

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Greenwich		
Unit of Assessment: 17 - Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Contributing to the success of the Dubai Government Excellence Programme to transform benchmarking capabilities at 11 government organisations, leading to enhanced performance, improved efficiency and significant cost savings.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: February 2013 – May 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dotun Adebajo	Professor of Supply Chain Management	01/02/2013 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: April 2017 – July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>In April 2017, the Dubai Government Excellence Programme (DGEP) launched the second phase of their 'Dubai We Learn' (DWL) initiative, DWL2, in recognition of the need to provide more efficient and effective services to the residents of Dubai. The research of Prof. Adebajo into benchmarking supported DWL2 to adopt this vital tool for performance enhancement in 11 government organisation (GO) projects for organisational learning and improved public services.</p> <p>Impacts leading from this contribution were as follows: (1) DGEP were enabled to develop new capabilities in 11 GOs; (2) The Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER, who applied Adebajo's research in support the DWL2) were enabled to improve benchmarking support services to 11 GOs. Both contributions, directly to the DGEP and indirectly through the COER, contributed significantly the following: (3) All 11 GOs delivered public service improvements and cost benefits, totalling £6m, to Dubai; (4) Dubai Government Human Resources (DGHR) Department launched a HR Think Tank improving Dubai Government's HR policies to better meet performance priorities; (5) Dubai Health Authority (DHA) launched a diabetes prevention programme, subsequently reducing diabetes risk in 70% of treated patients; (6) Dubai Police improved personnel productivity from 40% to 72%.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Over 23 years, Professor Adebajo has developed expertise in benchmarking and facilitating organizational excellence. Benchmarking is a systematic technique that enables organisations to improve performance by adapting best practices identified from other organisations. Adebajo carried out research on sponsored benchmarking projects including the Global Benchmarking Network and the Asian Productivity Organisation. Based on this expertise, and particularly Output 3.1, Dubai Government Excellence Project (DGEP) invited Adebajo in 2016 to participate in the Dubai We Learn (DWL) project and specifically to lead research into success of coordinated benchmarking projects. Output 3.1, conceptualized and led by Adebajo and in partnership with the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER), a benchmarking and business excellence research consultancy based in New Zealand (research arm based at Massey University), identified and evaluated the importance of benchmarking to the public sector. The DGEP is a programme of the General Secretariat of the Government of Dubai with a remit to support other government bodies in improving organizational performance and public services. The DWL initiative was the first-of-its-kind to develop and deploy a co-ordinated set of benchmarking improvement projects across multiple organisations to improve organizational</p>		

learning and various public services. This makes the research that this first phase initiative entailed significant and ground-breaking within the context of benchmarking.

Firstly, in May/June 2016 **Adebanjo** provided research input to four organisations (Dubai Courts, Md. Bin Rashid Housing Estate, Dubai Public Prosecution, Dubai Road Transport Authority) specifically *carrying out informal benchmarking and identifying potential benchmarking partners and best practices*. Secondly, in October 2016, **Adebanjo** was a member of an international panel of judges (with Robin Mann of COER and Arndt Husar – Deputy Director at UNDP) that *analysed 13 benchmarking projects and provided evaluation and feedback to all 13 project teams (3.3 p15)*. Third, **Adebanjo** led research into *analyzing the suitability of benchmarking frameworks for coordinated initiatives; analyzing outcomes and successes of the 13 benchmarking projects; investigating particular factors, at programme and organisation level, that facilitated success of DWL; identifying and analyzing the challenges faced by DWL participants and proposing improvement ideas*. This research happened between July 2016 and February 2017. **Adebanjo** specifically carried out the analysis of the data from the 13 organisations and based on this, **Adebanjo** led the writing of several chapters of Output **3.3** as well as the data analysis and writing of Outputs **3.2**, **3.4** and **3.5**.

