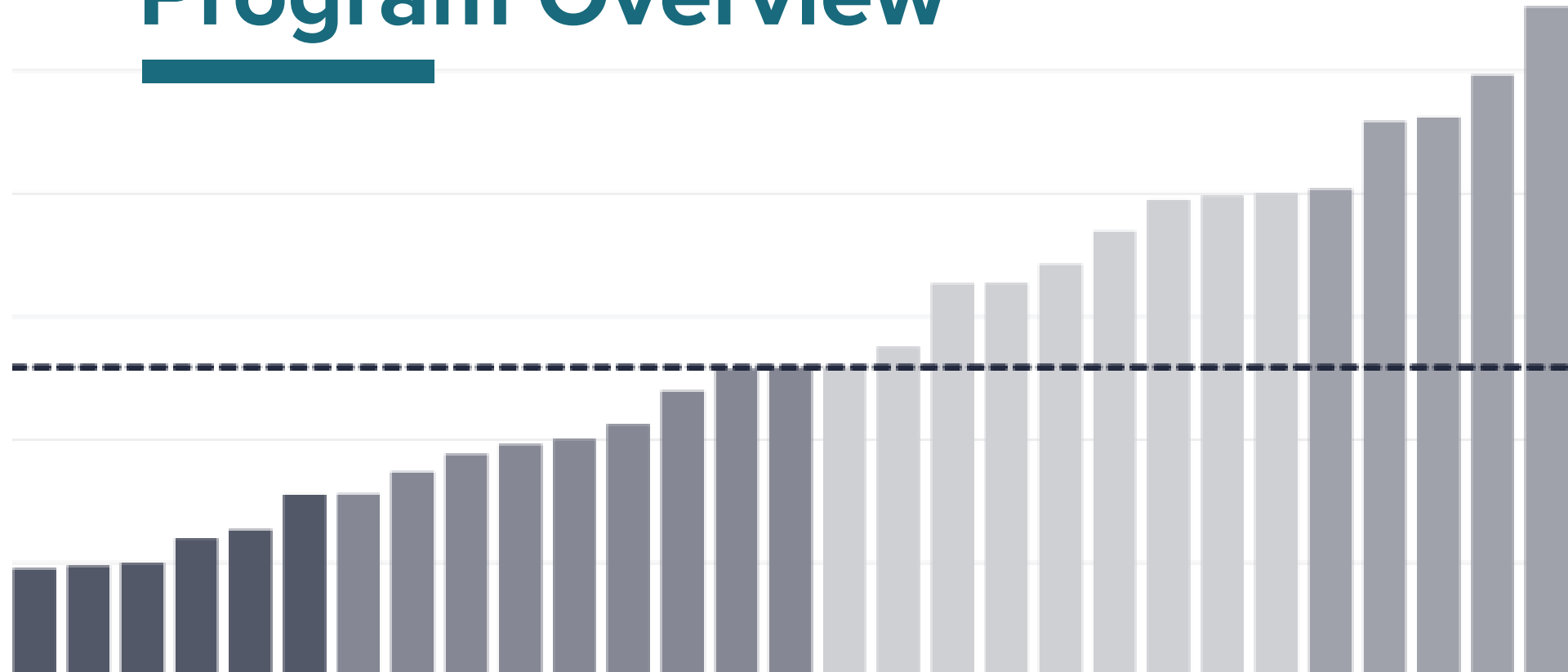
FACILITY ISSUES

2026 Cultural Facility Benchmarking Program Overview



Introduction

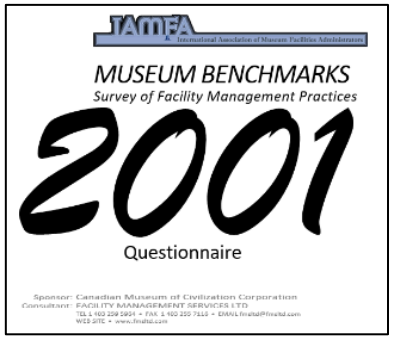
This document describes the 2026 Cultural Facility Benchmarking Program, endorsed by IAMFA, the International Association of Museum Facility Administrators.

This benchmarking program is designed for those who manage museum and cultural institution facilities. Over 130 institutions from nine countries have participated since the program started.

