



# **ECRF Benchmarking Project Future Work**

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## **FUTURE WORK**

### ***Objectives***

The project “Benchmarking within European Commerce Register’s Forum (ECRF)” was started in September, 2001 and the final report will be presented at the ECRF conference in Sevilla, Spain in June, 2003.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Start the process of comparing the different organizations of registration between the member states in ECRF
- Identify the differences or similarities in the registration processes between the member states
- Finding common questions
- Co-operate about simplification
- To find examples of best practice

The purpose with the project was to find fundamental information of the member organizations and to find some benchmarks.

### ***Introduction***

The commission with a benchmarking within ECRF was delegated to the Swedish Patent- and Registration Office (PRV). The work began with producing a questionnaire in September, 2001 and it was distributed by the end of November, 2001. When the answers started arrive, it became obvious that some of the questions had to be more specific and defined. Because of that, a revised questionnaire was produced and returned by the end of May, 2002.

The questionnaire contained questions about the registration organization and the activities within the organization by examining four chosen types of business enterprises. The same type of business enterprises was also chosen in the project ‘Benchmarking the Administration of business Start-Ups’. One reason to choose these four types of business enterprises was that they exist in almost every member organizations and their legal definition is comparable inbetween the states. Another reason was to have the possibility to compare these two different projects with each other.

The first report from the project was presented at the ECRF Conference in Tromsø, Norway in June, 2002. During the following ECRF General Meeting, PRV got the mission to suggest a possible way to continue the benchmarking work.

### ***How to continue***

If the ECRF decides to continue the work with the benchmarking, the suggestion is to first decide why a benchmarking should be done at all. The experiences, so far, show that such a decision is very helpful during the work. There is a need for input when constructing the questionnaire, during the following discussions with the recipients and finally, during the analyses of the answers.

There is also a need to decide, whether it is the benchmarking process itself, that is the most important or the answers. Of course, both could be considered important, but again it will help the project if it is known where to put focus. ECRF has to decide, as the “owner” of the project, if the members of the organisations really are interested in the answers and how they will use them. Again, it could be

interesting just to collect information, but the objectives of the study were more extensive as you read above.

The responsibility for deciding these goals are of course ECRF's, but the main responsibility for its fulfilling must be the Board. Since the ECRF organisation is rather big, the Board also has to act like a Steering Committee for the project. There must be someone that the Project Group could discuss with and also to report to. This will become even more important if there will be a budget for the project.

One other important item is that all members must answer the questionnaire. There might be a need for some "letter of intent" or something similar, to all members in ECRF, because it can not be the responsibility for Project Group to ask over and over again for answers. The idea should be to receive an answer from EVERY member state.

### ***One suggestion***

The next step for a new Benchmarking Project could be to continue with collecting some of the information that is necessary for the benchmarks and create new key numbers to measure these two goals of ECRF;

- creating an efficient environment for starting-up and developing innovative businesses, especially Small and Medium sizes Enterprises (SME:s), and
- simplification of regulatory environment in order to reduce the administrative burdens on businesses.

The starting point of the work should of course be the results of the questionnaire used during the first project, but the first mission could be to check if the questions and thus the answers in the questionnaire put focus on the goals mentioned above. One main purpose should be to find questions that could be interesting to ask during a period of years, as a suggestion every second year.

One other part of the work could be to create new key numbers to measure the two goals mentioned above. Already at this point, it is of a great value to know why this benchmarking is done. It will give a chance to ask the right questions and also how to frame them. Already at this point, there is a need to know how the results should be presented and what the expectations of the work are. It is quite different to ask questions about subjects that should be compared to each other, than to ask questions about something that should be described to come to many peoples knowledge.

The questionnaire should contain about the same amount of questions as the previous one.

One open question is if the work also means to complete the results of "Benchmarking the Administration of business Start-Ups". There are still answers missing from some countries to make that complete.

### ***Organisation***

To be able to do this work, a Project Group need to be established and a Project Leader must be appointed. The Project Group should be a quite small group, maybe like the first time; just two persons.

The important thing is to establish a reference group with five to six participants that can take the time for doing the work needed to be done and have a possibility to participate. The Project Group should have the main responsibility for constructing the questionnaires and to do the analyses. The members in the reference group should be able to participate in a first discussion about the questionnaires and they should also be part of the work with the analyses of the results.

## ***Budget***

So far, the Benchmarking Project has been going on without any economic contributions at all. It might not be possible to continue like this, because some countries will be contributing a lot and some not at all. To be able to do a good work, there is a need for money. Even if there can be some work done using e-mail, telephone conferences and so on, there is also a need for at least one, maybe two meetings together with the reference group. As during the first benchmarking project, there could also be a need for a meeting with all the answering countries. These costs might be easier for each country to plan for, but the costs for the Project Group (two persons) should be covered in a budget.

It is clear, that there are costs for travel, but there are also costs for doing the job. The first project is estimated to at least three man months work, and it is not for free! It will not be possible to continue without paying for the job.

## ***Time Plan***

The first step should be for the ECRF Board to come up with a written Project Directive. At the same time, a Project Group (including a reference group) should be appointed and a budget and the forms of financing of the project should be decided. If the ECRF meeting in Sevilla gives this mandate to the Board, this could be done quite fast and the work could start in September, 2003.

The questionnaire could be sent out November-December, 2003 and the analyses could be done during next spring, 2004. The goal should be to have the next report at the next ECRF Conference. Then it will be a period of two years between the Benchmarking Projects.

This time plan means that the people appointed and the answering members must be aware of their responsibility, since it is the basis for a successful project!!!