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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BEST - Benchmarking European Sustainable Transport - was a thematic network funded by the European Community under the Fifth Framework Programme (Growth Programme, Key Action 2). The project ran from May 2000 to April 2003. It was managed by the Directorate General for Energy and Transport, and coordinated by a consortium of eight partners.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were to:

- Develop the potential of benchmarking at a European level in the field of transport.
- Provide a European framework for benchmarking in the transport sector.
- Raise awareness of the techniques and benefits of benchmarking in the transport sector.
- Compare European benchmarking projects with those in other regions of the world.
- Organise a series of six conferences over three years to address key issues for benchmarking in the transport sector.
- Produce specific recommendations to the European Commission in relation to the development and application of benchmarking in fields covered by transport policy.
- Provide input to the BOB¹ project, a 'sister' project in which three practical benchmarking pilots were carried out.

APPROACH

The structure and activities of the network were based on the following approach:

- Series of conferences: The BEST network was based on a series of six conferences over three years. Each conference addressed a specific topic related to benchmarking.
- Recommendations to the European Commission: The findings and conclusions of the six conferences were used as the basis of reports and recommendations to the European Commission on how to maximise the potential benefits of benchmarking in implementing sustainable transport policies in Europe.
- Links to BOB: BEST provided input to the three BOB pilots, and in turn, the results of BOB were fed into BEST.
- Dissemination activities: Several dedicated dissemination tools were produced for BEST: a project brochure, regular newsletters and a website. In addition, the project was presented at relevant events and articles about it were written for a range of publications.

RESULTS

The main results of the project are:

- The creation of a comprehensive network of transport policy makers and other stakeholders.
- Increased awareness of the potential of benchmarking in the transport sector.
- Increased understanding of the use of benchmarking in relation to policy.
- The production of new material about benchmarking.
- Recommendations to the European Commission.
- A comprehensive website on transport benchmarking.
- Increased benchmarking activities in Europe.
- The development of an innovative approach to conferences.

The results will be disseminated by the project consortium partners through participation in/presentations at relevant events; publication of articles/studies; and links with other projects/programmes.

¹ Benchmarking of Benchmarking (BOB), an accompanying measure linked to BEST, was funded by the European Community under the Fifth Framework Programme (Growth Programme, Key Action 2).

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The main objectives of the BEST project were to:

- **Develop the potential of benchmarking at a European level in the field of transport.** The aim of BEST was to learn from the successful application of benchmarking at production and operational levels, and to assess, in particular, the potential of benchmarking at policy and management levels in order to support transport policy making in Europe.
- **Provide a European framework for benchmarking in the transport sector.** The BEST project aimed to create the first, comprehensive, European transport benchmarking network of policy makers and other stakeholders to enable the exchange of experience between different sub-sectors of the transport sector (passenger and freight, rail, air, road, urban, cycling etc.) and from different levels (international, national and regional/local).
- **Raise awareness of the techniques and benefits of benchmarking in the transport sector,** through reviewing and presenting examples of benchmarking in both transport and non-transport sectors.
- **Compare European benchmarking projects with those in other regions of the world,** by involving experts from countries outside Europe.
- **Organise a series of six conferences over three years to address key issues for benchmarking in the transport sector:**
 - (i) The state of the art of benchmarking in the Member States, especially in industry.
 - (ii) Identification of examples where benchmarking in the transport sector has led to improvement.
 - (iii) Appropriate criteria for benchmarking (qualitative and/or quantitative).
 - (iv) Assessment of the state of the art of benchmarking methodologies.
 - (v) The possibility of benchmarking policy.
 - (vi) Final conference to disseminate the results and conclusions of the project.
- **Produce specific recommendations to the European Commission in relation to the development and application of benchmarking in fields covered by transport policy.** The aim of the recommendations was to use the material and conclusions of the series of conferences in order to propose ways in which the Commission could maximise the potential benefits of benchmarking in implementing sustainable transport policies in Europe.
- **Provide input to the BOB project.** The information gathered in BEST was intended to inform and support the work carried out in the BOB² project, which conducted three practical benchmarking pilots³. The role of BEST was also to organise a specific workshop to discuss the results of BOB, and to disseminate the results of BOB at the final BEST conference.

² Benchmarking of Benchmarking (BOB), an accompanying measure linked to BEST, was funded by the European Community under the Fifth Framework Programme (Growth Programme, Key Action 2).

³ The pilots benchmarked passenger rail transport, road safety and airport accessibility. For more information see the BOB pages of the BEST website: www.besttransport.org.

3 SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESULTS

3.1 Approach

3.1.1 Conferences

The BEST network was based on a series of six conferences over three years. Each conference addressed a specific topic related to benchmarking:

1. The State of the Art of Benchmarking in all Sectors (October 2000);
2. The State of the Art of Benchmarking in the Transport Sector (January 2001);
3. Indicators and Benchmarking in the Transport Sector (June 2001);
4. Putting Benchmarking Methodology into Practice (October 2001);
5. Benchmarking Transport Policy (June 2002);
6. Final Conference to disseminate results and conclusions of the project (March 2003).

Each conference was attended by an average of 76 participants, who represented a wide range of benchmarking and transport expertise from the public and private sectors from Europe and beyond (North America, New Zealand etc.). Each conference built on the discussions of the previous conferences in order to create a coherent and dynamic learning process for the participants.

The conferences used an interactive and participative approach based on a mix of presentations and group work. During the conferences, several delegates were interviewed by BEST consortium partners in order to give delegates the opportunity to express their views on benchmarking in the transport sector and the BEST project. This discussion-based and interactive approach stimulated the active contribution of delegates and created an effective framework for learning and exchange.

3.1.2 Recommendations to the European Commission

The findings and conclusions of the six conferences were used as the basis of reports and recommendations to the European Commission on how to maximise the potential benefits of benchmarking in implementing sustainable transport policies in Europe. For each conference, a conference report and set of recommendations were produced relating to the specific issues addressed by the conference. The first report and set of recommendations focused on the state of the art of benchmarking in all sectors; the second report focused on the art of benchmarking in the transport sector; the third on criteria and indicators; the fourth on methodology; and the fifth on benchmarking policy. The final report and recommendations were based on the material of the whole BEST project and reached overall conclusions on the potential and role of benchmarking in the area of European sustainable transport policy.

