



New quality instruments supporting the SMEs competitiveness improvement

Authors:

Diana Mura Badea, Constantin Petre, Florin Teodor Tanasescu, Gabriel Vladut, Angela Voicila,
Gheorghe Stefanescu, Aurel Istrate, Despina Duminica, Dinu Mihai Comanescu

Abstract

The Romanian Association for Benchmarking was set up as the result of analyzing the situation from Romania and world wide on improving the organizations competitiveness. Next are presented some relevant issues on this relative new and very interesting field. There have been set up institutes, organizations, Benchmarking units and nets all over the world.

Presentation

The Benchmarking system has been used in all the fields where it was necessary the own assessment of fields, organizations, improving quality and total management. At the level of the European Programs we find the Benchmarking applications in FP 6 and FP 7, in different thematic arias:

- technical-scientific field referring to productivity
- cross national cooperation in research programs and transport policy
- applications on women role in science in Europe
- human resources
- regional development

The existence of a Benchmarking Romanian Net for companies has as objective to encourage all the interested parts to concentrate their efforts for creting a favorable environment where:

- the Romanian companies may be based on reliable, coherent and equal services, in the country and in the whole Union;
- the Romanian SMEs to have access and to be initiated in the benchmarking concepts and services as stimulants for the ongoing improvement;
- to exist better identification possibilities on comparing points and the use of the best practices.

Benchmarking is a world initially used by the topography for " a marked point defining a known or admitted elevation from which may be deduced other elevations" (Webster`s Encyclopedia – unabridged Dictionary of the English language, Portland House, New York, 1989).

This benchmarking description involves the following: Benchmarking has a place in space and it is established by compare and positioning according to a marked, known or admitted point. This means that benchmarking is not necessarily with the highest point (the "best") but with any point choused by the benchmarking agent.

In the business and governmental world made of persons able to change, benchmarking is not static but essentially dynamic: # the marked point defining known or admitted elevation# is modified in time as #the other elevations that may be deduced# .



It is not surprising that benchmarking out of the original interest **started in the business world**, operating in a competitive environment.

In the second part of the `90 benchmarking was adopted by the European Union institutions as well. The so called "strategy from Lisbon" agreed by head of states and governments and also by the European Commission, represents the living expression of the benchmarking type approach. The ambition of making the European Union around 2010 # the most competitive economy based on world dynamic knowledge, able to support the economy improvement with more and better working places and marital social cohesion# involve over passing the actual benchmarking provided by the USA economy.

#The Strategy from Lisbon uses in an explicit way #opened methods for coordinating and benchmarking#.

Definition on benchmarking:

- **benchmarking** is a process of establishing the best;
- **benchmarking** is a part of the Re-engineering or of the initiatives in Improving Quality;
- **benchmarking** is considered a special type of quality management tool;
- **benchmarking** represents an estimation of the performance of a company towards another company in the same field of activity;
- **benchmarking** is a process of organizational changing directed to an ongoing improvement, mainly to the lacks correction;
- **benchmarking** answers the question "which is the reference point we use when we asses the performances of a company?";
- **benchmarking** is not a simple compare between indicators but represents the processes, practices and methods study, used by the performing organizations in the respective field;
- **benchmarking** is a process of ongoing and systematic measurement and of compare the ongoing activity process of an organization with the one of some leaders, no matter where they are in order to obtain information so that the respective organization may act for its performances improvement (David Kearns – the new definition of the benchmarking was published by the American Center for Quality and Productivity in 1992);

At present in Romania 5 benchmarking organizations and one Romanian Association for Benchmarking have been set up /ARoB.

ARoB has included in the status the following activities:

- Forming specialists for initiation, management, accomplishing and implementing the benchmarking projects;
- Identifies the interest arias and realizes data basis;
- Organizes symposia (communication sessions) with international participation;
- Publishes books, magazines, articles;
- Promotes the benchmarking concept, techniques and tools in Romania and creates a portal in the field;
- Trains experts in the benchmarking field;
- Develops the association by registering new members;
- Provides a new service both SMEs and other governmental or non governmental organizations, **benchmarking service**;



- Creates the premises for better performances by identifying and implementing the best practices.

ARoB has been affiliated to an European net "Global Network Benchmarking" GBN located in Great Britain.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. N. Albu, C. Albu, Instruments for performance management, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003.
2. ...in orig...
3. Contract CEEX no. 33/10.10.2005, Setting up a benchmarking net for using the strategic and process benchmark for the economic and trade support, for SMEs/BENCHMARK;
- 4-7 ...in orig...

BIBLIOGRAFIE

- [1] N. Albu, C. Albu, Instruments for performance management, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003.
- [2] H. Kohl, *Process Benchmarking at the German Fraunhofer Information Center Benchmarking (ICB)*, Best Practice Digest, June 2004, pag. 23-27
- [3] Contract CEEX nr. 33/10.10.2005, *Crearea unei rețele de benchmarking în vederea utilizării benchmarkingului strategic, de performanță și de proces în sprijinul reformei economice, comerțului, pentru întreprinderile mici și mijlocii/ BENCHMARK*
- [4] www.apqc.org
- [5] www.assetivity.com.au
- [6] www.pmi.org
- [7] www.icfi.com