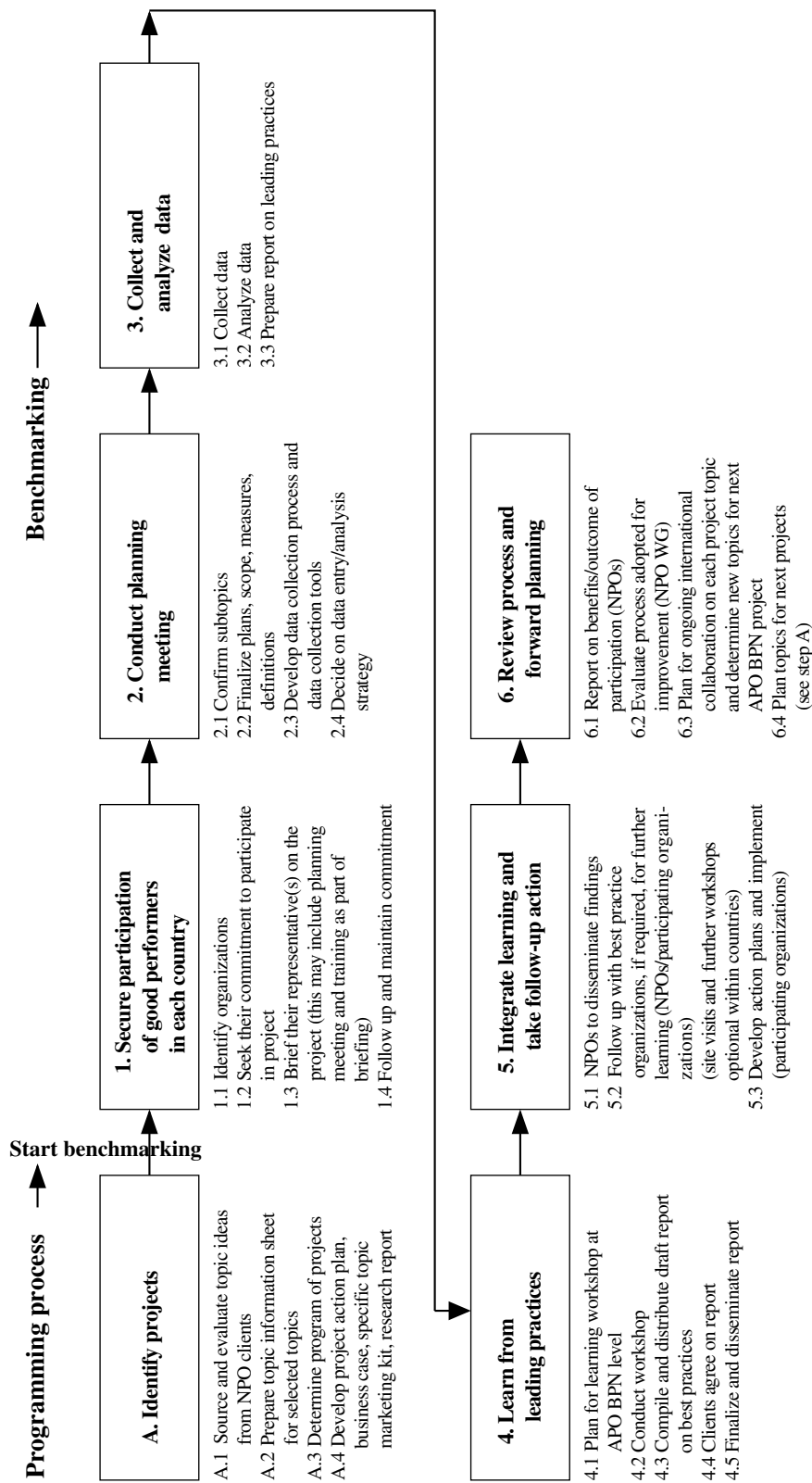


Figure 10.1. Overview of benchmarking process: Step A to Step 6

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

Table 10.1. Review process and forward plan (Step 6)

Comments/Tasks												
		NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other
<div>6.1 Report on benefits/outcomes</div>		A			C							
					A							
			C		A				I			
			C		A				I			
<div>6.2 Evaluate process adapted</div>					A							
<div>6.3 Ongoing international collaboration on each project topic</div>			C		A				I			
<div>6.4 Plan for next APO BPN topics</div>			C		A				I			
		<div><div>A Accountable for</div><div>C Communicated with and involved</div><div>I Informed after</div></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">NPOs to report on benefits/outcomes of participation for their client organizations and participating firms in their countryNPO WG to evaluate process adopted for improvementsNPOs and their client organizations plan for ongoing international networking and collaborative sharing and learning on the topicAPO and NPOs determine the next projects; topics, scope, composition of project teams, and topic information sheet for each topic										