3.1.3 Links to BOB

The BEST project was linked to a 'sister' project, BOB. BEST provided input to the practical BOB pilots and in turn, the results of BOB were fed into BEST. The timing of the BOB project - starting a year after BEST and finishing three months before BEST - enabled BOB to benefit from the information gathered in BEST Conferences 1 to 4. The results of BOB were then presented at the final conference of BEST. Throughout the BEST project, all documentation from the BEST conferences was made available to the BOB participants. A specific workshop was organised (November 2002) in the framework of BEST in order to discuss and evaluate the results of the BOB pilots. The results of the workshop formed the basis of recommendations on benchmarking criteria and methodology.

3.1.4 Dissemination activities

Project Brochure:

A BEST project brochure was produced in July 2000. The brochure sets out the objectives and structure of the project, in addition to providing the names of the project partners and the contact details of the European Commission project officer and the project coordinator. The brochure has been a key dissemination tool, distributed at BEST conferences and other international transport events.

Newsletter:

Six BEST newsletters were published (see Annex). Each newsletter was sent to all BEST conference participants, as well as the contacts of the BEST consortium partners, which represented a total of approximately 900 recipients. Each newsletter provided updates of the project work, particularly the conferences, together with articles by transport and/or benchmarking experts, interviews with conference delegates, and information about the BOB project.

Website:

A dedicated project website (www.besttransport.org) was established in order to provide comprehensive information about the BEST project, as well as information on and links to other relevant transport and benchmarking projects.

Other activities:

In addition to the specific BEST dissemination tools described above, other dissemination activities carried out by the project consortium included: presentation of BEST at relevant events; publication of articles about BEST; meetings with organisations working in the fields of transport and/or benchmarking; and establishing links with other relevant projects/networks.

3.2 Work Performed

3.2.1 Series of six conferences

Organisation

The organisation of all six conferences involved three key phases:

(i) Phase 1: Pre-conference preparation:

- Researching potential experts and speakers to attend conferences;
- Formulating programme (see Annex for conference programmes);
- Contacting Ministries of Transport in all EU Member States and Accession Countries in order to identify/confirm the appropriate national representatives to participate in the conferences;
- Contacting transport associations, organisations, authorities and research institutes (International, national and local) to identify/confirm appropriate delegates to participate in the conferences and raise awareness of project;
- Preparing and sending invitations to selected delegates;
- Liaising with selected speakers to support preparation of their papers and carrying out a quality assurance check of papers/slides;
- Organising all conference logistics: venue, documentation, catering etc.

(ii) Phase 2: Conference facilitation and coordination:

- Ensuring overall smooth-running of conference according to the programme;
- Welcoming delegates and providing information (about conference, BEST project, related projects etc.);
- Supporting chairpersons and speakers with facilitation/presentation;
- Facilitating working groups;
- Carrying out video interviews with participants to find out their views on the issues raised at the conference;
- Supervising logistics.

(iii) Phase 3: Post conference activities:

- Preparing post-conference questionnaire and sending it to participants for their feedback on conference and issues discussed;
- Preparing conference reports and recommendations for the Directorate General for Energy and Transport;
- Contacting all conference participants by email with follow up information about the project;
- Administration for participants' payment (travel, per diem, fees etc).

Table summarising key data about conferences:

Conference Number	Topic	No. of participants	Ministry Representatives	European / International Organisations	No. of case studies presented	Output
1	The State of the Art of Benchmarking in all Sectors	61	16	8	13	Conference Report & Recommendations
2	The State of the Art of Benchmarking in the Transport Sector	77	19	10	11	Conference Report & Recommendations
3	Indicators and Benchmarking in the Transport Sector	75	18	9	7	Conference Report & Recommendations
4	Putting Benchmarking Methodology into Practice	63	16	11	6	Conference Report & Recommendations
5	Benchmarking Transport Policy	92	14	9	6	Conference Report & Recommendations
6	Final BEST conference: results and conclusions	90	16	10	5	Conference Report & Recommendations

Conference 1

Objectives and content:

The first BEST conference addressed the State of the Art of Benchmarking in all Sectors. The two-day conference took place in Brussels on 19-20th October 2000. The objectives of the conference were to:

- Provide an introduction to benchmarking (key success factors, main challenges);
- Present successful examples of benchmarking in a range of non-transport sectors;
- discuss the use of benchmarking techniques in the transport sector;
- Consider the role of the European Commission in promoting the use of good benchmarking practices of non transport sectors to support the implementation of European sustainable transport policies.

The conference was attended by 61 delegates, including representatives from Ministries of Transport in 10 Member States and 6 Accession Countries.

Speakers included representatives of a range of organisations and companies (public, private and mixed): Teligen (UK), Enterprise Ireland (IRE), Fraunhofer IPK (D), European Commission, HM customs and excise (UK), Paul Leonard Consultancy (UK), SIPTU College (IRE), Eni Enrico Mattei Foundation (I), Department of Trade and Industry (UK), Institution for Industrial Promotion (I), Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs (NL), European Federation for Transport and Environment, and the European Cement Association.

Other delegates represented international or European transport organisations: European Cyclists' Federation, International Road Transport Union, Polis, Association of European

Airlines, European Conference of Ministers of Transport, and the International Association of Public Transport.

The conference presented 13 examples of benchmarking in non transport sectors, including telecommunications, employment, customs and excise, environment and small- and medium-sized enterprises. In addition to the presentations, there was discussion of specific issues:

- Key success factors for benchmarking in the transport sector;
- Overall objectives of benchmarking in the transport sector;
- Identification of non transport sectors from which the transport sector could learn through benchmarking.

Results:

The conference was an important first step in the creation of the BEST network. The conference marked the beginning of a learning process and served to stimulate an exchange between transport policy makers and benchmarking practitioners from non transport sectors. Conference participants had a wide range of knowledge and experience of benchmarking. In particular requested more information in order to gain a better understanding of the benchmarking process. For some participants, particularly the Transport Ministry representatives, the conference provided a useful introduction to the principles and benefits of benchmarking, while for others it provided the opportunity to share their expertise and practical experiences of benchmarking.