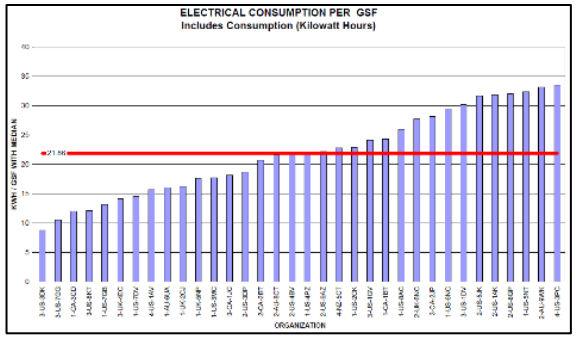
Contents of this document:

- Background & History (Page 3)
- Data & Metrics (Pages 4-7)
- Process & Guidance (Pages 8-11)
- Shared Practices & Networking (Pages 12-15)

25 Years of Cultural Facility Benchmarking



2001



2007



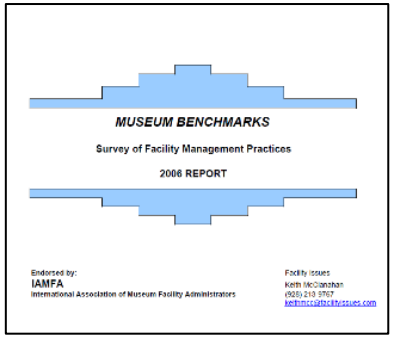
2021

Program was started by Canadian Museum of Civilization

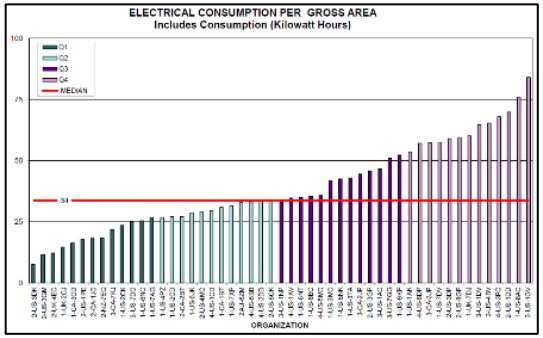
Facility Issues transitioned the system from email & Word documents to Excel then Power BI

Program provides best industry data for cultural facilities

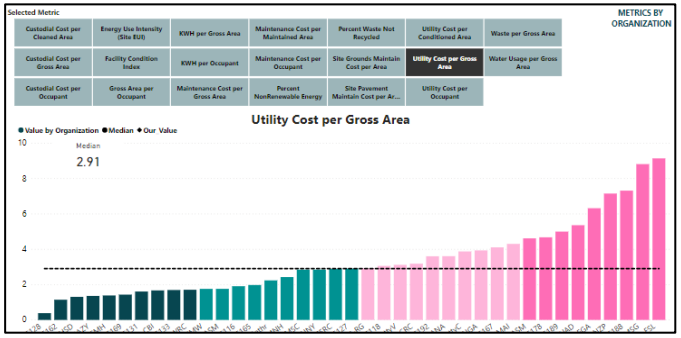
2005



2011



2018



Program Provides Data & Metrics

Quantitative performance metrics are the language of business.

- Your position vs. peers
- Document your current situation
  - Confirm your competitiveness to defend performance
  - Identify weak areas to justify action
- Identify Trends
  - Measure progress to determine how effective changes are
  - See industry trends
  - Promote mindset of positive change and growth

Qualitative metrics identify potential actions you can take for performance improvements.

