

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND BENCHMARKING PROJECT



**A partnering project involving:
The Ministry of Public Safety and
Security–Office of the Fire Marshal,
Municipalities, Fire Departments,
and the Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing**

PROJECT UPDATE NO. 2

Comments from Project Participants

John De Hooge, Deputy Fire Chief, Town of Oakville, who is on the ‘Fire Suppression’ team of the Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project, said “We wanted to create measurements that are common, but all fire departments can’t reach fires in the same amount of time.” He further explained that, using the measurement process, he and his fellow project participants want fire departments to be able to find out if they have the ability to call up an appropriate first response. “Do they have the vehicles?” he asks. “Oakville with its urban mix and Ford Refinery might have needs similar to those of Mississauga and Sarnia. So in those communities we need to build response to meet their needs.” That as he explains involves different equipment and cross training with other fire departments.

Fire department needs from communities across the province continue to play an important role in the Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project. That’s why Dave Carruthers, Fire Chief of the volunteer fire department in Clearview County and member of the project’s ‘Fire Suppression’ team, approached executives of the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario about becoming involved with the project. “We’ve never had measures with which to compare,” he says. He cites a particular need for a stronger inspection program in his area, where inspections are done upon complaint or request only, due to limited resources. He says, “That’s not enough.” Measuring input against outcome (results) would provide him with evidence to make his case and gain the support needed to move forward on a stronger inspection program.

The Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project can also lead to more effective budgeting. Lynn McCoy, Fire Chief, Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department, who is on the Standards and Enforcement Team, provides an example of how fire departments can help municipalities save money by identifying and adopting best practices. “We lease our cars at half price,” he says, “because we offer to put on them ‘courtesy of’ followed by the car dealer’s name. That’s not something one could arbitrarily mandate for everyone. But a ‘better practice’ particularly useful for a community in the north with

limited revenues could end up being adopted everywhere.”

Questions and Answers

1. Who is implementing this project?

The Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project is being funded and facilitated by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM), but is being executed as a partnership between the OFM, municipalities, fire departments and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The project is guided by a steering committee representing key external and internal stakeholders. Members of the four ‘Outcomes and Measures’ teams are drawn from the OFM, municipalities and fire departments, and bring in-depth professional expertise and knowledge to the project. Members of these teams communicate project findings to wider audiences across the province. Feedback from audiences is being used on a continuing basis to fine-tune and evaluate the practicality and usefulness of proposed measures.

2. What benefits does the project produce?

A more objective examination of business results, processes and functions can result in improved service delivery benefits through the adoption of suitable best practices. Performance measurement and benchmarking processes can be a foundation for the adoption of continuous improvement strategies. These strategies focus on user satisfaction, process improvement and employee involvement.

Suggested Reading

Taylor, Sheila. “Benchmarking for Records Management Excellence.” Municipal World, January 2003, pp. 7-10, 30.

For further information on the Performance Measurement and Benchmarking Project, please visit the Web site www.gov.on.ca/OFM/Benchmarking/index.htm.

We welcome your thoughts and ideas. Please contact the Office of the Fire Marshal through the project Web site.