A Accountable for
C Communicated with and involved
I Informed after

• NPOs to report on benefits/outcomes of participation for their client organizations and participating firms in their country

• NPO WG to evaluate process adopted for improvements

• NPOs and their client organizations plan for ongoing international networking and collaborative sharing and learning on the topic

• APO and NPOs determine the next projects: topics, scope, composition of project teams, and topic information sheet for each topic

Appendix 1

APO BPN Methodology Framework

APO Best Practices Network Methodology Framework

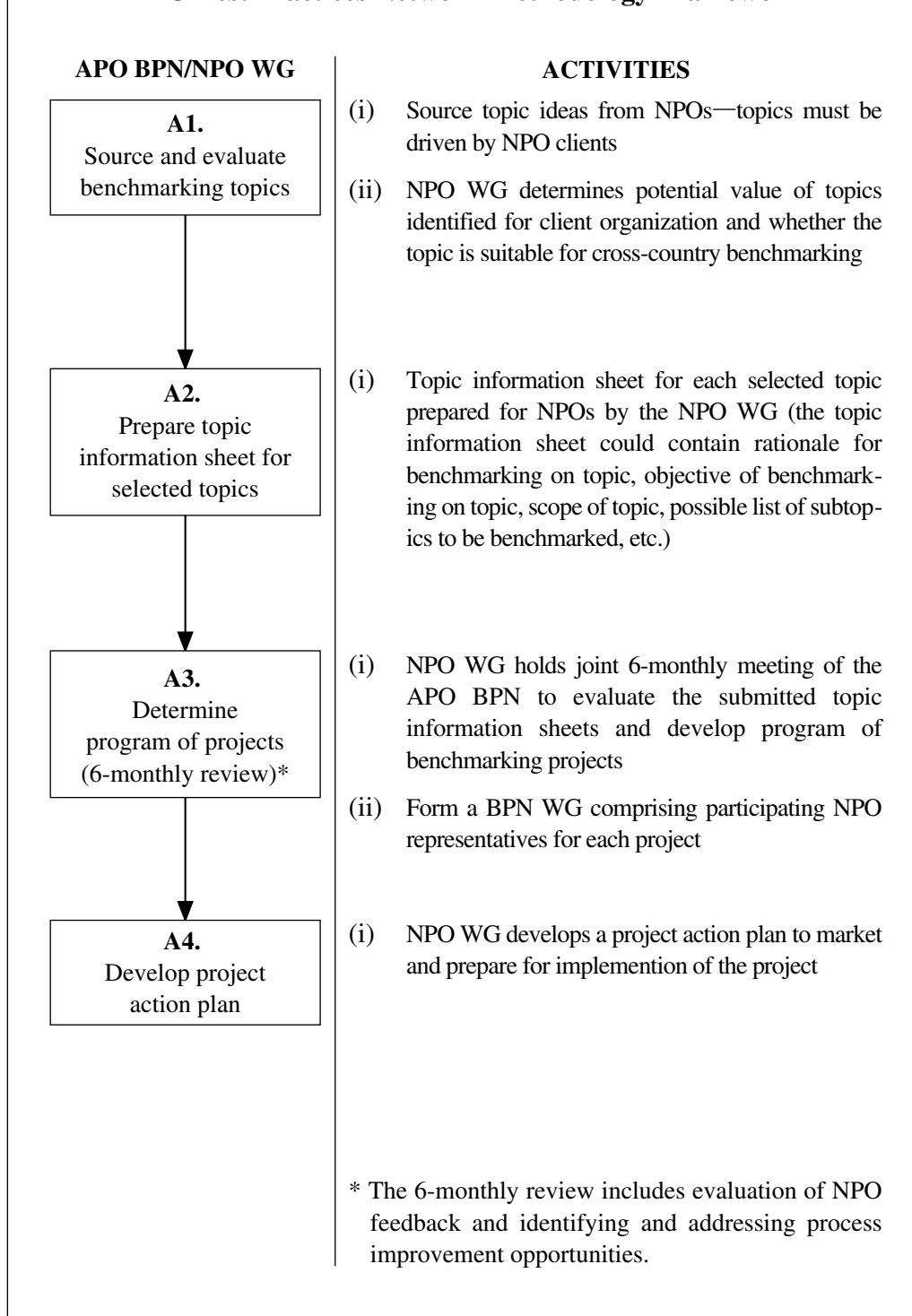


Figure 1. Best Practices Network Programming Process

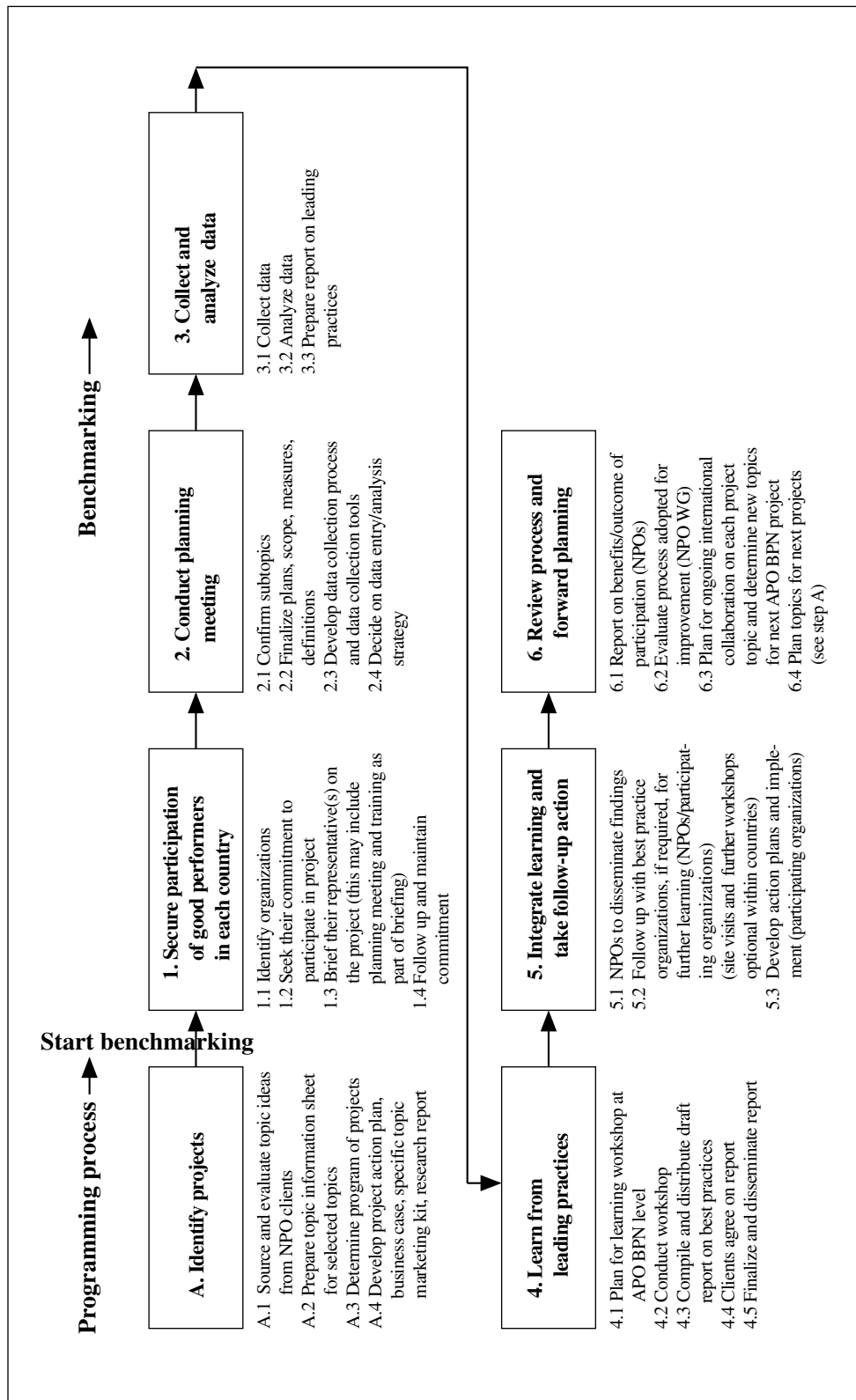


Figure 2. Overview of benchmarking process: Step A to Step 6

Table 1. Securing good performers (Step 1)

	NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other	Comments/Tasks
1.1 Identify organizations	A			C								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify good or high-level performers in own country on the topic Screening criteria could be used to identify these organizations
1.2 Secure commitment to participate in project	A			C	C							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPOs to secure commitment of these organizations to participate in project NPO WG to prepare project marketing information to help NPOs secure participation of these organizations NPOs to report to NPO WG on the number of organizations participating
1.3 Brief representative(s) on project / 1.4 Maintain commitment	A			C	C	C	C	C	I	I		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a short briefing session for representatives from participating organizations to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concept of benchmarking methodology and scope Code of Conduct data collection process and tools This may include planning meeting (see Step 2) and training Step 1.4 involves the NPO maintaining client commitment to benchmarking while the network is being formed
A Accountable for C Communicated with and involved I Informed after												