Some important conclusions were reached as a result of the conference presentations and discussions:

- Benchmarking is not a 'quick fix' or 'panacea'. It requires hard work and commitment from all participants in the process. It must also be implemented as part of an integrated strategy for improvement. It cannot work as an isolated exercise.
- Despite the complexity and scale of the transport sector, the wide variations across Europe in the way in which it is managed, and the framework conditions in which it operates, there was general consensus among participants that benchmarking could be used to bring about improvement in the transport sector and to support the implementation of sustainable transport policies in Europe.
- Benchmarking in the transport sector must focus on straightforward and clearly defined processes. In order to carry out a successful benchmarking exercise, specific areas within the sector must be identified.
- Transport can learn from other sectors. One of the key messages of the conference was the need to be open-minded when looking for benchmarks: it is necessary to look beyond the confines of a single sector and see what others are doing successfully in any sector (public or private) anywhere in the world.
- BEST has the potential to enable the Directorate General for Energy and Transport to act as a facilitator and catalyst of benchmarking, pooling efforts through networking, maximising benefits and encouraging wide application of benchmarking at the national level.

Following the conference, a Conference Report and a Recommendations Report were produced. The Conference Report summarises the conference proceedings and includes in its annex all conference papers, programme, participants' list, and questionnaire results. The Recommendations Report provides recommendations to the European Commission on the definition and principles of benchmarking; the role of the European Commission in supporting and promoting the use of benchmarking; and the role of the BEST thematic network in supporting the application of benchmarking in the European transport sector.

Conference 2

Objectives and Content:

The second BEST conference addressed the State of the Art of Benchmarking in the Transport Sector. The two-day conference took place in Brussels on 26-27th January 2001. The objectives of the conference were to:

- Build on the findings of the first conference by developing and clarifying the benchmarking process (methodology, benefits and limitations);
- Present examples of benchmarking projects from a range of transport sectors in order to provide an overview of the state of the art of benchmarking in the transport sector;
- Identify the benefits of and conditions for successful benchmarking in the transport sector.

The conference was attended by 77 delegates, including representatives from Ministries of Transport in 12 Member States and 7 Accession Countries⁴.

Speakers included representatives of organisations and companies working in a range of transport sectors: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, University College London (UK) , the European Commission, the European Federation for Transport and Environment, Imperial College London (UK), Strathclyde Passenger Transport (UK), METIS Consultancy Group (I), the International Road Transport Union, Langzaam Verkeer (B), Copenhagen Airport (DK), London Underground (UK), NS Railways (NL), and the International Air Transport Association.

Other delegates represented transport associations, public authorities, operators, research institutes and consultants: Polis, International Association of Rail-Road Transport, European Cyclists' Federation, Vélo-Mondial, Environmental Research Institute (CH), Berlin Senate Department of Urban Development (D), Association of European Airlines, International Association of Public Transport, McKinsey (DK), French Railways (F), Hertzog (D).

Seven participants in the BOB pilots also attended the conference: Dutch Ministry of Transport, Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications, Polish Motor Transport Institute, Dutch Railways (NS), Belgian Railways (SNCB), Strathclyde Passenger Transport, and the International Air Rail Organisation.

The conference presented 11 examples of benchmarking projects in the transport sector, including: intermodal freight transport, regional passenger transport, metros, air transport, road transport, cycling, and passenger railways. In addition to the presentations, there was discussion of specific issues:

- Key benefits of benchmarking in the transport sector;
- Main barriers to benchmarking in the transport sector;
- Data confidentiality;
- Cooperation between transport operators and authorities;
- Commitment to benchmarking.

Results:

The positive and productive discussions during the conference strengthened the role of BEST as a network for the exchange of expertise and experiences between transport and benchmarking professionals. The conference identified the key success factors and benefits

⁴ The majority of Ministry representatives was the same at each conference, therefore ensuring coherence and continuity of the conference discussions and the BEST process.

of benchmarking, as well as the main barriers to benchmarking. In answering the post conference questionnaire, 91% of participants judged the quality of the presentations at the conference to be 'good' or 'excellent', and 91% answered that the conference had increased their understanding of the concept of benchmarking.

The majority of national representatives were planning to write a summary report of the conference in order to distribute to colleagues in their ministries and support the dissemination of information about BEST.

The main conclusions reached as a result of the conference presentations and discussions were:

- Benchmarking can be applied in many different areas of transport, including both individual modes and transversally to several modes in a particular transport chain or entire transport network. It is also possible to use benchmarking at many different levels: international, national, regional and local.
- Transport benchmarking is not a science. A flexible and workable approach must be taken to deal with potential problems such as lack of data.
- The European Commission can play an important role in encouraging national governments to implement benchmarking in the transport sector by disseminating information and promoting its benefits. Individual countries will be more willing to use benchmarking if they see that there is support at European level and that other countries and organisations are already participating in the process.
- Accession Countries regard benchmarking as an effective tool to improve the integration of their own transport policies in line with those of the Member States, and to identify practical ways to implement sustainable transport policies.

Following the conference, a Conference Report and a Recommendations Report were produced. The Conference Report summarises the conference proceedings and includes in its annex all conference papers, programme, participants' list, and questionnaire results. The Recommendations Report provides recommendations to the European Commission on the use of benchmarking in the area of sustainable transport; the role of the European Commission in disseminating information about benchmarking to European and national transport policy makers, and supporting national governments in the implementation of benchmarking projects; the needs of Accession Countries with regard to benchmarking; the role of BEST in creating synergies between the work of other international, European and national organisations active in the fields of sustainable transport and benchmarking.

Conference 3

Objectives and content:

The third BEST conference addressed Indicators and Benchmarking in the Transport Sector. The two-day conference took place in Brussels on 7-8th June 2001. The objectives of the conference were to:

- Clarify the role of indicators in the benchmarking process;
- Present effective and practical ways to develop and use transport indicators;
- Understand better the needs of transport policy makers with regard to indicators;
- Provide an overview of the state of the art of transport indicators and data in Europe.

The conference was attended by 75 delegates, including representatives from Ministries of Transport in 11 Member States and 7 Accession Countries. Speakers included representatives from public transport authorities, research institutes and transport associations involved in developing and working with indicators: Belgian Ministry of Transport, European Commission, Danish National Environmental Research Institute,

Spanish Ministry of the Environment, European Shippers' Council, Cranfield University (UK), Public Transport Authority of Genoa (I), Transport and Urban Planning Research Centre of the French Ministry of Transport, and the International Air Rail Organisation.

