



## Raising the bar

Dear reader,



It has been an exiting and hectic time for EBC since the last newsletter. In October, the programme was represented at the IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition in Brisbane, Australia. Shortly after, the benchmarking workshops for the Western European group and the Former Yugoslavian countries took place in Poznan, Poland and in Budva, Montenegro. The datasets have been finalised and the final company reports have just been published. Also the public report is under construction and is expected to be ready in the beginning of January. In

other words, it will continue to be busy till the end of the year

Despite these hectic times we should not forget to look ahead to next year. Maybe look even further ahead. As more and more (societal) challenges arise it is important to look at the future. I addressed this important point during my opening speech of the benchmarking workshop for the Western European group in Poznan: *"It is time to raise the bar! Today, it is not enough anymore to supply safe drinking water and collect and treat wastewater in a way that it prevents problems to the environment. Stakeholders expect more from us: utilities should be well managed, climate resilient, provide a sustainable service, contribute to the circular economy and inform their customers in a transparent way, using modern communication technologies."*

EBC aims, also in the new year ahead, to assist utilities in reaching these goals and therefore focus more on the improvement stage of the benchmarking process. We will challenge ourselves next year again to further improve our services and explore which other tools we can offer to support the European water sector in improving their services!

But most important is, to have you involved (again) as we can only help to improve if the sector is involved and participates. Therefore, I would like to invite you and other utilities across Europe to join EBC's next international benchmarking exercise IB2016!

I would also like to use this opportunity to wish you all, on behalf of the IB2015 team, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Enjoy reading this newsletter!

**Mr. Peter Dane,**  
Managing director EBC Foundation

## Benchmarking workshop IB2015 Western European programme

**From 2 - 4 November 2016, participants in the IB2015 benchmarking exercise for Western Europe gathered in Poznan, Poland for the 10th edition of the annual benchmarking workshop. Over 80 utility representatives from around Europe and beyond, including delegations from regional benchmarking hubs in the Danube region participated in an open and constructive atmosphere, with a clear spirit of collaboration and taking lessons from colleagues.**

Aquanet SA (<http://www.aquanet.pl/>), the water- and wastewater company for Poznan, kindly offered to host and sponsor this year's workshop in the fifth largest city of Poland. Over 80 representatives from 18 different countries gathered in Poznan, to discuss the benchmarking results and share good practices. In the inspirational and industrial setting of a completely renovated old printing house the group went through an intensive programme. After a warm welcome and brief introduction by Pawel Chudziński, President of the Management Board of Aquanet SA it was time for Peter Dane, managing director of EBC, to set the scene with a sharp focus on raising the bar.

After Peters' welcome address the participants spread over several parallel sessions in which the assessment results took a central role. From the afternoon onwards the focus slowly shifted towards sharing good practices and improvement measures.



On the second day, after a short feedback session from the moderators of the first day, Marco Beros (European Investment Bank) addressed the view of the EIB on how water-

and wastewater utilities could increase their climate resilience. Marco Beros was followed by Henrik Frier (Aarhus A/S, Denmark) who inspired the audience with a presentation on the transition from energy consumption to energy production at their wastewater treatment plants. The second day was completed with parallel sessions on good practices and knowledge sharing.



*During the workshop a video was made for communication purposes. Please find the impression on our website!*

## EBC and ABF: two years of joint efforts on the benchmarking platform

By: Jeroen de Kort | CEO | ABF Research



Back in 2014 when the Stichting European Benchmarking Co-operation (EBC) and ABF Research (ABF) entered into a partnership for the development of a new benchmarking platform, both parties were not precisely aware of the

challenges they would be facing. With varying participation levels, scopes and languages among participants and EBC's ambition to increase added value for participants' year after year all knew it would not be an easy ride. However, a shared ambition and a mutual feeling of trust provided a strong enough basis to both parties to confidently start working.

Since then a lot has happened. Most results are visible and known to participants, whilst other results contribute to a smoother process without a clear and recognisable impact on the programme's deliverables. While EBC/ABF have sufficient ideas for future developments left to continue working for many years, suggestions from participants are welcomed since EBC prefers to steer innovation and progress based on the feedback of participants.

