



Learning from benchmarking

Technical workshop on existing initiatives for benchmarking regions on information society
BORDEAUX, 24TH MAY 2004 – Galerie AEC, Cité mondiale, 23 Parvis des Chartrons

The project

The UNDERSTAND¹ project aims at developing a shared list of indicators to benchmark regions on information society (IS), about domains such as internet usage by households/citizens and by companies, e-government, broadband infrastructure. The project partners are 10 regional IS observatories from 7 countries.

Regions invest a significant amount of money on IS policies but lack fundamental tool for governing the process, such as comparative quantitative data to benchmark against each other.

Benchmarking information society is not a new theme. The European Commission has arguably taken the lead in this activity, using it within the “open method of coordination” both on information society (eEurope) and innovation (Innovation Scoreboard, Trendchart). The EC has also co-financed several benchmarking projects, some of which were aimed at providing regional data. Last but not least, many regions have separately carried out their surveys, without harmonising the methodologies and producing non-comparable data.

Why a benchmarking projects’ workshop

UNDERSTAND partners appreciate the work carried out in the past at the European and regional level, and do not want to create “yet another regional benchmarking”. The advantage of developing personalised indicators are insignificant compared to the advantage of having a few good-quality comparable data. However, some modifications and additions to eEurope indicators could be necessary to meet regional needs, such as data on broadband infrastructure at the regional level.

Also, having data is only the first result. How to develop shared and meaningful indicators? How to strike a good balance between supply and usage/impact indicators? How to ensure the quality and consistency of data? How to use benchmarking to support policy-making and evaluation?

The workshop, restricted to actors with relevant experience on benchmarking regional information societies, aims at taking stock of existing experiences. The focus of the meeting is not on projects’ results, but rather and insight on methodological issues, and on the usage of benchmarking data as a tool to “understand” how and why some regions gain more competitive advantage than other by the mature usage of ICT – the “benchlearning” process.

In accordance with the UNDERSTAND matrix structure:

ACTIVITY	DOMAIN	Citizens	Firms	Government	Broadband infrastruct.
Defining indicators					
Survey implementation					
Evaluation and benchlearning					

the interventions in the workshop should focus:

- on domain-specific issues (citizens, firms, government, broadband infrastructure);
- on type of activity (methodologies to establish indicators, how to manage large amount of data, how to use benchmarking for benchlearning etc.)

The workshop is not a one-off exercise, but the beginning of a lasting cooperation between projects.

¹ European regions UNDER way towards STANDard regional indicators for benchmarking information society. Started 1/2/2004 with co-financing from Interreg III C initiative.

Draft programme

Chair: Gareth Hughes, CEO of Eris@

10h00 Introduction

Emilia-Romagna Region, UNDERSTAND lead partner

10h15 Benchmarking methodology and defining “citizens” and “business” indicators

The SOURIR and Sensitic 2 networks

Thierry Ulmet, Aquitaine Europe Communication

Defining key indicators for regional IS benchmarking; the experience of BISER

Karsten Gareis, Empirica

11h15 eGovernment indicators

Measuring e-government and benchmarking : the BEEP project

Jeremy Millard, DTI

Measuring public services and benchmarking e-government

Patrick Wauters, Cap Gemini Ernst & Young Belgium

12h15 Questions and debate

12h45 Lunch

14h30 Measuring the broadband regional infrastructure

The IDATE methodology on measuring broadband infrastructures

Alain Veyret, IDATE

Territorial trends and basic supply of infrastructure for territorial cohesion: the ESPON project

Ranald Richardson, CURDS

15h30 Questions and debate

16h00 Coffee Break

16h30 Conclusion: future development of “benchmarking eEurope”

Guido Acchioni, European Commission

17h00 End of the workshop

18h00 Social event in Bordeaux

Participants

UNDERSTAND Partners²

RCC (Italian Network of Regional Competence Centres) – Stefano Kluzer (scientific coordinator).

Osservatorio Banda Larga (Italian Observatory on Broadband) – Cristoforo Morandini

The participation will be open also to a limited number of interested EU regional stakeholders.

Further information:

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² Emilia-Romagna Region; CSP s.c.a.r.l. (Piemonte); Aquitaine Europe Communication; InvestitionsBank Hessen AG IBH; IBIT Foundation (Balears); OVSI Foundation (Valencian Office for the Information Society); Association of local authorities in the county of Vasternorrland (Sweden); Yorkshire Forward (Yorkshire and Humberside); ISEU, European Business Management School, University of Wales, Swansea; Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Voivodship (Poland)