

Benchmarking FAQs

The Study

What is benchmarking?

Benchmarking is the process of comparing your organisation to others in the sector and your peer group on key metrics. Agenda run benchmarking studies on HR and Workforce ([People Count](#)), the finance function ([Finance Count](#)), and the volunteer function ([Volunteers Count](#)).

How will it help me / my organisation?

Benchmarking key metrics of your organisation provides early warning signs of potential issues and gives reassurance for what is already working well.

The hard evidence helps determine priorities for action and provides evidence to support change, which enhances your ability to report back to management and trustees.

You can also gain new insights on good practice and as our benchmarking studies are an excellent networking opportunity.

Who else takes part?

Over 150 organisations of different sizes and sub sectors have been involved in our various benchmarking studies over the past 2 years so there is already a wide range on our database for you to choose from when selecting your peer organisations.

Participants join from across the Third Sector from INGOs, social care organisations, and charities.

What is included in the price of the study?

- Volume One Report – a scorecard of your organisation's scores against those of your peers and the whole sample
- Online drill down reports
- Executive Summary
- Good practice material from participants
- Access to online Contact Zone to share good practice and network
- Sector-wide and Detailed Statistics reports by key topics
- Invitation to Results Conference and Product Training Workshop
- Telephone or webinar consultation with one of our consultants tailored to meet your needs and deepen your understanding of the reports

I missed this year's study, what can I do?

You can still take part in the latest study as a late participant. Your results will not be included in the whole sample but you are able to benchmark your results against your chosen peers and the whole sample.

We don't have all the data to complete the questionnaire, is it worth taking part?

Certainly. Many organisations find it helpful to take part as it is a good way of identifying gaps in their data collection. The only mandatory fields in the questionnaire are the basic ones about your organisation's size and location. Even if you have not put in all of the data, you will still receive the results in the report about your peers and the whole sample. The average response rate is 70-80%.

Can my colleagues and I share the workload?

Yes. We will set up a lead user to the online system and from there you are able to assign other users from your organisation. This is helpful as a person's name appears beside any data they have entered which helps you to keep an eye on progress.

How long does it take to complete the questionnaire?

The time taken to complete the questionnaire will vary from organisation to organisation and will depend on how easy it is to acquire the information from your own internal systems. For most participants 3.5 person days of effort are required.

How do I know I'm comparing like with like?

We provide detailed guidance notes for each question. We ask that all participants pay close attention to these notes whilst completing the questionnaire to ensure consistency.

Will Agenda share my data with other bodies?

As part of participating in the study, you agree for your data to be used in sector-wide reports but no data will be attributed to your organisation. We do not share an individual organisation's data with any other body.

Can I amend my data once it has been submitted?

Yes, you can update your data submission as many times as you like throughout the year and rerun your Volume One Report.

Can I change my peer selection?

We ask you to choose your peers carefully as we cannot allow you to change your peers.

How frequently should an organisation take part in a benchmarking study?

Many organisations choose to take part in benchmarking studies annually as part of their annual work cycle. Others leave it a year before participating again.

Who can I contact for help?

For any questions about the study or signing up to take part, please contact [Sarah Rushworth](#). For help filling out the questionnaire, please contact [Katharina Hutchings](#). For help selecting your peers, please contact [Brita Benson](#).

Peers

Who chooses my benchmark peers and on what grounds?

You can choose between 5 and 20 organisations to benchmark against. You can choose peers based on size or sub-sector or a mixture of the two.

All measures in the Volume 1 report are split by size and sub-sector as well so you get a really clear picture of your scores compared with others'.

Questionnaire

Who chooses the questions?

The questionnaire for each study has been shaped by a steering group of professionals from within the sector. Each time we run a study we invite the steering groups to meet over a telephone conference and we run through

any proposed changes or additions. If you would like to participate in the steering group for any of our benchmarking studies or would like to contribute any feedback, please get in touch with [Brita Benson](#).

What are the benefits of the ‘good practice’ questions?

Good practice questions are an opportunity for you to share with other organisations what is working well for your organisation and learn from others. These questions are not mandatory and so there is no obligation to complete them. The responses will be attributed to your organisation for other participants only. Only those taking part in the study will be able to see which organisation has said what. There is also the opportunity to get in touch with an organisation to network and share good practice as each organisation nominates one person to appear on the contact list alongside their job title and an email address.

Reports

How do I access my reports?

Your reports can be accessed the [client area](#) of the Agenda website using the same login details as used when completing the questionnaire. Go to the dashboard and select ‘Reports and Drill Down’. The first time you do this you will need to generate a Volume One Report so click ‘Generate New V1 Report’. When this is generated you can download the report into a Microsoft Word document or view the online drill down element.

The Drill Down Report is a way for you to really engage with the results of your questionnaire and look at any measures of particular interest in greater detail.

From here you can also access and download the Volume Two Reports which are sector-wide and not specific to your organisation. This contains an executive summary of the findings.

What is the difference between the Volume One report and the Volume Two report?

The Volume One Reports are specific to your organisation and compare your scores for each measure to your peer scores and the whole sample. It also indicate where you are comparable, different, or significantly different by colour coding results. You can also see the percent rank and any previous scores:

Table	Measure	Unit	Your Score 2012	Your Score 2013	Peers		Whole Sample	
					Median	Percent Rank	Median	Percent Rank
Employee numbers								
Table 2.1	Total number of employees	Headcount	307	359	1,985	0% SD	582	43% C
Table 2.1.1	Annual change in employee numbers (headcount)	%	-14.5	1.7	1.3	60% C	0.4	57% C

The Volume Two Reports include the results for the whole sample and paint a picture of the sector as a whole. They include charts and key findings of the study alongside an executive summary.