The conference also provided updates of the three BOB pilot projects by the pilot leaders.

Other delegates represented transport associations, public authorities, research institutes and consultants: Imperial College London (UK), International Association of Public Transport, Brussels Representation of Corsica, Polis, Community of European Railways, International Road Transport Union, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, European Federation of Inland Ports, the Irish Department of Public Enterprise, and the Paul Leonard Consultancy (UK).

Some participants in the BOB pilots also attended the conference: Polish Motor Transport Institute, Strathclyde Passenger Transport, and national rail operators: NS (Dutch Railways), SNCF (French Railways), and SNCB (Belgian Railways)⁵.

The conference presented seven examples of the use of indicators in the transport sector at international, national and local levels. There were also presentations on the role of indicators in the benchmarking process and their importance to transport policy makers. In addition, the Directorate General for Energy and Transport presented its indicators and data work, and information was provided on relevant international and European initiatives.

Following the presentations, there was group work to discuss the applicability of the examples presented to the participants' own fields of work in the transport sector. There was also discussion of specific issues such as the comparability of data, data confidentiality, and taking the initiative to establish and encourage the use of indicators in the transport sector.

Results:

Feedback from participants showed that the conference had been particularly useful for two principal reasons. Firstly, the presentations provided practical examples of working with indicators in the transport sector. The post-conference questionnaire, distributed to all conference participants, showed that as a result of the conference, 97% participants increased their understanding of the role of indicators in the benchmarking process. The examples, directly relevant to participants' daily work or fields of expertise, served both to confirm their understanding of the challenges of developing and using indicators, and also to suggest new ideas and approaches to manage indicators and data collection, which they identified as one of the major challenges in a benchmarking exercise. Secondly, participants greatly appreciated the networking aspect of the conference which provided a valuable forum for participants to make contacts and explore possibilities of future cooperation with colleagues from different countries or sectors. 72% said the BEST project was providing them with a useful network of experts in the sector in which they worked.

The key lessons learnt at the conference can be summarised:

- Indicators should be used to identify differences between benchmarking partners, and changes in organisations over time, acting as pointers to identify areas or subjects for further analysis. It is through this additional focused work that the real value from benchmarking can be achieved.
- An organisation needs to understand how it performs its key activities and the factors that are critical to the success of these activities. Indicators can then be

⁵ Both the French and Belgian railways later left the BOB railway group due to internal reasons in the organisations.

developed that are accurate measures of performance in the areas of prime importance to an organisation whether this is a particular business process or a political strategy.

- Building consensus is an essential part of developing and selecting indicators
- Simplicity is a key factor in selecting successful indicators. It is usually better to use indicators and data that already exist rather than creating new indicators.
- Indicators need to be comprehensive, concise, and prioritised according to a logical hierarchy. They should also be flexible enough so that they can evolve over time.
- There are effective ways to overcome problems relating to data availability. Data gaps can often be filled by supplementing quantitative data with qualitative data, by providing financial incentives for data collection, by making informed comparisons with similar cases elsewhere, by working with experts etc. It is beneficial to collect data frequently, as the database becomes more and more valuable as time series data are gathered.
- It is essential to address concerns about data confidentiality at the beginning of the benchmarking exercise.
- Appropriate indicators for benchmarking in the transport sector are not dependent on the mode of transport studied. This means that it is possible to develop generic indicators that are applicable to a number of different modes.
- It is important to learn from experiences within and outside Europe in order to maximise the value of the range of data and indicator initiatives that are being undertaken both by the European Commission and other international organisations.

Following the conference, a Conference Report and a Recommendations Report were produced. The Conference Report summarises the conference proceedings and includes in its annex all conference papers, programme, participants' list, and questionnaire results. The Recommendations Report provides recommendations to the European Commission and the BOB pilot participants on establishing useful indicators for benchmarking in the transport sector. The recommendations provide guidance on the principles of establishing useful indicators, how to ensure commitment of participants to the process, the necessary criteria to establish successful key performance indicators, and the role of the European Commission in contributing to the harmonisation of data and indicators at a European level.

Conference 4

Objectives and content:

The fourth BEST conference addressed Putting Benchmarking Methodology into Practice. The two-day conference took place in Brussels on 4-5th October 2001. The conference objectives of the conference were to:

- Build on the lessons learnt at previous BEST conferences by examining in more detail each step of the benchmarking methodology;
- Assess the state of the art of benchmarking methodology by presenting a variety of different approaches to implementing the steps of the benchmarking process, including success factors and practical aspects.
- Provide useful guidelines to the BOB pilot participants by providing them with different ways to use the benchmarking methodology.

The conference was attended by 63 delegates, including representatives from Ministries of Transport in 9 Member States and 7 Accession Countries. Speakers included representatives from Vancouver Airport (Canada), the International Air Transport Association, McKinsey and Co. (DK), Greater Copenhagen Authority (DK), Norwegian Highways Agency, the Benchmarking Coordination Office (IRE), and Booz Allen Hamilton (New Zealand).

The conference also provided updates of the three BOB pilot projects by the pilot leaders.

Other delegates represented transport associations, public authorities, research institutes and consultants: European Sea Ports Organisation, European Cyclists' Federation, European Conference of Ministers of Transport, Polis, Community of European Railways, Port of Gdansk Authority (Poland), International Association of Railways, International Association of Public Transport, and the International Air Rail Organisation.

Some participants in the BOB pilots also attended the conference: Strathclyde Passenger Transport, European Insurance Committee (CEA), Traffic Information System Police (TISPOL), and national rail operators: NS (Dutch Railways), SNCF (French Railways), and NSB (Norwegian Railways).

The conference presented six different approaches to various stages of the benchmarking methodology, including how to motivate senior management and involve stakeholders in the benchmarking process (e.g. Vancouver Airport); how to work in partnership with organisations from the transport sector and non transport sectors (e.g. Nordic public transport benchmarking network); how to manage data and plan a benchmarking exercise (e.g. Data Envelopment Analysis); and how to implement the results of benchmarking (e.g. Australian bus benchmarking). In addition to the presentations, there was group work to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches presented and to assess their applicability to the participants' own fields of work.