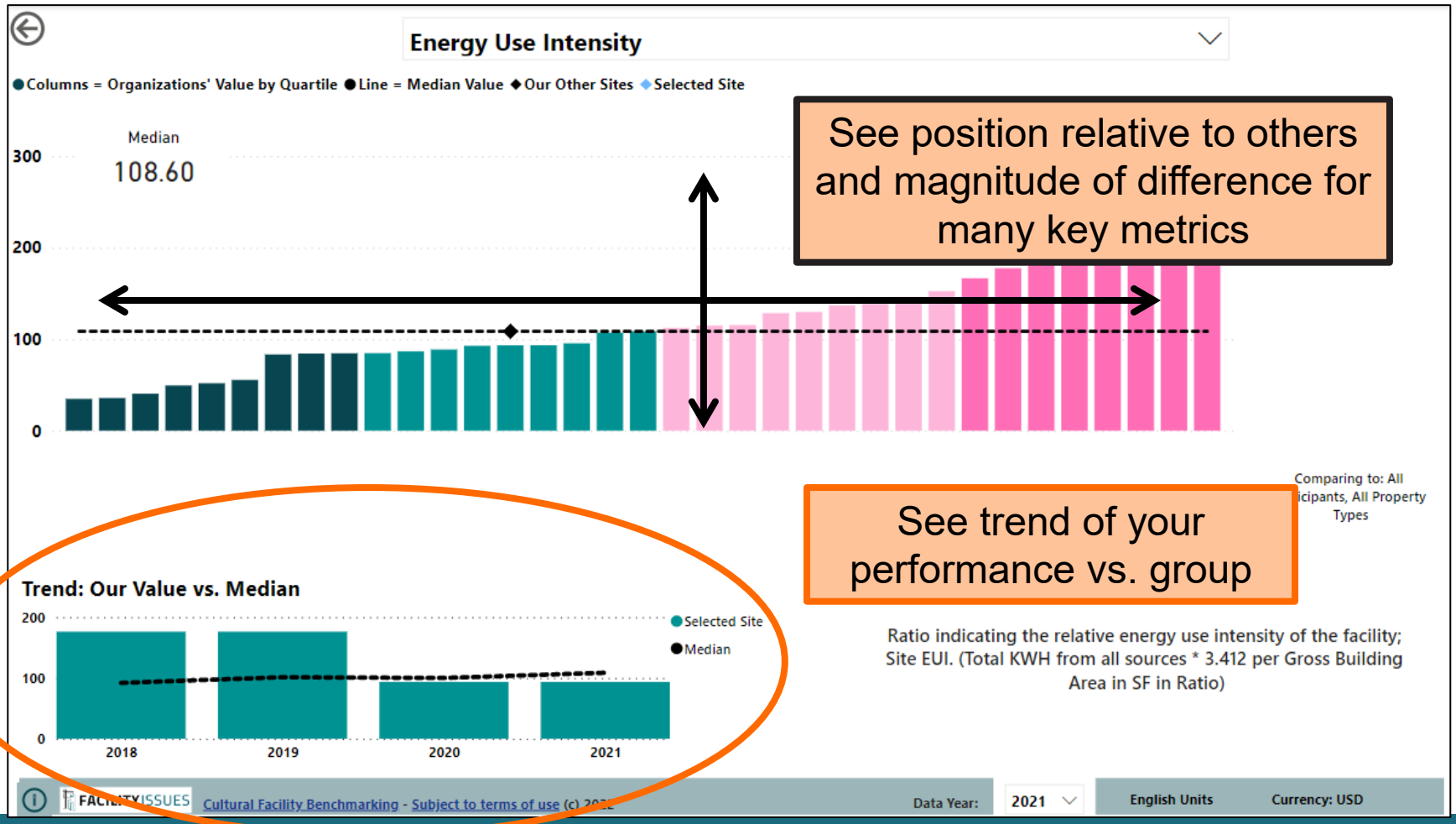
- Degree of use for practices & technology
  - Space management
  - Custodial services
  - Maintenance
  - Utility conservation & sustainability
- Identify specific opportunity areas and actions
  - Quality improvements (non-cost performance measures)
  - Incremental changes
  - Step-function changes

Reports & Metrics Categories

Reports	Metric Categories
Property Assets & Space Metrics Reporting on the space and asset related metrics; gross areas, net areas, facility condition index, capital renewal, and some occupancy metrics.	Asset Management Space & Occupancy
Property O&M Cost Metrics Reporting on the traditional facility operating cost metrics, maintenance, cleaning, grounds, security, and utilities.	Cost: Custodial Cost: Maintenance Cost: Security Cost: Total O&M Cost: Utilities
Property Sustainability Metrics Reporting on energy, water, waste, and CO2E metrics (Scope 1 & 2 only).	Sustainability: Energy Sustainability: GHG Sustainability: Waste Sustainability: Water
FM Organization Metrics Reporting on staffing ratios, service levels, & work order metrics. (Also costs and GHG at the organization level)	Cost: Capital Cost: Total O&M Occupant Service Staffing Sustainability: GHG
Results Explorer – Quick review & explore data **Our Data** – Review your own data for errors/trends	