Research findings were submitted to DGEP in February 2017 and subsequently published in different forms (**3.2**, **3.3**, **3.4**, **3.5**). Findings from the research as presented in Output **3.3** were an important evidence base in the decision of DGEP to launch a previously unplanned set of 11 benchmarking projects in April 2017 (DWL2). **DWL2** enabled learning from the research indicated to be implemented in the 11 projects. Novel findings from DWL applied to DWL2 related to *mechanisms for enabling success of coordinated benchmarking projects*. Specifically, the research *identified 44 different activities/suggestions (3.3 pp. 87)* including:

- **Desktop research** should be carried out as a complement to site visits
- Each project needs a proper change management strategy to **reduce change resistance**.
- Benchmarking programs must provide **clear descriptions** of proposed actions, resources required, timelines and likely impact.
- It is very important to **capture all ideas for improvement** - ideas may come from team members and stakeholders as well as from benchmarking partners.
- During project implementation it should be considered whether **suppliers or customers could also benefit** by implementing similar actions, and advice and help should be provided to them to do the same.
- Detailed analysis of project benefits, including financial benefits, should be **demonstrated**, even for government projects
- **Reflections** on what has been implemented and learnt should be **used to generate new ideas for future projects**

3. References to the research

1. Tickle, M., **Adebanjo, D.**, Mann, R. and Ojadi, F. (2015) '*Business improvement tools and techniques: a comparison across sectors and industries*'. International Journal of Production Research, 53 (2). pp. 354-370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207543.2014.933274> . Full version available at: <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/12070/> [**REF2 Submission – Identifier 12070**]
2. Al Nuseirat, A., El Kahlout, Z., Abbas, A., **Adebanjo, D.**, Punnakitikashem, P. and Mann, R. (2019) *An analysis of a structured benchmarking project: the case of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority's benchmarking project*. Benchmarking: An International Journal , 26(5), pp. 1431-1450 [doi/10.1108/BIJ-02-2018-0032](https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-02-2018-0032) Full version available at: <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/22233/>
3. Mann, R., **Adebanjo, D.**, Abbas, A., Al-Nuseirat, A., Al-Neaimi, H. and El-Kahlout, Z. (2017) Achieving performance excellence through benchmarking and organisational learning - 13

case studies from the 1st cycle of Dubai We Learn's Excellence Makers Program, DGEP and COER Limited, Dubai. <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/19102/> or <https://blog.bpir.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Dubai-We-Learn-13-Benchmarking-Case-Studies.pdf>

4. **Adebanjo, D.**, Abbas, A., El Kahlout, Z., Al Nuseirat, A. and Mann, R. (2018). *Key Success Factors for co-ordinated benchmarking projects using the TRADE benchmarking Model: Lessons from Dubai*. Proceedings of the 25th Annual EurOMA Conference, Budapest. <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/19664/>
5. Mann, Robin, **Adebanjo, Dotun.**, Abbas, Ahmed, El Kahlout, Zeyad., Al Nuseirat, Ahmad and Al Neaimi, Hazza (2020) *An analysis of a benchmarking initiative to help government entities to learn from best practices - the Dubai We Learn initiative*. In: International Journal of Excellence in Government. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEG-11-2018-0006>

Research quality:

- Outputs 1, 2 and 5: all published in international **peer-reviewed academic journals**, indicating an overall international quality or above.
- Output 4: EurOMA is the **leading international peer-reviewed conference** in the Operations Management field with a typical acceptance rate of 20-30%.

4. Details of the impact

The **Dubai Government Excellence Programme (DGEP)** launched the '**Dubai We Learn' (DWL2)** initiative in early 2017 to foster an organisational learning culture and support innovation and delivery of citizen-focussed services and continuous improvement in Dubai. This was driven by the mission of DGEP to *foster excellence in the delivery of government services*. DGEP themselves state that one of the reasons for applying research informed benchmarking and organisational learning expertise to their government operations was an acknowledgement that 'there is now an expectation that achieving "value for money" in the public sector is business as usual and not an exception or a one-off objective' and that they needed to '*change the way they serve society*' (5.1 pp7). In contributing to the more specific impacts described below, **Adebanjo's** research aided DGEP in fulfilling the more general aims which framed DWL2, in particular to '*become citizen focused and accountable to citizens*'; to '*use technologies that make delivery of government services easier and more convenient for citizens*'; to '*be smart*'; to '*be connected and be seen as one service provider*'; and to '*work with the private sector*' (5.1 pp7)

