PROJECT

BOB
Benchmarking of Benchmarking

**Funding:** European (5th RTD Framework Programme)

**Duration:** May 2001 - Aug 2003

**Status:** Complete with results

**Background & policy context:**

It is widely recognised that there is a growing need to improve the quality, efficiency, safety and sustainability of the European transport system. BOB - an accompanying measure under the EC's Fifth Framework Programme - acts as a 'laboratory' to test the recommendations produced by the BEST network.

The BEST project (2000-2003) aimed at sharing expertise and experiences with transport benchmarking among policy makers, the transport sector and experts.

**Objectives:**

The overall objective of BOB was to assess, by means of practical pilot studies, how performance measures and benchmarking can support the development and implementation of the various elements of a European sustainable transport policy. The three topics addressed by the pilots were Passenger Railways, Professional Road Transport Safety, and Airport Accessibility.

**Rail**

The objective of this pilot study was to assess to what extent benchmarking can be used to improve the implementation of key objectives to increase the effectiveness of railway services, both from the point of view of the operator and as an instrument for national or regional transport authorities. This should allow these stakeholders to achieve sustainable mobility through attracting more passengers to rail and securing value for public money as well as supporting investment in the system.

**Air**

The overall objective of the pilot was to assess the use of benchmarking as a tool to improve airport accessibility. In particular, the results of the pilot were used to identify effective policy measures for ensuring sustainable airport accessibility. Furthermore, the pilot acted as a laboratory to test the recommendations produced by BEST - Benchmarking European Sustainable Transport - a project related to BOB under the European Union's Fifth Framework Programme for research and development

Participants that contributed to the pilot included representatives of airports from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, and representatives of ministries of transport in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, as well as a local public authority in Poland. The Airports Council International - Europe (ACI Europe) and the International Air Rail Organisation (IARO) were also involved in the pilot.

**Road**

To assess how far benchmarking can be used to improve policy at national and European level aiming at a higher road safety performance of professional road transport in particular and consequently the sustainability of road transport as a whole.

Two main items were preselected:

- professional driver training (road safety policy) and
- safety culture.

For these two items the benchmarking process was worked out, with a final report being the outcome of numerous discussions between professionals over the best way to benchmark these two items.
Methodology:

Rail

The steps for a normal benchmarking exercise were followed for the railway case:

1. Identification of areas for benchmarking;
2. Identification of relevant dimensions;
3. Identification of indicators and of data needed.

These steps were taken for the topics 'institutional relations' and 'performance criteria'. Within these two areas more specific benchmarks were formulated but the dimensions of the institutional relations proved difficult to identify while for the performance criteria it was slightly easier. The next steps in the process were:

4. Collection and collation of data;
5. Identification of benchmarks and choice of indicators;
6. Analysis of the reasons for performance differences.

Availability of sufficient comparable data has been identified as a major bottleneck in the benchmarking of performance criteria. We concluded that we should not seek in all cases fully comparable information (for example when benchmarking punctuality). It is more realistic to aim for comparability at a level of 75%. We must accept to formulate conclusions in the context that complete comparability is not feasible as a result of widely different protocols for data present within the railway industry.

Within the institutional set up the difficulty has been to define a desirable benchmark that can serve as an example for others: what is the 'ideal model' to separate infrastructure from operations. At the moment the stakeholders (operators, authorities) and the academic community cannot agree on an appropriate formula. However a tenable basis for the Exercise was needed and we have chosen to collect more neutral (soft) information on institutional relations and policy objectives, without advocating at this stage what the preferred system should be. Steps 7-9 were designed to be of interest primarily to the participants in each case study:

7. Analysis of possible remedial measures;
8. Proposals for action and continuous improvement programmes;

The railway pilot did not have as an objective to proceed further than these stages. Wherever possible the available information was used to create useful benchmarks and improvement programmes where under performance has been highlighted to allow individual stakeholders to use the results of this pilot study in their normal day to day work.

