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## **Editorial**

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### **Executive Editor: Abby Ghobadian**

The tough competitive landscape caused by globalisation, developments in ICT, and liberal trade agreements is forcing all organisations irrespective of size, sector, or ownership to constantly seek improved effectiveness and efficiency. At the same time all organisations use a variety of processes to convert inputs to outputs. The way processes are configured and managed exerts a significant influence on cost, product/service range, quality, speed of delivery, delivery reliability, time to market and innovation capacity. Typical business strategies such as cost leadership, differentiation, focused cost leadership, focused differentiation, and combination strategies, for example, crucially depend on supporting processes. In short, the way processes are configured, organised and managed can significantly influence the competitiveness of an organisation.

Process improvement is a complex and risky business. It is difficult to determine in advance if a new process would work effectively and efficiently. The risk can be reduced by learning from other organisations' experience. The benchmarking concept provides a powerful tool in this respect.

The theory and practical guidance on how to develop and deploy effective and efficient processes is somewhat underdeveloped. This is despite the critical role processes play in enabling organisations to realise their strategy, and their impact on organisations' effectiveness and efficiency. Process improvement is multi-faceted and requires input from different disciplines within an organisation. The interdisciplinary nature of process improvement and management, combined with its critical role in all organisations – public and private, manufacturing and service, large and small – means it does not receive the focused attention necessary for its development within the current journal publications. This lack of focus and attention is responsible for its slow development.

The mission of the *International Journal of Process Management and Benchmarking* is to address this theoretical and practical void and help process management to develop as a subject in line with its critical importance. The mission will be pursued through a four-step approach. First, we will endeavour to ensure that the journal provides a lively and high quality global focal point for academics and practitioners to interactively discuss process management and benchmarking issues. Second, the journal is committed to developing a wide body of theoretical and practical knowledge addressing process management, configuration, development, change, and process improvement tools such as benchmarking in private, public, voluntary, manufacturing, service, small, medium and large organisations. Third, we aim to encourage innovative research by publishing high quality interdisciplinary work. Fourth, the journal is committed to encouraging a wide range of methodological approaches and also methodological development by publishing quantitative and qualitative research and methodological contributions. In short, we aim to stimulate the theoretical and practical development of process management and process improvement tools, and thus enhance the capacity of organisations to realise their

strategies, and improve their effectiveness and efficiency. This will in turn result in improved productivity and sustainable competitiveness – the dual challenge faced by all organisations and policy makers.