Project Brief

TIP 436: EPRI - Sustainability Benchmarking for Utilities

Context

Companies across many industries are increasingly working to understand how to meaningfully track sustainability performance over time and relative to peers. There are a growing number of third-party reporting “standards” companies can follow and an equal number of private consultants offering benchmarking services. Under all of these approaches, specific metrics are used to identify priorities and trends, communicate with stakeholders, track performance against company goals, and compare to peers. It is important under any benchmarking effort to use metrics that properly compare information that was collected using similar methods.

Project Description

The Benchmarking Project builds off the metrics research undertaken through Energy Sustainability Interest Group (ESIG), providing an opportunity to test their applicability, technical validity, and significance. Each year project participants submit their performance data to EPRI’s online platform to benchmark with industry peers.

The online benchmarking platform contains a set of sustainability metrics identified as most relevant to the industry by EPRI and ESIG. The database allows users to benchmark their sustainability performance data against other companies who participate in this project and with themselves from year to year.

Additionally, the database has the capability to run annual comparisons, trend analysis, metric-by-metric summaries, filter results to compare companies with similar characteristics, and many other analyses, all in one platform.

This year the project has four main tasks:

1. **Enhance Online Benchmarking Platform Capabilities**
   Project participants identify and recommend new or evolved capabilities for version 6.0 of the benchmarking platform. It is possible that a new software platform will be considered.

2. **Update Online Benchmarking Platform**
   This task focuses on the engineering, coding, and technical build of the online platform.

3. **Submit Data and Perform Benchmarking**
   Project participants have the option to submit data via the online platform and run reports to compare to other companies who also submit data. A formalized EPRI confirmation and data correction process will be undertaken prior to opening the database to participants for graphing and reporting.

4. **Benchmarking Forum Conference**
   Project participants may attend a Benchmarking Forum, where funders can review and discuss the benchmarking results and learn from companies that excel in different performance areas.

Why It Matters

The plethora of metrics in use in the electric power industry have created a heavy burden of reporting. This burden translates into business and customer cost, and may make it difficult to understand and prioritize sustainability performance issues.

This Benchmarking project uses a common set of metrics to collect data and provide the opportunity to benchmark sustainability performance against peer utilities. The project aims to avoid the costly effort of assembling peer data from other sources, as well as facilitate direct engagement and collaboration among participants.

Goals and Objectives

This updating of the benchmarking platform provides a foundation for businesses’ success by understanding how companies compare to peers and managing overall performance. Such understanding can assist companies in being more sustainable, which has major benefits to efficient operations, community engagement, and employee recruitment and retention.

Deliverables

The non-proprietary results of this work will be incorporated into EPRI R&D Program 198, and made available to the public, for purchase or otherwise.

- Access to Online Benchmarking Platform and database
- Benchmarking results compared to other participating companies
- Bimonthly webcasts.
- Benchmarking Forum conference
- Version 6.0 of the online database release
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**BPA membership:** 2019 to Current Year

**Links**
www.epri.com/sustainability

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