

ORGANISATIE VOOR INTERNATIONALE  
SAMENWERKING VAN DE VERENIGING  
VAN NEDERLANDSE GEMEENTEN  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION  
AGENCY OF THE ASSOCIATION  
OF NETHERLANDS MUNICIPALITIES  
AGENCE POUR LA COOPÉRATION  
INTERNATIONALE DE L'ASSOCIATION  
DES COMMUNES NÉERLANDAISES  
LA AGENCIA DE COOPERACIÓN  
INTERNACIONAL DE LA ASOCIACIÓN  
DE MUNICIPIOS DE LOS PAÍSES BAJOS  
ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО МЕЖДУНАРОДНОМУ  
СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВУ ПРИ АССОЦИАЦИИ  
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# Benchmarking

*Peter Knip,  
director VNG International*

'Participants experience benchmarking as a strong tool to improve the performance of their organisation. They learn from each other by analysing the good practices of other organisations on certain topics. With this information they can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of activities of their own organisation.'

## About VNG International

VNG International is the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. We support decentralisation processes and facilitate decentralised cooperation. We strengthen local governments, their associations, training institutes and decentralisation task forces both in developing countries and in countries in transition. We have project offices in various countries and work with a large group of local government experts with broad international expertise.

VNG International  
P.O. Box 30435  
2500 GK The Hague  
Tel +31 70 373 84 01  
[www.vng-international.nl](http://www.vng-international.nl)



### *Manager Housing, Benchmark Social Housing*

'When we were filling in the questionnaire, we already found gaps in our systems. Based on the experiences of other municipalities we have developed a programme to deal with these gaps.'

### *Coordinator Public Participation, Benchmark Public Participation*

'Often we think the challenges are unique to our municipality. In the benchmark we saw how much we can learn from other municipalities.'

### *Municipal Waste Management Department Representative, Benchmark Waste Management*

'The benchmark gave us a great opportunity to learn and to enhance the performance of our department. Thanks to the benchmark, municipalities can now implement concrete measures to improve their performance.'

**VNG International**  
Benchmarking  
Measure, compare  
and learn  
to improve  
performance



# Benchmark

Benchmarking is a learning tool used worldwide in businesses and governmental organisations to improve performance.

The essence of the method is the comparison of performance indicators with similar organisations and learning from the good practices of others. Therefore benchmarking is a research and learning based improvement instrument.

### VNG International benchmarking model

VNG International developed the VNG International benchmarking model, a benchmarking methodology for local governments and other organisations in developing countries and countries in transition. The model is the result of practical experience with benchmarking and scientific research on benchmarking. Over five years of experience with the model has proven that it is a powerful instrument for capacity building of local governments and other organisations in developing countries and countries in transition.

### VNG International benchmarking model

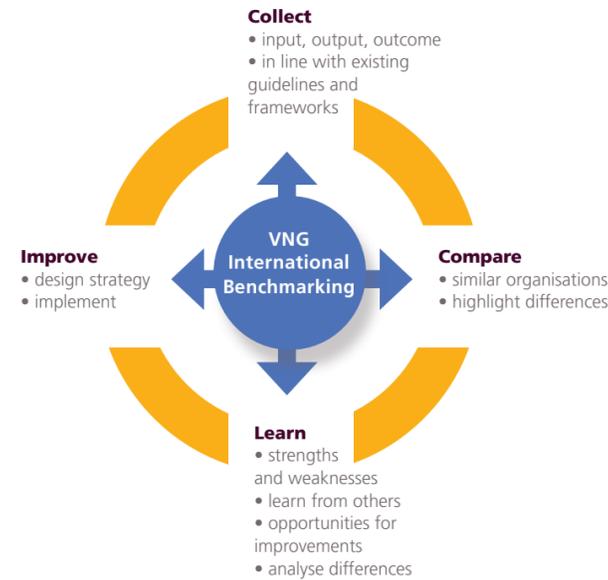
The model consists of four stages. In the *Collect* stage information is collected about the performance of participating organisations on a certain topic. In the *Compare* stage the differences between the organisations are identified. In the *Learn* stage participants analyse these differences and learn from the good practices of other organisations. In the *Improve* stage organisations implement the learned practices and improve their performance.

*'Learning through the sharing of information with other municipalities has enabled municipalities to understand their strengths and weaknesses while incorporating important lessons learnt from peer municipalities. These lessons have led to significant changes in the way municipalities are responding to HIV/AIDS.'*  
External evaluation report of the Benchmark Local Response to HIV and Aids

The VNG International benchmark gives local authorities and other organisations insight in their achievements. It generates information on the *effectiveness* and *efficiency* of their policies and provides practical tools on how to improve their performance. It improves quality and reduces costs of public policies.

The VNG International benchmark:

- *Capacitates organisations to improve the effects and reduce the costs* of their activities
- Gives insight into the *strengths and weaknesses* of organisations
- *Encourages transparency and accountability* as it enables public organisations to inform the public about its achievements



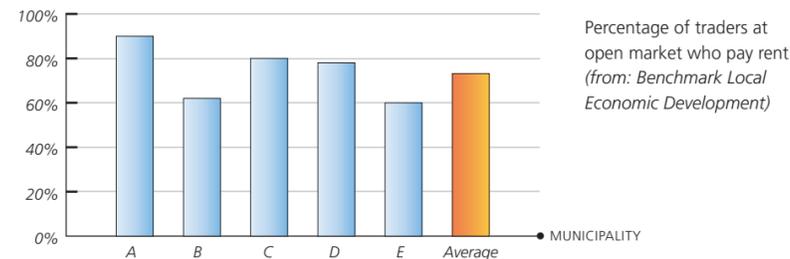
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### More information

For more information contact

- Mr. Nicolas Haezebrouck  
+31 (0)70 373 82 09  
nicolas.haezebrouck@vng.nl

### Examples of reporting in VNG International's benchmarks



Stages of public participation in housing policy  
(from: Benchmark Housing)

Municipality	Policy development	Decision making	Implementation	Evaluation
A	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B	No	Yes	No	No
C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D	No	No	Yes	No
E	No	No	No	No

### What do you receive

Participants of the benchmark receive:

- Insight in the achievements of their organisation in comparison to that of other organisations
- Tailor-made solutions to challenges based on practices of other organisations
- Benchmark meetings with colleagues from other organisations facilitated by benchmarking experts
- A final benchmarking report that identifies opportunities for improvement

### What is needed from participants

As peer learning is a crucial element in benchmarking, full engagement of participants is important. Participants in a benchmark need to:

- Be willing to learn from other organisations
- Be willing to share experiences and practices with other organisations
- Take responsibility for data collection
- Participate in benchmarking meetings

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