Results:

The conference provided the opportunity for in-depth discussion of the different aspects of the benchmarking methodology and critical assessment of the factors that need to be taken into account in the application of different approaches to benchmarking. The post-conference questionnaire indicated that 66% of participants felt quite to very confident that they could now undertake the different steps of the benchmarking process.

The key lessons learnt at the conference about the practical application of the benchmarking methodology were:

- It is necessary to follow a defined methodological structure based on four steps: planning, analysis, integration and action.
- It is also necessary to be open-minded about ways to approach the basic steps. There are many possible approaches which can be taken and it is necessary to choose the one most suited to a particular exercise.
- It is important to encourage multi-party involvement (regulators, operators, users, planners etc.) in defining the objectives of a benchmarking exercise and agreeing on the necessary measures to implement its findings.
- Benchmarking should be linked to a continuous learning process based on concrete action. Monitoring the implementation of an action plan will enable the identification of new improvement objectives and areas for benchmarking.
- It is possible to benchmark with partners outside the transport sector, but selecting a benchmarking partner must be done with care and there must be clear reasons for the choice of partner.
- 'Selling' the benefits of benchmarking is one of the main challenges in gaining support and commitment for a benchmarking exercise. It is important to find a balance between presenting the 'quick wins' that can be gained from benchmarking and the benefits of long-term commitment to the process.

The conference also helped to clarify and strengthen the links between BEST and BOB. The main role of BEST is to support the BOB participants by providing general information about the benchmarking methodology and its application in the transport sector. The

developments and results of BOB are disseminated through the BEST conferences, newsletters and website.

Following the conference, a Conference Report and a Recommendations Report were produced. The Conference Report summarises the conference proceedings and includes in its annex all conference papers, programme, participants' list, and questionnaire results. The Recommendations Report provides recommendations to the European Commission and the BOB pilot participants. The Report propose ways in which the European Commission can promote and facilitate a common approach, at a European level, to benchmarking methodology in the transport sector. The Report also provides useful guidelines on how to benchmark, including practical examples of different approaches to benchmarking, and recommends ways to win support for benchmarking.

Conference 5

Objectives and content:

The fifth BEST conference addressed Benchmarking Transport Policy. The two-day conference took place in Brussels on 7-8th June 2002. The main objective of the conference was to assess the possibility of benchmarking transport policy. The conference aimed to consolidate and reinforce the most important lessons of the previous BEST conferences and to apply them to transport policy. Questions addressed by the conference included: Is it possible to benchmark policy? If it is possible, what aspects of transport policy should be benchmarked? What methodology should be used? What are the benefits?

The conference was attended by 92 delegates, including representatives from Ministries of Transport in 8 Member States and 6 Accession Countries. Speakers included representatives from the European Commission (the Directorate General for Energy and Transport, the Directorate General for Research and the Directorate General for Consumer Affairs), national or federal public transport authorities in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain and the USA, WS Atkins consultants (UK), Vélo-Mondial, Centre for Management and Policy Studies (UK), and the Warsaw University of Technology (PL).

Participants in the three BOB pilot projects also presented the preliminary findings of the projects.

Other delegates represented transport associations, public authorities, research institutes and consultants: Imperial College London (UK), the European Federation for Transport and Environment, Walloon Ministry of Transport (B), Berlin Senate Department (D), European Cyclists' Federation, European Conference of Ministers of Transport, Eurochambres, Asturias Regional Office, Wales European Centre, European Parliament, City of the Hague, Brussels Delegation of Catalonia, International Association of Railways, the Danish National Environmental Research Institute, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, University of Leeds (UK), DNV Consulting (UK), and the International Association of Public Transport.

Some participants in the BOB pilots also attended the conference: Toulouse Public Transport Authority, Road Traffic Safety Department (French Ministry of Transport), Polish Motor Transport Institute, Brussels International Airport, Milan Airport, the International Air Rail Organisation, Strathclyde Passenger Transport (UK), Warsaw City Council (PL), Association of Spanish Airports, and rail operators: NS (Dutch Railways), SNCF (French Railways), and NSB (Norwegian Railways), SBB (Swiss Railways), DSB (Danish Railways), VR (Finnish Railways).

The conference presented six examples of policy benchmarking in transport and non transport sectors: European research policies, international policy comparisons, cycling policies, best practices in integrated transport, policies on road transport-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, and benchmarking a federal transport policy framework. In addition, there were presentations on the White Paper on European Governance, transport policy under the Spanish EU Presidency, the specific needs and challenges of benchmarking in Central and Eastern European Countries, and the role of benchmarking in relation to the White Paper on European Transport Policy.

In addition to the presentations, there was group work to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches to policy benchmarking presented.

Results:

Participants' feedback and contributions to discussions at the conference revealed a high level of interest in the topic of policy benchmarking, which is a new area of application in the transport sector. The most important result of the conference is that it helped to clarify the different kinds of relation between benchmarking and policy, and the methodology that needs to be applied.

The final conclusions of the conference were that:

- Benchmarking is a tool that can be used by policy makers to develop, evaluate and compare policies in different sectors (transport, research, environment etc.) at different levels (international, national, local).
- It is essential to define clearly the specific aspect of policy to be benchmarked, for example, the policy making process, policy instruments or policy outcomes. It is advisable to start simply with limited objectives and gradually develop the process to include other areas and issues.
- The impacts and benefits of policy improvements brought about by benchmarking may only be visible in the long term.
- Benchmarking should be used as a complement to other policy and planning instruments, including transport forecasting models and policy evaluation studies.
- The basic principles of benchmarking are the same when applied to any topic or sector. The complexity of transport policy also requires a qualitative assessment of policy and performance in addition to quantitative measures.
- Comparison of policies of different countries must take into account differing external conditions and policy objectives.
- The political sensitivity of the results of a policy benchmarking exercise means that communication, particularly public relations with the media, must be handled carefully.

Following the conference, a Conference Report and a Recommendations Report were produced. The Conference Report summarises the conference proceedings and includes in its annex all conference papers, programme, and participants' list. The Recommendations Report provides recommendations to the European Commission on the main factors to take into account in the application of benchmarking to transport policy (what to benchmark, who to involve, how to benchmark policy) and the possibilities for EU transport policy benchmarking in the future.