Table 2. Conduct planning meeting (Step 2)

	NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	AP0 bench-marking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	AP0	Clients & NPOs globally	Other
2.1 Confirm subtopics	C	C	C	A	C	I	C	C	I	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPOs meet to confirm subtopics or scope issues to be covered to suit needs Some target organizations could also attend the meeting
2.2 Finalize plans for network	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	I	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plans, process inputs, outputs, and boundaries scope measures and definitions data collection tools aligned to business excellence frameworks data collection process timeline for entire project
2.3 Develop data collection process & tools	I		I	A	I	C	I	C	I	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop data collection process and tools based on 2.2 above to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparison of which output performance metrics are used by participating organizations and how they measure these perception survey of employees focused on the importance and performance of practices that comprise the process/topic management survey of how leading practices are done in the organization Gain feedback from some organizations participating in the project
2.4 Decide on data entry/analysis strategy	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	I	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and decide on the approach to be adopted, as well as the templates to use for data analysis after the data collection stage

Table 3. Data collection and analysis (Step 3)

Comments/Tasks												
3.1 Collect data	NPO's own country	C	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other
					C	A	I	I	I	I	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Follow up, give advice to customers, and check progress
					A		C					<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze data collected in their own countries to identify the leading best practices and benchmark performance levelsAnalysis of perception survey data optional (if perception survey is used)
3.3 Prepare report on leading practices		I	I		A	I	C					<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare report on leading practices and benchmark performance levels against organizations participating in own country
A Accountable for	C Communicated with and involved	I Informed after										

Table 4. Learning from leading practices (Step 4)

	NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other	Comments/Tasks
4.1 Plan for learning workshop	A			A	A	C	C	C				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPOs in their own country work with participating client organizations to identify strengths for sharing and gaps for learning and also identify gaps for learning among other nonparticipating client organizations in their own country and submit these strengths and gaps to the NPO WG NPOs identify their key participating client organizations, i.e., those with the best practices, and ensure that these organizations attend the sharing and learning workshop NPO WG drafts and finalizes the workshop program at the APO BPN level to learn and share best practices identified
4.2 Conduct learning workshop	C			A	C	C	C	C				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop attendees are NPO representatives and some key participating organizations. All participating client organizations and participating NPOs should attend Participants share strengths in a facilitated 1–2–day workshop. Key findings from the workshop are identified and reported * Feedback regarding the workshop and benchmarking process to date from workshop participants is obtained and collated
4.3 Compile and distribute report on best practices	C			A	C	C		C				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile and distribute report on the leading practices identified based on workshop findings. The report also covers the guidelines identified for the adoption of best practices by organizations
A Accountable for C Communicated with and involved I Informed after * Further workshops/site visits if required, repeating steps above												

Table 5. Integrate learning and follow up (Step 5)

	NPO's own country	NPO clients	NPOs globally	NPO WG	Clients involved	APO benchmarking expert	Sponsor	Topic expert	APO	Clients & NPOs globally	Other	Comments/Tasks
5.1 Disseminate findings on best practices	A	C		C	C	C	C	C	A			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPOs to disseminate findings on best practices to participating organizations that did not attend the learning workshop APO/NPOs to disseminate findings on best practices to organizations in their own country through existing channels
5.2 Follow up with best practice organizations (if required)	A	C		C	A	C		C				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPOs/participating organizations to follow up with participating best practice organizations for further learning, if required
5.3 Develop action plans and implement	C	A		C	C	C	C	C				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating organizations develop their action plans for improvement of the plans
<div> <div>A Accountable for</div> <div>C Communicated with and involved</div> <div>I Informed after</div> </div>												

Table 6. Review process and forward plan (Step 6)

[illegible]

Appendix 2

Sample Topic Information Sheet

PROGRAMMING PROCESS TOPIC INFORMATION SHEET

Balanced Scorecard Project

RATIONALE

- BSC is one of the key strategic tools in implementing strategy and performance management
- BSC is becoming a common corporate mandate
- Strategy management and deployment are common areas of weakness in the business excellence framework

SCOPE

- Approach and methodology: how the BSC is implemented and deployed
- Resource and technology exploitation: how IT is utilized, how improvement is managed, HR organizational improvement, infrastructure
- Life cycle management: tracking and review mechanism for continuous improvement

INDUSTRIES TO BENEFIT FROM BSC PROJECT

- Potentially all enterprises in any industry interested in effective use of the BSC in strategy planning and deployment will benefit from the findings of this project, for example:
 - telecommunications
 - utilities
 - banking
 - manufacturing and service