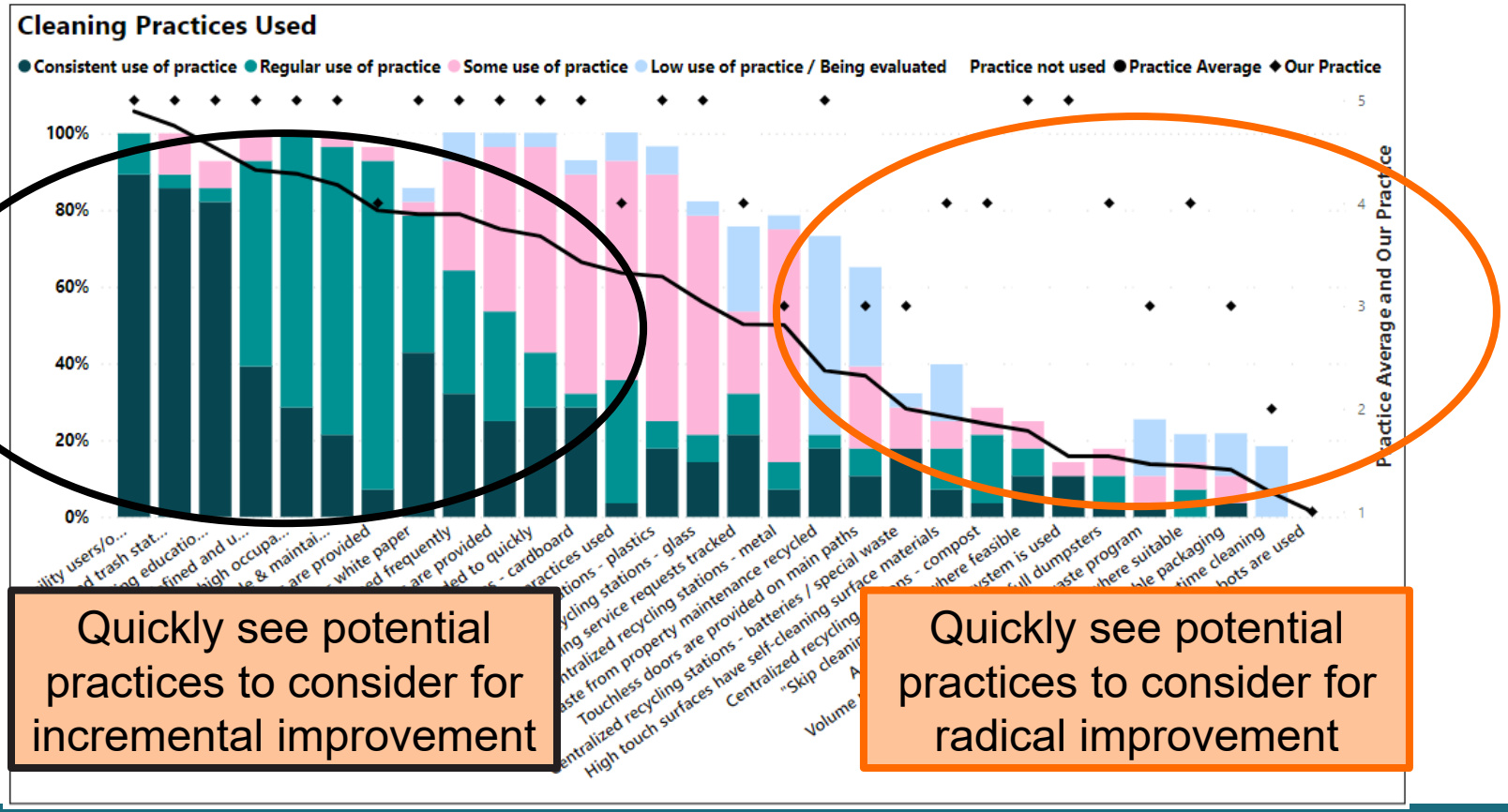
Comparing Metrics → Provides Context & Trends

"Ready to share" with full range of facility-related metrics grouped on pages by topic.