The **Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER)**, a benchmarking and business excellence consultancy based in New Zealand, was the strategic and technical partner to deliver the initiative. Through the adoption of benchmarking and its ability to improve organisational performance, both DGEP and COER were initial beneficiaries of **Adebanjo's** research. The realisation of those impacts then equipped both organisations to affect positive change for the **11 Dubai government organisations (GOs)** who participated in the second cycle of the DWL initiative (DWL2, 2017–2018).

Initial impacts: The research equipped (1) DGEP and (2) COER to effectively apply benchmarking tools to realise the aims of the Dubai We Learn (DWL2) initiative: to guide 11 Dubai government GOs to improve performance levels

The underpinning research provided **DGEP** with the evidence to confirm that benchmarking could provide significant efficiencies, cost savings, improved citizen services and enhanced skills in GOs. **The research (3.2 - 3.5) formed an important part of the evidence in the decision by DGEP to initiate a second cycle of 11 DWL projects (5.3) leading eventually to the impacts observed in the GOs.** Demonstrating the acknowledgment of the benefits of benchmarking in this decision, and commitment to applying it to their government organisations (GO)s, the DGEP

started off DWL2 in April 2017 stating that *'From DGEP's perspective benchmarking is considered a powerful tool for organizational learning and knowledge sharing' (5.1 pp6).*

DGEP provided financial and infrastructural support for all of these projects to facilitate knowledge exchange not only for themselves, but also for the **11 GOs**. **COER used Adebajo's research to inform their key role of providing technical benchmarking support directly to the 11 GOs.** This knowledge exchange work included *training 71 employees in the GOs on the use of benchmarking techniques, providing information and continually advising and facilitating the 11 GOs in delivering their projects.* The agency role of COER was vital to the practical delivery of the 11 projects and was one of the primary routes through which the research was translated into the expertise provided for these GOs. As an initial beneficiary of the underlying research, **COER made important changes to its approach to supporting benchmarking projects.** Specifically, **Adebajo's** insights helped them *make changes to the priority and timing of desktop research provided to support the 11 GOs (5.2).* *Desktop research was provided in the fourth month of the benchmarking projects and in greater detail in contrast to previous practice of provision in the eighth month. This change resulted in the 11 GOs identifying more improvement ideas and having more time to evaluate and deploy these ideas as presented below.*

Next-tier impacts: The research contributed to the success of the Dubai We Learn (DWL2) initiative to improve performance of the 11 GOs through expertise in, and application of, benchmarking:

The 11 GOs gained direct support from **DGEP** and **COER** to develop benchmarking skills and deploy them to specific projects resulting in cost savings, operational efficiencies and improved public services. As described above, **Adebajo's** research fed into this process through both routes.

(3) All 11 Government organisations (GO)s: The GOs that participated in DWL2 were the following: Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services, Dubai Customs, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, Dubai Government Human Resources Department (DGHR), Dubai Health Authority (DHA), Dubai Municipality, Dubai Police (DP), Dubai Public Prosecution, General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs, and, Knowledge and Human Development Authority. Evaluations of the benchmarking projects by the 11 GOs have determined that collectively, they resulted in ***c GBP6,000,000 financial benefits in the first year (Apr 17 – Apr 18), rising to tens of million GBP in subsequent years (5.1 pp.93).***

Due to space limitations, select impact details of only three of the GO projects are showcased further, as follows:

