

Next steps in the review of the benchmarking approach

UKPITG 15/05†

Issue

1. A fundamental review of the benchmarking approach and methodology used within UK Performance Indicators (UKPIs) needs to be progressed during Summer 2015. The UK Performance Indicators Technical Group (UKPITG) are asked to agree a framework for the review process and a schedule for work to progress.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that UKPITG consider the framework proposed to organise the fundamental review of the benchmarking approach.
3. UKPITG are also asked to determine and agree the schedule, distribution and parameters of the work required to support the fundamental review.

Discussion

4. At their meeting in March 2014 UKPITG was asked to consider the appropriate timing of a review of the benchmarking methodology used in UKPIs. The UK Performance Indicators Steering Group subsequently agreed that such a fundamental review needed to begin as early as possible in order to help inform wider in-depth review processes, and UKPITG revisited the matter at their February 2015 meeting.
5. UKPITG has agreed that the review of the benchmarking approach should provide the groundwork in support of both the existing set of UKPIs, any new indicators developed as a result of the in-depth reviews of UKPI areas, and subsequent review of the detailed factors to be included in benchmark calculations for a given indicator. Progress with this review needs to be made during Summer and Autumn 2015 in order to effect change in the 2016 publications of UKPIs, as requested by UKPISG.
6. In February 2015, UKPITG agreed that the review could be separated into distinct parts in order to facilitate the sharing of responsibility among members and the secretariat. It was also agreed that sub-groups would be established in order to progress each area of work. The secretariat has developed the following framework which is proposed to organise the review work.

Work area	Description and activities	Proposed UKPITG subgroup / leads	Comments
(a) Independent assessment of the statistical approach to the benchmarking	Identification and/or commissioning of an academic who can be invited to lead such an assessment. The academic is not expected to undertake the full assessment in	HEFCE / HEFCW, BIS, HESA	UKPITG members have previously been asked to consider any contribution that their organisation may be able to make to the expenses of commissioning an academic to undertake such work. UKPITG may wish to comment on the possibility of issuing a call to

	isolation and UKPITG members may be called upon to provide support: in terms of both financial support and academic expertise.		the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) or the Office for National Statistics (ONS) methodology unit for expertise (including in the identification of an appropriate academic).
(b) Review of the principles employed in the selection of factors to include in benchmarking calculations	Engage with relevant stakeholders and policy/strategic colleagues to review the principles currently employed in the selection of benchmarking factors, and any omissions.	HEFCE, HEFCW, DELNI	A literature review may be incorporated within this area of work. While care needs to be taken not to pre-judge the outcomes of work to review the statistical approach, UKPITG have previously determined that work can commence in relation to known issues and concerns.
(c) Review of the methodology used to define groupings used within benchmarking factors	Incorporate within activities proposed in relation to (b) above.	HEFCE, HEFCW, DELNI	
(d) User consultation with regards to the benchmarking approach used within UKPIs	Identification and implementation of appropriate stakeholder engagement mechanisms	SFC, Welsh Government	

7. As noted in the minutes of UKPITG's February 2015 meeting, on account of a conflict of interest, care will need to be taken to ensure that HEFCE are seen to be engaging independently with the review process established.

Recommendations:

That UKPITG consider the framework proposed by the secretariat to organise the fundamental review of the benchmarking approach.

That UKPITG determine and agree the schedule, distribution and parameters of the work required to support the fundamental review.

Further information

8. For further information contact Alison Brunt (Phone: 0117 931 7166; e-mail: a.brunt@hefce.ac.uk) or Mark Gittoes (Phone: 0117 931 7052; e-mail: m.gittoes@hefce.ac.uk).