OUTCOMES

To enable enterprises to achieve and maintain competitiveness by learning about best practices in design and implementation of the BSC through:

- better deployment of the scorecard
- better planning and performance management
- integration of IT to enable BSC use

Appendix 3

Sample Briefing Session with Clients

Briefing Session with Clients

Balanced Scorecard Project

WELCOME

- Introduction of the NPO
- Introduction to the APO Best Practice Network
- Purpose of briefing
- Timing
- Agenda
- Participant introduction

OVERVIEW OF BENCHMARKING PROCESS

Objective

The APO BPN will assist participating client organizations of NPOs to:

- identify where global best practices reside
- gain useful knowledge on global best practices that will help them to achieve superior performance
- acquire and apply best practice knowledge, including how to perform benchmarking

OVERVIEW OF BENCHMARKING PROCESS

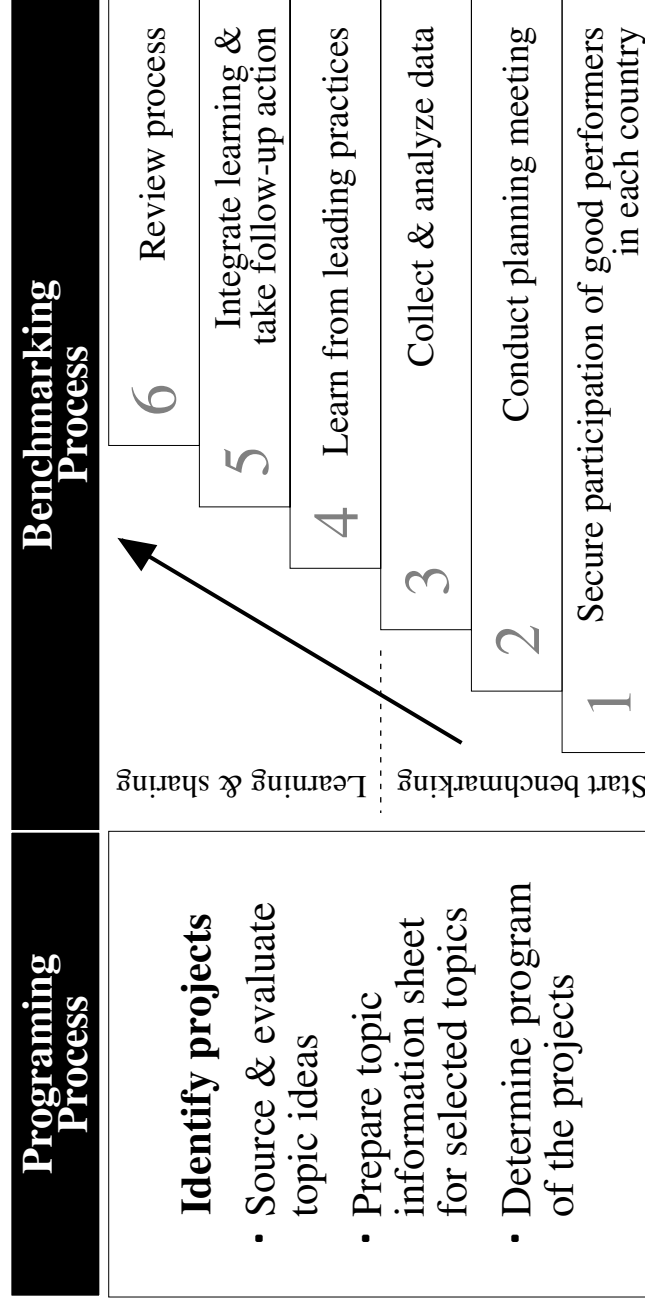
What Is Benchmarking?

Benchmarking is a process allowing an organization to:

- *identify,*
- *adapt, and*
- *implement*

best practices through sharing and learning.

APO BPN Methodology Framework



TOPIC AND SCOPE

- What participating organizations can gain
- Discuss topic and scope as given in the topic information sheet
- Ask potential participants for feedback on the scope: are those items they are willing to share; are there items they would like to include?

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Keep it legal
- Be willing to give what you get
- Respect confidentiality
- Keep information internal
- Use benchmarking contacts
- Do not refer without permission
- Be prepared from the start
- Understand expectations
- Be honest
- Follow through on commitments

BENCHMARKING PARTNERS AND ROLES

- Criteria for identifying best practice organizations
 - good performance in use of the BSC
 - business excellence awards/industry recognition
 - previously performed benchmarking
 - good reputation in industry
 - known for culture of improvement
- Roles of benchmarking partners
 - commitment to the process and outcome
 - willing to share good practices and committed to implementing relevant findings
 - commitment to providing appropriate resources for participation, e.g., staff time, etc.