Conference 6

Objectives and content:

The sixth BEST conference was the final conference and presented the results and conclusions of the BEST project. The two-day conference took place in Brussels on 12-13th March 2002. The main objectives of the conference were to:

- Disseminate the results and conclusions drawn from the previous five BEST conferences;
- Provide an update of the results of the previous five BEST conferences;
- Disseminate the results of the BOB project, and its conclusions and recommendations;
- Provide a forum for the dissemination of results of other transport benchmarking projects.

The conference was attended by 90 delegates, including representatives from Ministries of Transport in 7 Member States and 9 Accession Countries. Speakers included representatives from the Leeds Business School (UK), Commission for Benchmarking (NL), Freight Transport Association, Greater Copenhagen Authority (DK), TrenItalia (I), Danish National Environmental Research Institute, European Federation for Transport and Environment, Transport Research Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Transport, and the Public Sector Benchmarking Service (UK).

The BOB pilot leaders and BOB pilot participants presented the results of the three benchmarking pilot projects.

Other delegates represented transport associations, public authorities, research institutes and consultants: Imperial College London (UK), Spanish Ministry of Environment, Langzaam Verkeer (B), Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development, Bologna Public Transport Authority (I), European Transport Safety Council, Airports Regions Conference, Vélo-Mondial, Swiss Environmental Research Centre, Sporveier (Oslo public transport operator) Department of Trade and Industry (UK), European Rail Freight Association, International Road Transport Union, Swedish Association of Local Authorities, South East England Regional Assembly, Centre for Management and Policy Studies (UK), SNCF (French Railways), Wales European Centre, Brussels Delegation of Catalonia, International Air Transport Association, International Association of Railways, and the International Association of Public Transport.

Participants in the BOB pilots also attended the conference: Road Traffic Safety Department (French Ministry of Transport), Polish Motor Transport Institute, Brussels International Airport (B), Milan Airport (I), Manchester Airport (UK), BAA Heathrow (UK), railway authorities from the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Finland, and rail operators: NS (Dutch Railways) NSB (Norwegian Railways), and Hungarian Railways.

The conference presented five case studies of successful benchmarking projects in different sectors: energy, passenger public transport, passenger rail transport, CO2 policy benchmarking, and public sector benchmarking. These case studies had been presented at previous BEST conferences and the aim was to provide an opportunity to disseminate the recent results of the projects. In addition there were presentations on the benefits of benchmarking, achievements and recommendations of the BEST project, benchmarking to support sustainable transport policies, and the role of good practice in EU transport policy.

In addition to the presentations, there was group work to identify the conditions for successful benchmarking, to discuss future benchmarking activities that the participants were intending to undertake, and to assess the impact of the conference. There were three panel discussions on the BOB pilot projects, the role of benchmarking in achieving the goals of the White Paper on European transport policy, and the recommendations of the BEST thematic network.

Results:

The main results of the final conference were:

- Dissemination of the results and recommendations of BEST and BOB to a wide range of policy makers from member states and accession countries, as well as international transport associations. Those policy makers are now able to take the information back to their own organisations and use the results in their work. over 90% said that BEST had had an impact on their work.
- A widespread commitment from participants to continue or start benchmarking. Over 60% of participants at the final BEST conference who replied to the post-conference questionnaire, said that their organisation will continue or start to benchmark as a result of BEST. 88% expressed interest in participating in any follow up activities to BEST.
- Confirmation of the value of benchmarking , if appropriately and correctly applied, as a practical tool to support improvement in the transport sector for all modes and at all levels (EU, national and local), across a range of areas from operations and rolling stock to quality of service and policy making.
- A general consensus that the European Commission should continue to support the activities of the BEST network (for example, the website and annual meetings of policy makers). Over 65% of participants at the final BEST conference who replied to the post-conference questionnaire, said that they would like funding from the European Commission to support their benchmarking activities, and over 60% said that they would like practical support in the form of guidelines and help-desk facilities. Over 70% said that the European Commission should take the initiative for benchmarking in the transport sector.
- More learning about concrete results and benefits of benchmarking from the practical examples and discussions.
- Clarification of the relation between policy and benchmarking through the identification of different ways that benchmarking can support policy (for example, benchmarking to feed into the development of policy, benchmarking of policy or benchmarking the policy making process).
- A better understanding of the relation between benchmarking and sustainable transport, and the factors that need to be taken into account when using benchmarking to support a more sustainable transport system in Europe (for example, the need for indicators that integrate transport and environmental aspects).
- A strong call from Accession Countries to support benchmarking, both to enable them to learn from Member States in order to support their integration into the EU, and also to enable Member States to learn from successes in Accession Countries.

Following the conference, a Conference Report and a Recommendations Report were produced. The Conference Report summarises the conference conclusions and includes in its annex all conference papers, programme, participants' list, summaries of panel discussions and group work, and results of the post-conference questionnaire. The Recommendations Report provides recommendations to the European Commission on the role of benchmarking in facilitating the successful implementation of European sustainable transport strategies. The recommendations provide practical guidance on the most effective use of benchmarking in developing and implementing European transport policy.

3.2.2 Workshop

Objectives and content:

A BEST-BOB Workshop was organised in order to evaluate the BOB pilot projects and the lessons learnt with reference to the findings of BEST. The one-day workshop took place in Brussels on 18th November 2002. The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- Enable the pilot leaders, some of the most active participants in the pilots, and representatives of the European Commission to discuss and evaluate the benchmarking process as it was carried out in the framework of the BOB project.
- Assess the extent to which the BOB pilot exercises had applied the principles of benchmarking identified in the BEST project.

The workshop was attended by 34 delegates, comprised of the pilot leaders, representatives of the European Commission in the policy areas covered by the pilot projects (rail, road and airports), 5 participants in the rail pilot, 2 participants in the road pilot, and 4 participants in the airport pilot, as well as 7 independent experts in the fields of benchmarking and sustainable transport, including the European Federation of Transport and Environment, Imperial College London, Danish National Environmental Research Institute, International Air Transport Association, and the International Public Transport Association.

Each pilot leader and one participant from each pilot presented the objectives, methodology and results of the pilots. In addition to the presentations, there were working groups per pilot as well as integrated working groups. The main objectives of the working groups were to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each pilot with reference to the process followed and the lessons learnt, and to make recommendations on the future of BOB and BEST.