(4) Dubai Health Authority (DHA): A 2017 study (5.1 pp57) found 15.2% Diabetic prevalence and 15.8% pre-Diabetic rate in the Dubai populace – higher than Oman, Singapore and the UK and leading to high death rates (203 per 100,000 population) from Cardiovascular Diseases linked with Diabetes and Pre-Diabetes. To address this, DHA joined the DWL2 initiative to launch a diabetes prevention programme comprising 5 key initiatives (5.1 pp.55) including the Hayati Diabetes management app (5.4). Between April 17 and April 2018, ***the community awareness campaign increased engagement from 36,739 residents (2016) to 47,303 (2017).*** Over the same period, the pilot prescribing programme led to ***13% of severe risk female participants reducing to moderate risk (5.1 pp.56),*** and two newly established lifestyle clinics treated 158 patients (2018) leading to ***diabetes risk reduction in 70% of patients (5.5, 5.8).***

(5) Dubai Government Human Resources (DGHR): DGHR conducts research and benchmarking studies to update Dubai Government Human Resource law, systems, and policies. Previously, DGHR relied on outsourcing for research or limited in-house capabilities. This approach was incapable of supporting future government needs. Participation in DWL2 was aimed at launching a HR Think Tank to shape the future of the HR profession, define key practices and influence local and regional practices. DWL participation during April 17 to April 2018 enabled

DGHR *to identify 63 improvement ideas (5.1 pp.47) and launch an HR think tank (5.7)* in 2018. By August 2019, the think tank had completed two successful projects to support the HR function across government (5.9)

(6) Dubai Police (DP): In April 2017, DP launched a benchmarking project that continues to improve the maintenance and availability of police vehicles by providing standardized, regulated working hours for each maintenance/repair task. At the end of the DWL2 project (April 2018), **DP's Maintenance Division** (150 workers) had an *increase in daily work hours from 2.4 hours to 5 hours and increase in labour productivity from 40% to 72% (beating a 70% target)*. The same period showed an *increase in vehicle availability from 88% to 95%, saving c GBP 3,000,000 (5.6, 5.10, 5.1 pp.69)*. These improvements are set to be expanded throughout 254 sub-departments of Dubai Police due to sharing the DWL benchmarking experience (5.6, 5.10, 5.1 pp.69).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Mann, R., **Adebanjo, D.**, Abbas, A., Al-Nuseirat, A., Al-Neaimi, H. and El-Kahlout, Z. (2019) *Achieving performance excellence through benchmarking and organisational learning - 11 case studies from the 2nd cycle of Dubai We Learn's Excellence Makers Program*, DGEP and COER Limited, Dubai. <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/26135/> or <https://blog.bpir.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Dubai-We-Learn-2.pdf>
2. Testimonial: Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER), Jan 2020
3. Testimonial: Dubai Government Excellence Programme (DGEP), Oct 2019
4. Website for DHA's Hayati App: <https://www.apkmonk.com/app/ae.gov.dha.hayati/>
5. Press article confirming launch of DHA's Diabetes Prevention Programme: https://www.zawya.com/uae/en/press-releases/story/DHA_develops_award_winning_program_to_prevent_Diabetes_in_Dubai-ZAWYA20180414081704/; (b) <https://gulfnews.com/uae/health/new-clinics-ahead-of-world-diabetes-day-1.1541924187516>
6. Dubai Police Youtube video promoting the benchmarking project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=10&v=OPaM7QLPQRU&feature=emb_logo
7. Dubai Government Human Resources (DGHR) Website confirming launch of Think Tank: <https://www.dghr.gov.ae/en/media/pages/news-details.aspx?NewsId=81>
8. Dubai Health Authority (DHA) blog: <https://blog.bpir.com/benchmarking/dubai-health-authority-still-flying-the-seven-stars/>
9. Dubai Government Human Resources (DGHR) blog: <https://blog.bpir.com/benchmarking/case-study-no-1-dubai-government-human-resources-dghr-still-flying-the-seven-stars/>
10. Dubai Police (DP) blog: <https://blog.bpir.com/benchmarking/dubai-police-still-flying-the-seven-stars/>