RESOURCING ISSUES

- Services of:
 - benchmarking methodology expert (NPO)
 - topic experts
- Sponsorship support for:
 - attending learning and information sharing workshop
- Formulation and availability of data collection tools/format
- Feedback based on summarized sheets identifying self-assessed strengths and weaknesses based on scope

OTHER BUSINESS & CLOSING

- More information and assistance on APO BPN after briefing
- Preparation of help system
- Conclusion of discussion
- Thanks for participation
- Confirm follow-up action(s)
- Suggest/propose subsequent topics
- Activities in preparation for next meeting
- Set time and date for next meeting

Appendix 4

Benchmarking Code of Conduct

Adherence to these principles will contribute to efficient, effective, and ethical benchmarking.

BENCHMARKING CODE OF CONDUCT:

Individuals agree for themselves and their organizations to abide by the following principles in benchmarking with other organizations.

1. Principle of Legality

- 1.1 If there is any potential question concerning the legality of an activity, consult with your corporate counsel.
- 1.2 Avoid discussions or actions that could lead to or imply an interest in restraint of trade, market and/or customer allocation schemes, price fixing, dealing arrangements, bid rigging, or bribery. Do not discuss costs with competitors if costs are an element of pricing.
- 1.3 Refrain from the acquisition of trade secrets by any means that could be interpreted as improper, including the breach or inducement of a breach of any duty to maintain secrecy. Do not disclose or use any trade secret that may have been obtained through improper means or that was disclosed by another in violation of a duty to maintain its secrecy or limit its use.
- 1.4 Do not, as a consultant or client, extend one benchmarking study's findings to another organization without first ensuring that the data are appropriately blinded and anonymous so that participants' identities are protected, or without first obtaining the permission of the parties to the first study.

2. Principle of Exchange

- 2.1 Be willing to provide the same type and level of information that you request from your benchmarking partner to your benchmarking partner.
- 2.2 Communicate fully and early in the relationship to clarify expectations, avoid misunderstandings, and establish mutual interest in the benchmarking exchange.
- 2.3 Be honest and complete.

3. Principle of Confidentiality

- 3.1 Treat benchmarking interchanges as confidential to the individuals and organizations involved. Information must not be communicated outside the partnering organizations without the prior consent of the benchmarking partner who shared the information.
- 3.2 An organization's participation in a study is confidential and should not be communicated externally without prior permission.

4. Principle of Use

- 4.1 Use information obtained through benchmarking only for the purposes stated to the benchmarking partner.
- 4.2 The use of a benchmarking partner's name with the data obtained or practices observed requires the prior permission of that partner.
- 4.3 Contact lists or other contact information provided benchmarking partners in any form may not be used for purposes other than benchmarking and networking.

5. Principle of First Party Contact

- 5.1 Respect the corporate culture of partner companies and work within mutually agreed upon procedures.
- 5.2 Initiate benchmarking contacts, whenever possible, through a benchmarking contact designated by the partner company.
- 5.3 Obtain mutual agreement with the designated benchmarking contact on any hand-off of communication or responsibility to other parties.
- 5.4 Obtain an individual's permission before providing his or her name in response to a contact request.
- 5.5 Avoid communicating a contact's name in an open forum without the contact's prior permission.

6. Principle of Preparation

- 6.1 Demonstrate commitment to the efficiency and effectiveness of benchmarking by being prepared prior to making an initial benchmarking contact.
- 6.2 Make the most of your benchmarking partner's time by being fully prepared for each exchange.
- 6.3 Help your benchmarking partners prepare by providing them with a questionnaire and agenda prior to benchmarking visits.

7. Principle of Completion

- 7.1 Follow through on each commitment made to your benchmarking partner in a timely manner.
- 7.2 Complete each benchmarking study to the satisfaction of all benchmarking partners as mutually agreed upon.

8. Principle of Understanding and Action

- 8.1 Understand how your benchmarking partner would like to be treated.
- 8.2 Treat your benchmarking partner in the way that your benchmarking partner wants to be treated.
- 8.3 Understand how your benchmarking partner would like to have the information he or she provides handled and used, and handle and use it in that manner.

The following benchmarking Code of Conduct was developed by the American Productivity and Quality Center. All organizations undertaking benchmarking should use a similar code as a cornerstone of the partnering process.