Comparing Practices & Technology → Potential Change

Charts show degree of use for FM practices & technology by functional areas (cleaning, maintenance…) to help identify changes to consider.



Program Provides Process and Guidance

Coordination of the benchmarking process

Technical support with 1:1 as needed

- Additional support if desired

The Value of Benchmarking:

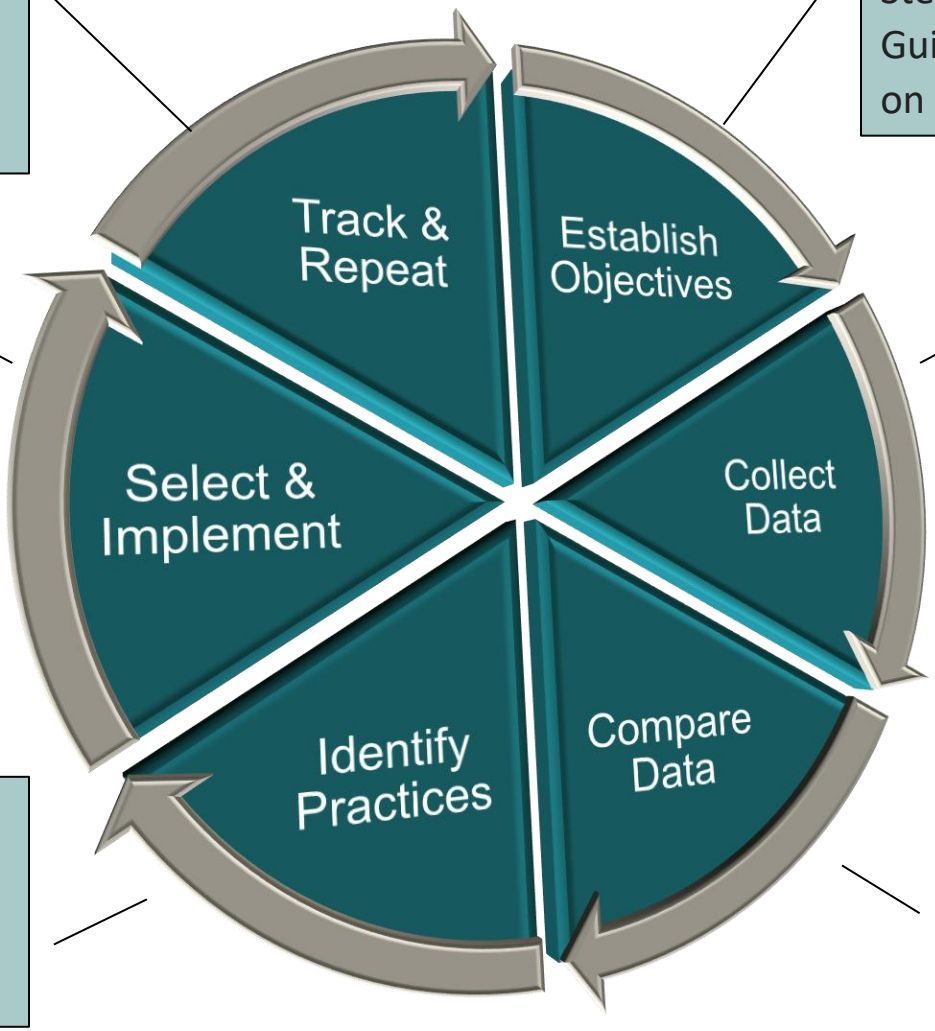
- *Part of an overall performance metric program*
- *Draws on actual performance data for forecasts and "what-ifs"*
- *Benchmarking data provides context → identifies the current high/low data values for many metrics*
- *Quantify the opportunity of getting to "top quartile"*
- *Participants contribute to raising the bar for everyone!*

VALUE OF FACILITY BENCHMARKING: https://facilityissues.com/facility-benchmarking-process/

The Benchmarking Process

Trend Charts Show Your Progress vs. Industry Progress

Steering Committee Guides Program Based on Current Needs



Which changes are feasible for your situation? Support from Peers & FI

Data Collection Templates, Data Normalized by Facility Issues

Shared Practice Comparison & Shared Practice Meetings

Interactive Power BI Reporting on how you compare - what are potential opportunities?

