

Summary:

Benchmarking European Sustainable Transport Dokumentation of the projects BOB and BEST and TOIs participation

Introduction

Benchmarking is a structured learning process which has a potential to improve the quality, efficiency and sustainability of the transport sector. Both the private and public organisations can benefit from the systematic approach which benchmarking offers to challenges facing the transport sector.

Institute of Transport Economics in Norway has been partner in the EU funded projects Benchmarking European Sustainable Transport (BEST) and Benchmarking Of Benchmarking (BOB).

BEST has been organised as a Thematic Network and has organised 6 conferences to share information about, and experiences with, benchmarking among European transport authorities.

The sister project BOB assessed, by means of three practical pilot studies, how benchmarking can support the development and implementation of the various elements of a European sustainable transport policy. The three pilots are: Passenger Railways, Professional Road Transport Safety, and Airport Accessibility.

This summary report presents important findings from these projects and documents the processes and TOI's participation.

BEST

The Main Objectives of BEST were:

- To identify practical solutions as to how benchmarking can be developed as a practical tool to assist the European Commission, member states, and accession countries in effectively implementing sustainable transport policies in Europe.
- To provide specific recommendations to the European Commission in relation to the development and application of benchmarking in fields covered by transport policy, and further research needs and activities in the area of benchmarking in transport.

- To create an innovative dynamic of exchange of experience between the different transport sectors and sub-sectors.
- To create an effective network for the dissemination of practical information about benchmarking as an effective tool to support the implementation of sustainable transport policies and strategies through a series of conferences, newsletters, web site and links with other networks.

BEST established, for the first time, a European level framework for benchmarking in the transport sector. The thematic network built a consensus at a European level on the key requirements for successful benchmarking and the benefits of applying benchmarking in the transport sector. The network also produced specific recommendations on the development of benchmarking as a practical tool to assist the European Commission, Member States and Accession countries in effectively implementing sustainable and competitive transport policies in Europe.

The series of six conferences established a coherent thematic network. Each conference built upon the conclusions reached in the course of the previous conference(s), and upon inputs from the BOB pilots.

Conference 1: The state of the art in benchmarking in all sectors.

The first conference presented successful examples of innovative benchmarking from a range of non-transport sectors, and assessed the applicability of these 'good practices' to the transport sector.

Conference 2: The state of the art in benchmarking in the transport sector.

Successful examples of benchmarking in the transport sector were presented, with a focus on cases which have resulted in performance improvement. The conference also considered the use of benchmarking as a tool in the implementation of sustainable transport strategies.

Conference 3: Identifying effective benchmarking criteria.

The conference analysed both quantitative and qualitative indicators in order to identify the most effective and practical criteria for successful benchmarking. The conference considered benchmarking methodologies based on the complementarity of qualitative and quantitative criteria.

Conference 4: Identifying effective benchmarking methodologies.

The conference brought together experts to identify effective benchmarking methodologies in order to formulate 'best practice' benchmarking methods for application in the transport sector.

Conference 5: The application of benchmarking in transport policy.

Benchmarking transport policy is a new area of application for benchmarking. The conference brought together policy makers in order to identify the potential of benchmarking to promote the development of sustainable transport policies in Europe.

Conference 6: The final conference.

The final conference consolidated the conclusions and recommendations of the series of BEST conferences.

BOB

BOB acted as a 'laboratory' to test the recommendations produced by the BEST network. BOB assessed, 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 are Passenger Railways, Professional Road Transport Safety, and Airport Accessibility.

Railway pilot

Passenger Traffic in Railways has been a topic in several previous policy papers produced within and outside the confines of the European Commission. The European Policy is outlining a firm relationship producing a greater demarcation between the responsibilities of transport authorities and those of operators. This relationship should be based on appropriate contractual agreements and is regarded as

an important way achieving lasting improvement and a firmer basis for public service obligations.

The objective of the railway pilot study has been 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.

To secure optimal participation of the stakeholders two working groups were formed to carry out the benchmarking: the 'authorities' and the 'operators' group. The national and regional authorities working group made an analysis of the institutional set-up in the participating countries, while the operators group made an analysis of some specific performance criteria.

A benchmark of institutional relations appeared to be difficult because of the high abstraction level (policy, law) and the differences between European systems. Moreover one cannot identify a single framework that has worked better than the rest in Europe. It did, however, seem that the actual comparison of different institutional systems applied is useful as this causes the stakeholders to think and to seek the best possible solutions.

Benchmarking of specific performance indicators is difficult but not impossible. Within this project we have concluded that there are possibilities for stakeholders to learn from the best practices regarding punctuality and growth. This pilot could only draw preliminary conclusions for these topics. There are, however, good reasons to continue the work in this field.

Participants included authorities and operators from Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Scotland. Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer and operators from Belgium, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom were participating as "observers", which enabled them to have limited involvement in the project.

Road safety pilot

There is increasing pressure on transport policy makers – both at national and European levels - to improve the safety of road transport. In the European Commission's White Paper 'European Transport Policy for 2010: time to decide', it has set a target of a 50% reduction in road

transport casualties between 2000 and 2010. The role of professional transport in road safety is particularly interesting for the European Commission because of its cross-border aspect and the importance of creating a level playing field for road transport throughout Europe. Since the market for professional transport has been liberalised, regulations for this sector are increasingly being enforced at the European level. Basic rules for driving times, transport of dangerous goods, type approval, driver training and examination, etc. are defined in EU Directives and Regulations.

Since most of the responsibilities for taking concrete measures fall mainly to national and regional authorities, the main instrument for the Commission to reach its ambitious target is the exchange of best practices. This underlines the importance of the BOB pilot study that aims to use benchmarking to improve policy at national and European level with the objective of achieving a higher road safety performance of professional road transport in particular and consequently the sustainability of road transport as a whole.

The benchmarking exercise has focused on policy measures. Two subjects were selected for benchmarking: professional driver training and the safety culture of transport companies.

Participants included representatives of the Ministries of Transport from the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Poland, Czech Republic, France, Finland, and Ireland. In addition to these countries the following organisations took part in the project: IRU (International Road Union), CEA (Comité Européen des Assurances), CIECA (Commission Internationale des Examens de Conduite Automobile) and TISPOL (Traffic Information System Police).

Airport accessibility pilot

The overall objective of the pilot has been to assess the use of benchmarking as a tool to improve airport accessibility. In particular, the results of the pilot have been used to identify effective policy measures for ensuring sustainable airport accessibility. Furthermore,

the pilot has acted as a laboratory to test in practice the recommendations produced by BEST.

The issue of airport accessibility is one that involves a great number of stakeholders including airport authorities, transport providers, infrastructure providers, local, regional and national authorities, employees, employers, etc. The initiatives of one party are heavily dependent on those of others. Consultation of the participating airports has resulted in the identification of a number of good practices related to airport accessibility. Many practices identified were especially related to resolving the problem of limited control over airport accessibility by some form of co-operation between actors in order to be able to address effectively the accessibility of the airport. The strength of these good practices, such as those in the UK (airport transport forums), the Netherlands (VCC-Schiphol) and Belgium (Brussels airport sustainability partnership) is that they provide the structure in which all relevant actors involved co-ordinate measures to improve airport accessibility.

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 access.

Airports that have participated in the pilot exercise have expressed enthusiasm about taking part in a group that enables them to compare performance and share good practices in the field of airport accessibility with other airports. Further, they expressed the need for a structure in which airports can compare their performance with others that have similar problems and in which they can learn from others and exchange good practice.

Participants that have contributed to the pilot include 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.