BENCHMARKING CODE OF CONDUCT

- Keep it legal
- Be willing to give what you get
- Respect confidentiality
- Keep information internal
- Use benchmarking contacts
- Do not refer without permission
- Be prepared from the start
- Understand expectations
- Be honest
- Follow through on commitments

BENCHMARKING PROTOCOL

Benchmarking Partners:

1. Know and abide by the benchmarking Code of Conduct.
2. Have basic knowledge of benchmarking and follow the benchmarking process.
3. Prior to initiating contact with potential benchmarking partners, they have determined what to benchmark, identified key performance variables to study, recognized superior performing companies, completed a rigorous self-assessment, and are willing to share information.
4. Prepared benchmarking partners have developed a questionnaire and interview guide and will share these in advance if requested.
5. Work through a specified host and mutually agree on scheduling and meeting arrangements.

When the benchmarking process proceeds to a face-to-face site visit, the following behavior is encouraged:

- Provide a meeting agenda in advance.
- Be professional, honest, courteous, and prompt.
- Introduce all attendees and explain why they are present.
- Adhere to the agenda.
- Use language that is universal, not one's own jargon.
- Be sure that neither party is sharing proprietary information unless prior approval has been obtained by both parties from the proper authority.
- Share information about your own process, and, if asked, consider sharing study results.
- Offer to facilitate a future reciprocal visit.
- Conclude meetings and visits on schedule.
- Thank partners for their time and sharing.

ETIQUETTE AND ETHICS

The following guidelines apply to both partners in a benchmarking encounter:

- In benchmarking with competitors, establish specific ground rules first, e.g., "We do not want to discuss matters that will give either of us a competitive advantage, but rather we want to see where we both can mutually improve or gain benefit."
- Do not ask competitors for sensitive data or cause benchmarking partners to feel that they must provide data to continue the process.
- Use an ethical third party to assemble and "blind" competitive data, with inputs from legal counsel, in direct competitor comparisons. (Note: When cost is closely linked to price, sharing data can be considered price sharing.)
- Benchmarking partners should check with legal counsel if any information-gathering procedure is in doubt, e.g., before contacting a direct competitor. If uncomfortable, do not proceed, or sign a security/nondisclosure agreement.
- Any information obtained from a benchmarking partner should be treated as confidential.

Appendix 5

Templates for
Topic Information Sheet,
Briefing Agenda,
and
Planning Meeting Agenda

Step A2 Topic Information Sheet

Topic Title

Introduction and background:

Rationale for selection of topic:

Outcome of benchmarking on the topic:

Scope (specific areas or issues to be covered under topic):

Likely participating enterprises and/or clients:

Likely organizations to benefit from findings (optional):

STEP 1.3 Briefing Agenda

Title of Benchmarking Project:

Date: _____

Time: From _____ to _____

Where: _____

Purpose: To brief potential participating clients

1. Welcome
2. Overview of benchmarking process
3. Topic and scope
4. Code of Conduct
5. Benchmarking partners and roles
6. Resourcing
7. Action plan
8. Data collection and collation of current data
9. Any other business
10. Closing

STEPS 2.1–2.3 Scope and Subtopic Planning Meeting Agenda

Name of Benchmarking Network: _____

Date: _____

Time: From _____ to _____

Where: _____

Purpose: To finalize the scope of topic and subtopic(s) and timeline for benchmarking and prepare to commence data collection.

1. Welcome
2. Overview of benchmarking process
3. Draft scope
4. Discussion of topic and scope
5. Benchmarking partners and roles
6. Code of Conduct
7. Resources required
8. Action plan/timeline
9. Discuss data collection process and identify key issues to be covered in data collection tool(s)
10. Discuss data analysis report format
11. Any other business
12. Closing

Appendix 6

Pros and Cons of Various Data Collection Tools

Qualitative Process Owner Survey	<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to design based on scope and client input • Easy for NPO WG to manage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - only one response from each organization - cut and paste to provide report 	<p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one response from each organization • Need to verify reliability of information • Must manage bias or myopia
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Qualitative Process Owner Survey	<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended and thus able to extract more informations • Organizations are more willing to share • Faster to perform 	<p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-person evaluation and therefore gaps may not be identified • Design may be too general for specific country needs
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Staff Survey	<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less subjective - response from staff • Less chance of bias or myopia • Critical gaps are identified • Deployment of approach can be determined 	<p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis more difficult and costly for NPO WG • Cultural issues (some organizations may not allow) • Time-consuming • More difficult to obtain all responses • Another step required to explore more information on good practices
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KPIs	<table> <tr> <th data-bbox="267 173 432 801">Pros</th><th data-bbox="267 801 432 1756">Cons</th></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="432 173 1192 801"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective (based on fact) • Extensive (not controlled for response) • Good learning for organizations on types of measures and strategies </td><td data-bbox="432 801 1192 1756"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on metrics instead of process • May be “apples vs oranges” • Comparative analysis may be difficult • A lot of effort for “need to know” results </td></tr> </table>	Pros	Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective (based on fact) • Extensive (not controlled for response) • Good learning for organizations on types of measures and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on metrics instead of process • May be “apples vs oranges” • Comparative analysis may be difficult • A lot of effort for “need to know” results
Pros	Cons				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective (based on fact) • Extensive (not controlled for response) • Good learning for organizations on types of measures and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on metrics instead of process • May be “apples vs oranges” • Comparative analysis may be difficult • A lot of effort for “need to know” results 				