The co-operation with EBC fits nicely with ABF's mission to support decision-making within public and private clients through the provision of information, research and software. ABF is headquartered in Delft, The Netherlands, home of the renowned Technical University. Its approximately 50 employees are specialised in data collection and organization, statistics and the development of mathematical models as well as software development. ABF focuses on three areas:

- Demography and Housing
- Land use and Economics
- Healthcare and Public Facilities

Next to the services to EBC, ABF supports seven additional benchmarking programmes for water companies.

## European Benchmarking Co-operation - Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

*By: Charlotte Pointon |Regulatory Economist |  
Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water*

Benchmarking is a key tool to compare our performance against other companies to ensure that we are providing a high quality service for our customers at the lowest price. As part of our regulatory framework our financial and operational performance is compared to the

other 9 water and sewerage companies and 8 water companies in England and Wales. We have participated in the EBC for the last four years so that we can benchmark ourselves against a wider range of companies, especially international utilities.

The annual workshop provides an opportunity to discuss the results from the benchmarking report which helps us to understand the differences in measurement and performance.

### Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has been owned by Glas Cymru and run on a not-for-profit basis since 2001 – meaning it has no shareholders and can focus on reinvesting financial surpluses on the business and to benefit its customers. It serves around 1.4 million households and businesses, and more than three million customers in total.

The workshop provides a useful platform to share best practices and experiences. The participation in the EBC has contributed towards several aspects of the business, one example is the ability to benchmark our approach towards domestic metering which helped inform the development of our strategy, resulting in improved operating efficiency.





## Pre-registration IB2016 open

Next year EBC will facilitate the international benchmarking exercise 2017 (IB2016). As already mentioned in the previous newsletter EBC will introduce a new contract model to reduce the administrative burden.

Contract options for 2017 (IB2016) are (including indicative price levels for 2017) for participants in the Western European group with > 100.000 consumers:

1. registration for one year (present option) – 9.500 euro/year
2. subscription until further notice (with the right to end participation annually) – 9.000 euro/year
3. contract for 3 years – 8.750 euro/year
4. contract for 5 years – 8.500 euro/year

### Registration

Interested in participating or looking for more information? Please visit [www.waterbenchmark.org](http://www.waterbenchmark.org) or send an e-mail to [tom.bijkerk@waterbenchmark.org](mailto:tom.bijkerk@waterbenchmark.org)

## IWA - Pi 2017 Specialised Conference on Benchmarking and Performance Assessment

Every two years the IWA Benchmarking and Performance Assessment Specialist Group (BPA SG) organises a conference to present experiences, learn about other benchmarking and assessment projects around the world. The Pi Conference is also a traditional forum for scientists and practitioners from the industry where ideas and methodologies are exchanged. The next Pi Conference will be hosted by the International Association of Waterworks in the Danube Catchment Area (IAWD) from 15 – 17

May 2017 in Vienna.

### Abstract Submission

Applicants are invited to submit an abstract (up to 500 words in English) featuring contributions to knowledge or case studies with value for practitioners facing similar problems elsewhere. All papers submitted will be peer-reviewed by the program committee.

Abstracts must be received by 31 December 2016 via the following link: [www.iwa-pi2017.org](http://www.iwa-pi2017.org). Most likely, the deadline will be extended until 30 January 2017.

## Planning IB2015

- 27/02 Invitation to register
- 15/04 Orientation & training workshop
- 09/05 Data collection
- 15/07-15/09 Data validation & -analysis
- 30/09 Draft reporting
- 03/11 – 04/11 Benchmarking workshop
- 16/12 Final reporting
- 31/12 Project closure

### More information, questions or remarks:

Please visit our website [www.waterbenchmark.org](http://www.waterbenchmark.org) or send an e-mail to [administrator@waterbenchmark.org](mailto:administrator@waterbenchmark.org) if you have questions, suggestions or remarks to share.

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