Suggested Process to Evaluate Benchmarking Results

1. Understand Your Organizational Objectives
2. Review Your Performance *(Particularly vs. Your Objectives)*
   - Scan all metrics of interest
   - Focus on metrics / trends for your priority areas
3. Identify Potential Actions To Consider
   - Triage and select actions to pursue (use Action Matrix on next page)
   - Discuss lessons learned with colleagues
4. Communicate Results of Your Review
   - Report overall performance and recommendations to leadership.
   - Communicate key metrics with staff & reasons for any initiatives
5. Track Progress on Initiatives, and Trends in General
   - Monitor trends of key metrics to measure & report progress
   - Perform ad-hoc queries/review to respond to emerging issues/questions
   - Share lessons learned from your initiatives & learn from others

Action Matrix: Performance vs. Objectives

Action Plan: Draft activities such as policy/practice change, capital investment in facility or technology, shift in resources, etc.

- To achieve ___ performance improvement (or address ___ deficiency)
- Over ___ time period.

Are ↓ / Want to be →	**Leader**	**Competitive**	**Not Priority**
Leader	Document & Celebrate	Document & Celebrate	Evaluate Resource Allocation
Competitive	Incremental Improvements & Evaluate	Document & Celebrate	Manage by Exception
Lagging	Evaluate Radical Changes	Incremental Improvements & Evaluate	Manage by Exception

Program Offers Shared Practices & Networking

Monthly Shared Practice meetings (Zoom)

- Regular 1-hour calls on selected topics or open discussion
- Chat with peers to share lessons learned
- Related Shared Practice surveys summarize activity in the industry
- Everyone working at a cultural institution is welcome
    - Signup to receive monthly notices: https://facilityissues.com/cultural/

Annual Workshop meeting (in-person)

- Full Day In-person meeting and small group discussion
- Prior to Annual IAMFA Conference

Monthly Shared Practices & Networking Meetings / Surveys

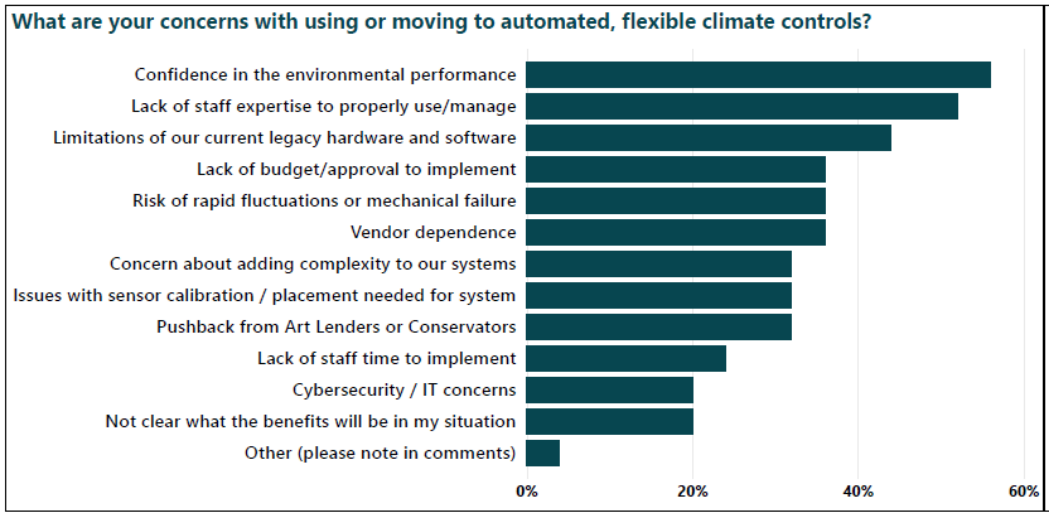
	2026 Monthly Shared Practice & Networking Topics
Jan	Current Issues for Cultural Facility Management
Feb	Resiliency Planning: Vulnerability Assessments
Mar	Resiliency Planning: Preventive/Reactive Measures
Apr	Using Automation Technology for Museum Climate Control and Energy Management (Case Studies)
May	Cultural Facility Condition Assessment (Case Study)
Jun	Specific Ways You Can Use AI Right Now
Jul	Application of Benchmarking Results
Aug	Capital-Delivery Readiness
Sep	Annual Workshop Town Hall Session
Oct	Operating Cost Management Best Practices
Nov /Dec	Emerging Issues for Cultural Facility Management

Suggest a topic for 2027!