Air

Five meetings were organised in the framework

Related Projects:

- BESTETIS
- LINKFORESIGHT for TRANSPORT
- SPOTLIGHTS
- TNTHINK
- UPTRANS
- TALK

Parent Programmes:

FP5-GROWTH KA2 - Sustainable Mobility and Intermodality

Institute type: Public institution

Institute name: European Commission, Directorate-General for Energy and Transport (DG TREN)

Funding type: Public (EU)

Partners:

- PANTEIA/NEA (NL)
- CERTU (F)
- ERASMUS UNIVERSITY (NL)
- FAV (D)
- INECO (E)
- OGM (B)
- TOI (N)
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Key Results:

Rail

Benchmarking of law and institutions without agreement on the direction to aim for (which is the right institutional structure) is a difficult exercise. The awareness that things should move ahead - initiated by the EC - is however present at nearly all administrations and operators. The BOB initiative played an important role in facilitating that common European directions should be taken or at least be coordinated rather then going back to a unique national approach. There is an added value in exchanging policy directions within Europe. Those authorities that have not bothered too much with presenting a vision will be confronted with the ‘policy gap’ for which they are responsible.Policy implications Rail Cleary the conclusions drawn up so far were not fully mature. This is inherent to the fact that this was a pilot project facing all kinds of unforeseen constraints. However, the fact that the pilot was successful is already illustrated by the fact that stakeholders (operators) have continued their co-operation on 'punctuality' irrespective of the finalisation of the project. Therefore it was recommended that DG-TREN explores the continuation of these initiatives for the benefit of rail services within the EU and, if possible, links it with its monitoring activities. The experience of tendering and contracting rail services linked to commercial practices and principles was generally a new skill both for operators and authorities. To facilitate and extend knowledge in this area, it is recommended that the benchmarking process be followed by a Continuous Improvement Programme linked to a programme of exchanges of data and analytical exercises. Any continuation process for the principal groups should facilitate the recruitment and retention of further participants who would be actively encouraged to provide any existing data and experience to the existing pool of knowledge. A continuation programme should continue the existing sub-groups but seek to encourage the formation of new groups to study, for example, such subjects as passenger security. Many participants have only limited time and resource available for this type of work and if better budget provision can be made, they feel comfortable if a larger proportion of the work is undertaken by consultants and experts with specialised knowledge of the benchmarking and railway management processes.

Air

The BOB airport accessibility pilot was successful in creating, for the first time, a network of airports that had never met in this kind of structured format to exchange ideas and experiences on airport accessibility. Airports that participated in the pilot exercise expressed enthusiasm about taking part in a group that enabled them to compare performance and share good practices in the field of airport accessibility with other airports. The cooperation of airport authorities, transport providers, infrastructure providers, local, regional and national authorities (local/regional), employees, employers, etc. at an airport is considered highly important in the identification and realisation of measures to improve the land-side accessibility of airports. Single actors simply have too little control over this issue.

Airports participating in the pilot expressed their desire for the European Commission to define a clear EU policy on airport accessibility that sets out the Commission’s vision and objectives in this area. The airport accessibility issue did not lend itself to the setting of fixed targets or standards for the quality of accessibility and the share of modes on a European level. The circumstances and relevant issues at the various airports vary too much to justify su...
demand expressed by airports and the role of airports in the mobility system. This involves, first of all, the establishment of a framework in which good practices can be exchanged between airports on a more permanent and long-term basis. Secondly, some work has to be done together with the airports on the harmonisation of the definition and measurement of variables that will allow effective monitoring of developments for policy purposes and for purposes of comparison among airports.

It is recommended that the European Commission considers an integrated approach that solves the need for co-operation and the need for better data, based on the following airport accessibility and benchmarking policy model: Airport accessibility

Documents:
Airport Final report (Final report)

STRIA Roadmaps: Other specified
Transport mode: Multimodal transport
Transport sectors: Passenger transport
Geo-spatial type: Other