Results:

The workshop provided a valuable opportunity for all parties involved in the pilots - project leaders, participants and the European Commission - to discuss their experiences of the pilots and to evaluate the benchmarking process carried out in BOB. It was the first time that the different groups had been able to do this. The main results of the workshop were:

- A better understanding among participants of the strengths and weaknesses of the BOB pilots both in terms of the process (indicators and methodology), and the expectations of the different parties involved. Participants identified key aspects of the benchmarking process followed in BOB that required improvement: coping with missing or incomparable data; agreeing common performance indicators; linking results to transport policy; setting clear objectives; project management; communication between participants.
- Clarification of the Commission's requirements with regard to the final reports of each of the pilots, which must concentrate on clear outputs.
- Consensus on the need for a flexible approach to transport benchmarking which leaves those involved to assess the scope and viability of an exercise before starting the work.

Following the workshop, a Workshop Report was produced that summarises the proceedings of the workshop (presentations and working groups) and provides recommendations to the Commission on benchmarking criteria and methodology. The annex to the report includes the programme, list of participants, and presentations.

3.2.3 Newsletter

Objectives and content:

Six BEST newsletters have been published (see Annex):

Newsletter 1	January 2001
Newsletter 2	May 2001
Newsletter 3	September 2001
Newsletter 4	February 2002
Newsletter 5	September 2002
Newsletter 6	April 2003

The main aim of the newsletters was to provide an update of the BEST and BOB projects, as well as articles about other benchmarking projects or initiatives. Due to the success and usefulness of the newsletters as a tool to disseminate information about BEST and transport benchmarking, the length of the newsletter was extended from 4 pages (Newsletters 1 and 2) to 6 pages (Newsletters 3, 4, 5 and 6). Each newsletter comprised an editorial and regular information about the project:

- BEST is a project under the Fifth Framework Programme;
- Project partners;
- Steering Committee;
- Contact details of European Commission project officer, project coordinator and newsletter editor.

Newsletter 1:

- Introduction to BEST (objectives and process);
- Summary of BEST Conference 1 on the State of the Art of Benchmarking in All Sectors;
- Information on forthcoming BEST Conferences 2 and 3;
- An article on the Key Factors for Successful Benchmarking by Paul Leonard, benchmarking consultant and member of the BEST steering committee;
- Introduction to the BOB project;
- Information about the BEST website.

Newsletter 2:

- Summary of BEST project;
- Summary of BEST Conference 2 on the State of the Art of Benchmarking in the Transport Sector;
- Information on forthcoming BEST Conferences 3 and 4, and other transport/benchmarking events;
- An article by Lucia Szepova, participant in BEST and representative of the Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic;
- Information about how to use the BEST network and invitation to contribute to the newsletter and website;
- Information about the BOB project, with focus on the rail pilot.

Newsletter 3:

- A summary of the presentation made by Olivier Colla, Belgian Ministry of Mobility and Transport, at the third BEST conference which was held during the Belgian EU Presidency;
- Summary of the BEST project;
- Summary of BEST Conference 3 on the Indicators and Benchmarking in the Transport Sector;

- An article on indicators by Paul Leonard, benchmarking consultant and member of the BEST steering committee;
- Interviews with 4 delegates at the conference on their views of BEST and Conference 3;
- Information about the BOB project with updates on all three pilots;
- Information on forthcoming BEST Conference 4, and other transport/benchmarking events;
- An article on 'Indicators for performance measures for transportation, environment and sustainability in North America' by Henrik Gudmundsson, Danish National Environmental Research Institute;
- An article on 'Benchmarking and quality: the learning organisation' by Bill Clarke, transport strategy consultant.

Newsletter 4:

- An article on the project 'Benchmarking European Service of Public Transport' by the project coordinator Bo Tengblad, Stockholm Public Transport Authority;
- Summary of BEST Conference 4 on Putting Benchmarking Methodology into Practice;
- Interviews with 5 delegates at the conference on their views of BEST and Conference 4;
- Information on forthcoming BEST Conference 5, and other transport/benchmarking events;
- An update of the progress of the three BOB pilot projects;
- An article on the Public Sector Benchmarking Service, an initiative of the UK Government.

Newsletter 5:

- An article on International Comparisons and Benchmarking Policy by Andrew Wyatt, Centre for Policy and Management Studies, UK Cabinet Office;
- Summary of BEST Conference 5 on Benchmarking Transport Policy;
- Interviews with 3 delegates at Conference 5;
- An update of the progress of the three BOB pilot projects with contributions from BOB pilot participants;
- Information on forthcoming transport events;
- An article on the Swedish Citizen Customer Satisfaction Barometer run by the Swedish Public Transport Association.

Newsletter 6:

- Summary of the final BEST Conference;
- Summary of the BEST process from the beginning of the project;
- Interview with Claude Rossignol, the Directorate General for Energy and Transport;
- Article about the BEST and BOB projects by Francis Cheung, participant in the BEST and BOB projects and representative of the Dutch Ministry of Transport;
- Article on a railway benchmarking project by Margherita Vaglio, TrenItalia, who presented at the final BEST conference;
- Article about the BOB passenger railway project by Hilary Howatt, participant in the BEST and BOB projects and representative of Strathclyde Passenger Transport;
- Information about the results of the three BOB pilot projects;
- Farewell note from the BEST project coordinators;
- Information about the next steps after the end of the BEST project.