Example Shared Practice Survey Results

Each meeting has a related shared practice survey

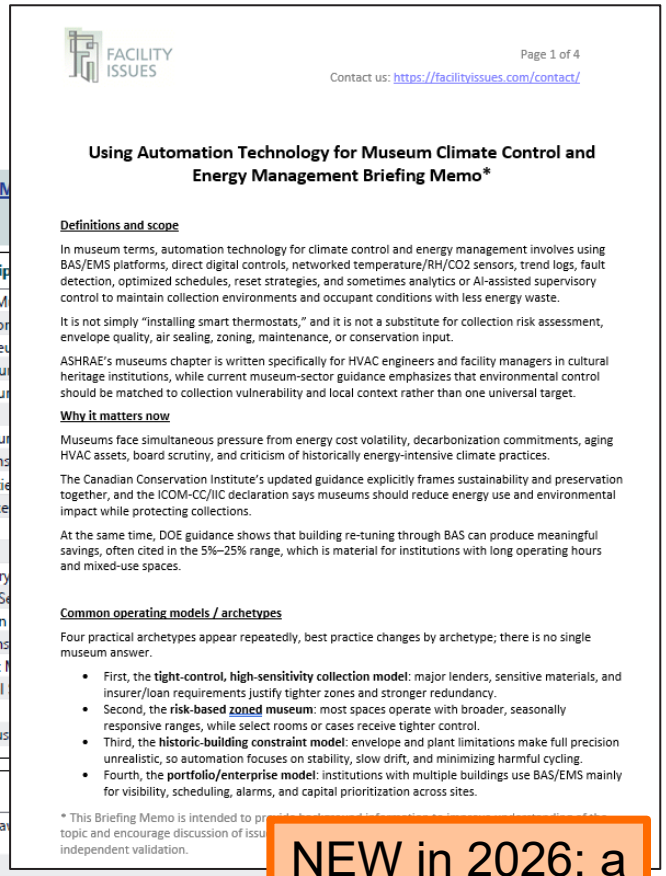
This report contains the results of a "Shared Practice Survey" on Using Automation for Climate Control and Energy M
and reflects the answers based on voluntary participation.



Survey Particip
Academy Art M
Brandywine Cor
Carnegie Museu
Corning Museu
Everson Museu
Exploratorium
Frist Art Museu
Government Ins
Great Lakes Scie
Jordan Schnitze
MFA Boston
Morven Park
National Gallery
National Park Se
SFMOMA - San
Smithsonian Ins
Springfield Art M
State Historical
UMMNH
Winterthur Mus

Comments & Questions

Curious about how Dyseco can optimize based on sub-meter data. We do not have sub-meters now but are considering adding. If the algorithm can receive amperage dra equipment and learn to optimize, it seems potentially worth adding to our system.
how do you measure success if you dont have submetering?
N/A
Shoulder seasons introduce variance of external conditions that impact this intentionally underground facility, built in 1989 at the wane of the underground facility construction hype.
Strategy for upgrading. room by room? floor? when equipment replaced?
We are strongly considering Dyseco implementation for our art zone air handlers and have done due diligence research. The benefits seem highly probable in speaking with other museums



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Page 1 of 4

Contact us: https://facilityissues.com/contact/

Using Automation Technology for Museum Climate Control and Energy Management Briefing Memo*

Definitions and scope

In museum terms, automation technology for climate control and energy management involves using BAS/EMS platforms, direct digital controls, networked temperature/RH/CO2 sensors, trend logs, fault detection, optimized schedules, reset strategies, and sometimes analytics or AI-assisted supervisory control to maintain collection environments and occupant conditions with less energy waste.

It is not simply "installing smart thermostats," and it is not a substitute for collection risk assessment, envelope quality, air sealing, zoning, maintenance, or conservation input.

ASHRAE's museums chapter is written specifically for HVAC engineers and facility managers in cultural heritage institutions, while current museum-sector guidance emphasizes that environmental control should be matched to collection vulnerability and local context rather than one universal target.

