

Benchmarking facilities services in Nigeria

Interim results from an ongoing research project

Synopsis

Research currently being undertaken indicates that productivity in manual-based facilities services in Nigeria may be less than 65% of the best international performance.

The research is being carried out by Prof. Bernard Williams, a UK Chartered Surveyor and facilities benchmarking specialist, in association with Ayo Abolarinwa of Ayo Abolarinwa and Associate (AAA) a firm of Estate Surveyors and Valuers and a leading Nigerian Institution - Covenant University.

The research team are using a long-established web-enabled benchmarking model – **EstatesMaster** (www.estatesmaster.com) – developed 15 years ago by Prof. Williams and which has been used successfully to benchmark facilities in over 10,000 buildings on large estates in UK, Continental Europe and North America.

The Nigerian Institution involved in the study has permitted Prof. Williams and AAA to use the **Estates Master** model to benchmark the Maintenance and Cleaning/Janitorial services across their estate of 200+ buildings covering over 200,000 m² Gross Internal Area.

The process has involved recalibrating the **Estates Master** model with the local costs of labour and consumables thereby producing benchmarks in the local currency but using levels of productivity prevalent in best-performing Western economies.

The conclusions from both Maintenance and Cleaning/Janitorial were very similar, both showing **levels of cost significantly higher** than would have been expected compared with best-performance international levels of productivity. The results of the case study are shown graphically at Figs A and B. In both cases the central (orange) histogram represents the actual costs and the outlying (green and red) histograms represent the tolerance extremities of the benchmarked best -performance costs.

Fig.A Maintenance benchmark result

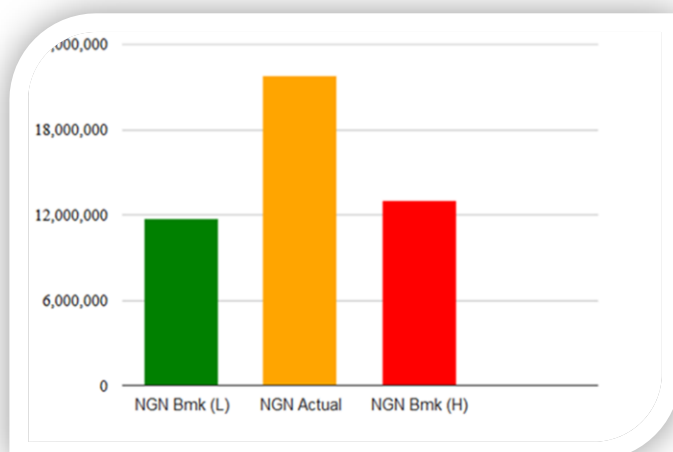
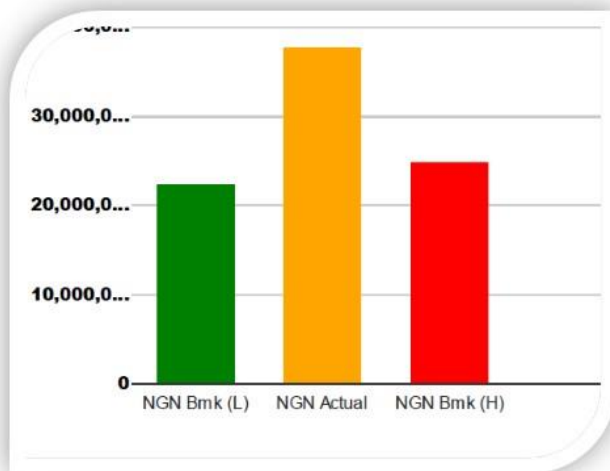


Fig. B Cleaning Benchmark Result



The validity of these initial findings is bolstered by the fact that the Institution concerned insources almost all of its labour and is renowned for being free from any adverse commercial influences. Management of the in-house team is well-organised and the overall standards achieved in both services are 'Fairly High' in terms of the Quality plateaux established in the **Estates Master model**.

Informal comparisons have since been made with the costs of these services in other organisations. These informal comparisons suggest that although the Institution's facilities productivity is relatively low compared to best-performance internationally the costs for these services in other organisations are significantly higher. This leads to a provisional conclusion that other in-house staffed organisations may be even less efficient and/or that outsourced contractors may be marking up the costs of the indigenous labour by considerably more than is justified in a normal commercial market; in either case the failure to meet best performance cost and productivity targets is almost certainly due to the absence of credible facilities benchmarking methods in Nigeria.

Going back to the basic findings it would appear that the 40-50% gap in productivity between what is a well-run insourced Nigerian facilities management regime and that in best performance international economies is almost certainly due to the comparative immaturity of facilities management in Nigeria; there is consequently a lack of rigorous management of productivity levels geared to best-performance benchmarked achievements.

The next stage of the research is to test these preliminary findings in depth against facilities costs both insourced and outsourced in other Nigerian institutions. The initial approach will be to benchmark costs of multi-building estates internally thereby both identifying best performance within those estates and comparing their costs with the Institution's results from this initial case study.

Organisations who would be prepared to be involved in such a case study are invited to contact Ayo Abolarinwa of AAA on (002348069409847); participants will have the benefit of having their own estates benchmarked internally and will also be contributing valuable data in the quest to improve productivity in Nigerian facilities services.

If these findings are ratified – as Prof. Williams confidently predicts – and benchmarking of Nigerian facilities leads eventually to mirroring of best-performance internationally, the impact on the Nigerian economy as a whole would be significant given that facilities services costs can often amount to 5% or more of an organisation's outgoings.