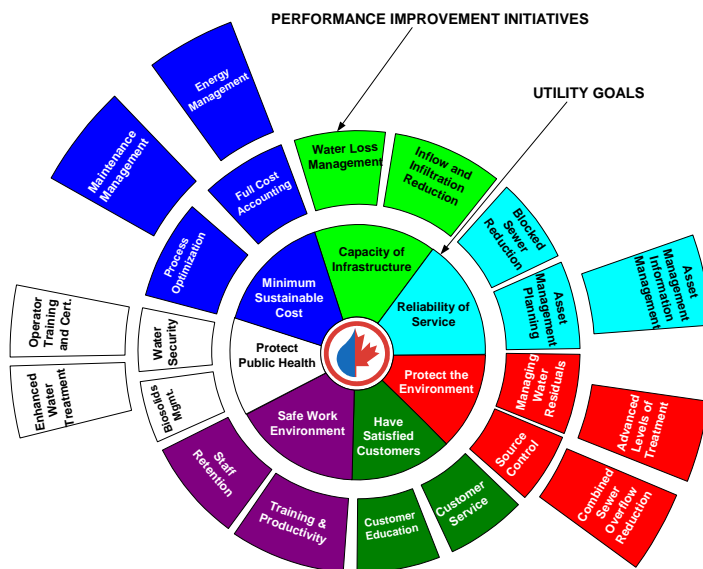


National Water and Wastewater Benchmarking Initiative: 1998 – Present (www.nationalbenchmarking.ca)



Earth Tech developed an ongoing benchmarking initiative that more than 40 Canadian cities and regional organizations are participating in today. The project began as a pilot project in 1997 with 4 participant cities and has grown to the point where the initiative serves as the national standard for water and wastewater utility benchmarking in Canada. The Partnership represents over 50% of the Canadian population and is considered to be the world's most advanced public sector metric benchmarking exercise. The methodology has also been utilized to develop country-specific benchmarking initiatives for South Africa and Malaysia.

The objective of the benchmarking project was to develop a high-level tool or model that the majority of Canadian Water and Wastewater Utilities would accept and use for managing and monitoring their performance. The project originally focused on wastewater collection and treatment systems, and expanded to include stormwater systems and water treatment and distribution systems.

The definition and development of performance measures was a critical step in the benchmarking project. Through consultation and benchmarking workshops, the participants identified performance measures to address issues of cost, reliability, environment and labor. A definition for each performance measure was developed, outlining its purpose and scope.

To ensure that data was collected on a like-for-like basis between utilities on the project, significant effort was placed on the specific definition of each performance measure, and the data was collected by on-site visits and not through questionnaires. The data was entered into a relational database and Earth Tech staff gained significant experience in working with the database and enhancing its capabilities to produce performance measure reports and utility summaries.

While fundamentally a high level metric benchmarking process, the Benchmarking initiative has developed into a network and information base for Canada's most progressive municipal utilities and is now focusing on developing utility specific performance improvement initiatives.

In conclusion, the benchmarking tool developed by Earth Tech assists managers to measure their utility performance and shift to a proactive management philosophy based on continuous improvement towards the utility's goals.



PROJECT DETAILS

Client: Over 35 large municipalities throughout Canada
 Location: Canada Wide

REFERENCE INFORMATION

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PROBLEM

Utility managers had no basis to measure how efficient their organizations were compared to others and whether their utilities were providing value for money to their customers.

CHALLENGES

To develop and collect performance data that allowed "apples-to-apples" comparisons.

SOLUTION

Development of a Business Management Methodology with clearly defined goals and related performance measures.
 Onsite collection of operational and financial information for metric benchmarking.
 Process benchmarking of activities and issues such as infrastructure reinvestment.
 Annual workshops attended by utility managers, aimed at discussing the benchmarking results.

BENEFITS

Utility managers are able to compare their performance with similar entities on a wide range of issues and start the process of continuous improvements in their utilities based on the benchmarking results.