Why it matters now

Museums face simultaneous pressure from energy cost volatility, decarbonization commitments, aging HVAC assets, board scrutiny, and criticism of historically energy-intensive climate practices.

The Canadian Conservation Institute's updated guidance explicitly frames sustainability and preservation together, and the ICOM-CC/IIC declaration says museums should reduce energy use and environmental impact while protecting collections.

At the same time, DOE guidance shows that building re-tuning through BAS can produce meaningful savings, often cited in the 5%–25% range, which is material for institutions with long operating hours and mixed-use spaces.

Common operating models / archetypes

Four practical archetypes appear repeatedly, best practice changes by archetype; there is no single museum answer.

- First, the **tight-control, high-sensitivity collection model**: major lenders, sensitive materials, and insurer/loan requirements justify tighter zones and stronger redundancy.
- Second, the **risk-based zoned museum**: most spaces operate with broader, seasonally responsive ranges, while select rooms or cases receive tighter control.
- Third, the **historic-building constraint model**: envelope and plant limitations make full precision unrealistic, so automation focuses on stability, slow drift, and minimizing harmful cycling.
- Fourth, the **portfolio/enterprise model**: institutions with multiple buildings use BAS/EMS mainly for visibility, scheduling, alarms, and capital prioritization across sites.

* This Briefing Memo is intended to pr
topic and encourage discussion of issu
independent validation.

NEW in 2026: a briefing paper on each topic

Annual Workshop



2025



Small group discussions at the 2025 Benchmarking Workshop.

Presentations, Discussions, Networking, Case Studies, Research, Facility Tours



2024



2023



2022

2026 Participants

- Air and Space Museum (Udvar-Hazy Center)
- Canadian Aviation and Space Museum
- Canadian Museum of Science and Technology
- Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh
- Carnegie Science Center
- Collection Conservation Centre
- Exploratorium Pier 15
- Glenstone Foundation
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
- Lowell Observatory
- Museum of Fine Arts - Boston
- National Gallery of Art
- National Museum of African American History and Culture
- National Museum of American History (Behring Center)
- National Museum of Natural History
- National Portrait Gallery (Donald W. Reynolds Center)
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- The Getty Center
- The Getty Villa

Your Thoughts on 2026-7 *(Welcome Anytime)*

How were shared practice meetings this year?

- Things you liked or did not like?
- What about the shared practice surveys?

How was benchmarking data process this year?

- Ease of process? Pain points?
- Usefulness of reporting? Gaps?
- Applicability of metrics? Metrics to clarify?

How is the (draft) benchmarking reporting this year?

- Ease of use?
- Usefulness?
- Alternative charts or formats to add to final?

Suggestions for 2027 (things to add or change)?

- Additional support needed on metrics/benchmarking?

Available Presentations on Benchmarking & Metrics

Getting Value from Benchmarking Activities
Whitepaper guide for using benchmarking

Benchmarking: Lead, Follow, or Get Out of the Way
IAMFA Annual Conference 2024, New York NY

Craft Your FM Metrics Roadmap
NFMT 2024 Baltimore MD

Benchmarking in the Age of AI
IAMFA Annual Conference 2023, Amsterdam

Track Your Facility & Service Performance
NFMT 2023 Baltimore MD

Using Benchmarking To Navigate Uncertainty
IAMFA Annual Conference 2022, San Francisco CA

New Dimensions in Benchmarking
Utilities Council of IFMA Fall Meeting 2021, Virtual

Using Facility Benchmarking in FM Decision Making
IAMFA Annual Conference 2020, Virtual

Benchmarking - The Role of Small Data in a Big Data World
IAMFA Annual Conference 2019, Pittsburgh PA

Integrate Your Facility Data for Valuable Insights
NFMT 2019 Baltimore MD

Benchmarking Update and Use Cases
IAMFA Annual Conference 2018, Los Angeles CA

FM Metrics for Dashboards and Scorecards
NFMT 2018 Baltimore MD

Using Benchmarking to Benefit Your Institution
IAMFA Annual Conference 2017, Ottawa ON

How to Get Value from Facility Benchmarking
NFMT 2017 Baltimore, MD

Preparing An Agile Strategic Facilities Plan
NFMT 2016, Baltimore, MD

FM Metrics That Matter
Suncoast Chapter IFMA 2016, Tampa FL

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