



Tuesday January 10, 2012

Bridging Process Gaps in P&P Facilities: Process Benchmarking (Part II)

Process benchmarking is the approach whereby existing system gaps are identified by understanding and evaluating the current situation in relation to "industry best practice"; which leads to recognizing areas of performance improvement. Applying process benchmarking for an existing mill involves four basic steps:

1. Selecting benchmarking subject and level:

In an existing process there are numerous parameters that could be improved. However, to be able to effectively close existing gaps, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be benchmarked. Benchmarking can be detailed to a specific equipment item such as paper machine, or inclusively consider the entire process to address global opportunities for improvement.

2. Detailed understanding of the existing process:

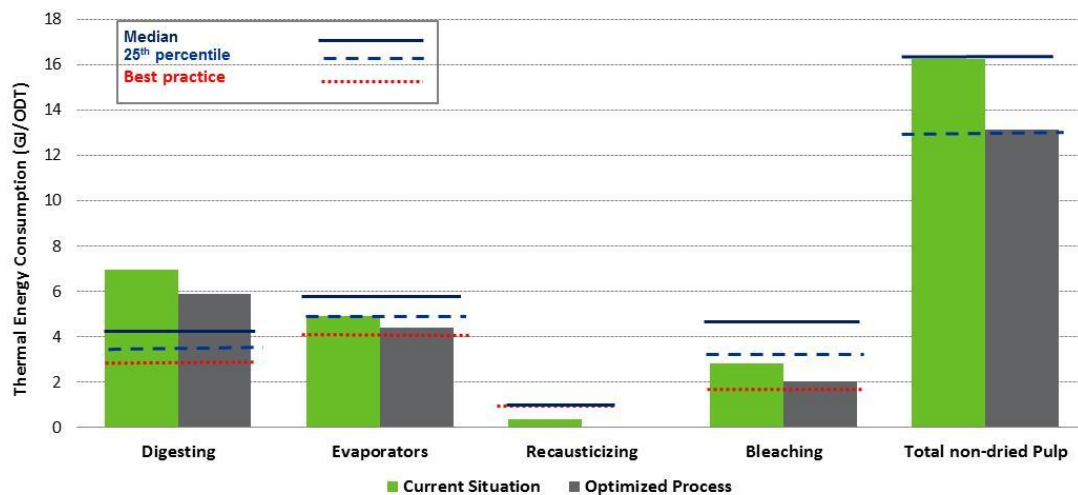
Regardless of the chosen level of benchmarking, a validated mass and energy balance provides an in-depth understanding of the operation (see info letter Part I) and supplies reliable data for calculating and analyzing the appropriate KPIs. Normalizing the selected KPIs is essential to make them comparable with their peers in the industry.

3. Comparison with industry peer processes:

Comparing the analyzed KPIs with the ones from other mills, benchmarks the current position against the best practice or the mills with better performance, to set targets for improvement.

4. Implementation of necessary steps to improve the performance

As an illustration of the proposed benchmarking approach, thermal energy consumption (as one of the process KPIs) of a typical Kraft mill located in Canada is benchmarked in the figure below against the industry best practice, median and 25th percentile consumption of Canadian Kraft mills based on NRCan data. The figure shows the mill's current situation as well as the impact of implementing the optimization projects on reducing existing gaps in the process.



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