Appendix 7

Data Analysis Report Format

Report Format

■ Background

- Introduction to project
- Topic information sheet: objectives, scope, list of participating organizations
- Timetable

■ Survey tools

- Attach the qualitative survey and KPI survey

■ Methodology

- Briefing of process owners
- Surveys/responses
- Discussion meetings

Report Format

■ Compilation of findings

- Compilation of responses per question

■ Staff survey results

- Benchmarks at gaps identified

■ Results

- Findings on best practices by scope/key area

■ Subsequent steps

- Identification of learning needs (what to learn from whom)

Appendix 8

Criteria for Identifying Strengths and Opportunities

Criteria for Identifying Learning Needs (Opportunities)

- **Scope outlined**
- **Gaps identified in perception survey**
- **Observations from qualitative surveys**
- **Detailed feedback collected during marketing and question design**
- **Feedback from verification interviews**

Criteria for Identifying Leading Practices (Strengths)

Match the participating organization's learning needs with the best performance identified in terms of approach adopted, deployment of the approach, and the results/outcomes achieved.

- **Perception survey results (ranking)**
- **Observations from qualitative survey**

Appendix 9

Site Visits

Prior to a site visit:

List the organizations to visit	Choose the right people in each organization to participate. You may want to include people who are not part of the benchmarking team, such as an IT manager. Consider confidentiality issues.
Contact the benchmarking partners	Confirm the details.
Follow up with a written proposal	The proposal should contain background information on benchmarking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your benchmarking strategy • expectations regarding the site visit(s) • proposed questions • timeframe • agenda • information on participants • format for information exchange and use
Outline information you will share and what you want to learn	Distinguish between the quantitative (performance metric) and the qualitative (process) information you have. Be prepared for what your host may want to learn from you and offer a return site visit. Offer to send a copy of your site visit report to your benchmarking partner to correct misunderstandings or omissions.
List your key questions	Send your list to the host organization prior to the visit so that it is adequately prepared and can arrange for relevant staff to speak with you.
Prepare a briefing package	The package should summarize site visit travel details, location, meeting purpose, and organizational information to enhance the perception of your seriousness and professionalism.
Hold a team briefing for staff involved in the visit	Review expectations to ensure that team members determine what the benchmarking partner is doing and why. This confirms each member's roles and expectations.

During the site visit:

Hold an introductory session	If possible, hold an introductory session with the partner's site visit organizer and executives.
Review the benchmarking partner's strategy and processes	<p>This might be in a group or through individual sessions with team members.</p> <p>Ask how they achieved higher performance; determine the key features of their best practices; and find out which activities contribute most to their success.</p> <p>Discuss documents such as strategy papers and flow charts with the relevant staff.</p> <p>Talk to customers.</p> <p>Assess how technology supports the organization's practices.</p> <p>Ascertain if anything went wrong during their improvements which you should avoid.</p> <p>Learn how people, technology, and processes were managed during change.</p>
Ensure that there is a flow of questions and answers	<p>The team leader usually asks prepared questions.</p> <p>Take comprehensive notes.</p> <p>Do not ask your questions parrot-fashion, as it stifles information flow.</p> <p>While being aware of your questions, discuss your organization's practices so that the partner knows you are genuine about a two-way dialogue.</p> <p>Avoid jargon or acronyms unique to your organization, particularly when outside the public sector.</p>
Review your strategy	Review your strategy and processes with the benchmarking partner.
Conclusion	<p>Finish by summarizing the visit.</p> <p>Discuss follow-up actions.</p>

After the site visit:

Debrief as soon as possible after the visit	Review your key findings before the next visit to prevent details becoming confused and key results overlooked.
Review	Review your data and findings with the sponsor and the entire benchmarking team.
Follow up	Follow up points for clarification.
Write to the benchmarking partner	Thank it for its time and information. Send any material you promised.
Provide an initial report to the benchmarking partner	This will ensure that you have reached a common understanding of strategy, processes, and characteristics.
Review the site visit plan	Recommend changes for future site visits to improve your benchmarking methodology.