Dissemination:

The newsletters are disseminated to all participants in the BEST conferences in addition to participants at other relevant transport/benchmarking events attended by the principal contractors. The newsletter is also sent to appropriate contacts of each principal contractor. Approximately 900 copies of each newsletter are disseminated in total. The main groups of recipients are transport policy makers at national, regional and local levels operators, consultants, research institutes and associations working in the transport sector in the countries in which the principal contractors are based. For example:

Belgium:

- Federal Ministry of Transport and Mobility
- Walloon Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure
- Brussels Capital Region Ministry of Transport
- SNCB - Belgian Railways
- TRITEL consultants

France:

- Ministry of Transport
- Local transport authorities of Lyon, Lille and Marseille
- SNCF - French Railways

Netherlands:

- Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Economic Affairs
- Environmental Protection Agency
- City of the Hague, Department for Urban Development
- NSR - Dutch Railways
- NEI - Netherlands Economic Institute

Spain:

- Ministry of Transport
- Ministry of Environment
- Gijon City Council
- Association of Spanish Airports (AENA)
- FENEBUS

Poland:

- Ministry of Infrastructure
- Warsaw Department of Land Development and Architecture
- Polish Railways (PKP)
- Port of Gdansk Authority
- Rail Transport Research Centre
- Polish Automobile Association

Norway:

- Ministry of Transport and Communications
- Norwegian Highways Agency
- NATAM - Norwegian Air Traffic and Transport Management
- NSB - Norwegian Railways
- AS Oslo Sporveier (Oslo public transport operator)

Germany:

- Federal Ministry of Transportation
- Berlin State Department for Urban Development
- Berlin Transport Authority

- Technical University of Darmstadt
- Hertzog and Partner (consultants)
- German Road Traffic Council
- German Airport Association

In addition, the newsletter is sent to international and European organisations, for example:

- European Conference of Ministers of Transport
- International Association of Public Transport
- European Federation for Transport and Environment
- International Association of Railways
- International Air Transport Association
- International Road Transport Union
- European Sea Ports Organisation
- Vélo-Mondial

The newsletter is also sent to organisations outside Europe to maximise the impact of BEST and develop its links beyond Europe where relevant benchmarking work is being developed. For example, the newsletter is sent to Vancouver Airport (Canada), Federal Department of Transportation (USA), Booz Allen Hamilton (New Zealand), and Kyushu Railways (Japan).

Results:

Overall, the dissemination of the newsletter to a diverse range of transport professionals working in all modes of transport inside and outside Europe helped to increase the impact of BEST beyond the circle of those attending the conferences.

In particular, the newsletters were useful tools for BEST conference participants to inform their colleagues of the activities of BEST. The interviews with and articles by conference participants were very popular features of the newsletters and helped participants to raise the profile of and increase interest in BEST in their own organisations.

The newsletters were also valuable tools for updating the BEST network on the results of the BOB pilots and in general for disseminating information about the BOB project, as there was no dedicated BOB newsletter.

The results of the newsletter are therefore positive: the creation of a reader-friendly format with diverse information about benchmarking in the transport sector, a large readership, and increased interest in the BEST and BOB projects.

3.2.4 Website

Objectives and content:

The BEST website (www.besttransport.org) was launched in August 2000. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the BEST project and useful information and links to other relevant projects. Extensive research was carried out in order to provide detailed and relevant information for the website. Throughout the duration of the project, the website was regularly updated.

The project coordinator and website manager were responsible for writing and editing all texts on the website and designing the layout of the website. The other principal contractors and participants in the BEST network provided contributions to the website.

The main features of the website are:

- A description of the project (objectives, structure, partners);
- An introduction to the concept of benchmarking, a wide range of examples of benchmarking projects in transport and non-transport sectors throughout Europe;
- All conference papers and programmes (Conferences 1-6);
- All conference reports and recommendations that have been approved by the Commission (Conferences 1-5);
- The six BEST newsletters (pdf format), including the possibility to submit articles;
- Information about the BOB project (objectives, structure, partners, working documents);
- Links to other relevant websites;
- Contact addresses of all partners and European Commission.

Results:

The establishment of the BEST website has created a unique database of information about benchmarking in the transport sector. It is the most important dissemination tool of the project as it reaches users from across the world. The website acts as a 'one-stop-shop' and comprehensive resource centre on transport benchmarking. In total there have been 8140 visits to the website since its creation.

The contact facility (best@ogm.be) is frequently used with enquiries coming from researchers, transport authorities, transport operators and consultants from Europe and as far a field as Mexico and Canada. Most users of the site are looking for general information about sustainable transport and/or benchmarking. Some users require specific information for a study or project that they are undertaking.

The website has also been an important tool for providing information about BOB, as there is no dedicated website for BOB. This has resulted in the wide dissemination of the work of the BOB pilots.

3.2.5 Dissemination activities

Information about BEST has been widely disseminated during the three year duration of the project, via presentations at relevant events, articles in transport/benchmarking publications, and participation in events. A selection of some of the main dissemination activities is given below.

Presentations:

- *'Benchmarking in Urban Transport'*, presentation by Wojciech Suchorzewski, Warsaw Technical University, at the IV Annual Urban Transport Conference "Effectiveness of Urban Transport" (Lodz, Poland, September 2000). The presentation described benchmarking applications in the context of urban transport, referring to the BEST project. The conference was attended by over 200 participants, who were representatives of transport operators, authorities, and industry.
- *'Participation in EU Transport Research Projects'*, presentation by Lucy Gordon, OGM, at the INCO-MED⁶ Infoday organised by the European Commission (Brussels, Belgium, June 2001). The presentation described the BEST project and the process of preparing and coordinating an EU research project. The Infoday was attended by approximately 30 participants who were representatives of national Ministries of Transport or national research institutes in Euro-Mediterranean countries, for example, Cyprus, Spain, Tunisia, and Malta.

⁶ INCO-MED - European Commission research programme for International Cooperation in the Mediterranean

- *'The European Commission's Approach to Benchmarking in the Transport Sector'*, presentation by Lucy Gordon, OGM, at a Benchmarking Workshop at the European Transport Conference (Cambridge, UK, September 2001). The European Transport Conference is organised by the Association for European Transport and is an annual event where transport professionals come together to keep up-to-date with policy issues, research findings and best practices across a broad spectrum of transport. Approximately 800 delegates from throughout the world attend the three-day conference. The half-day benchmarking workshop was organised by the BEST project coordinator in order to raise the profile of European benchmarking initiatives and to stimulate interest in the BEST project. The workshop was attended by approximately 20 people who were representatives of transport authorities and operators, research institutes and consultants from different countries in Europe.
- *'Benchmarking - a buzzword or a practical tool for the public transport sector?'*, presentation by Nils Fearnley (TOI) at a one-day working seminar on "Benchmarking and customer satisfaction surveys" (Oslo, Norway, March 2002), organised by the Public Transport Forum, coordinated by TOI. The paper gave a full introduction to benchmarking and the projects BEST and BOB. The seminar gathered some 22 executive members (senior managers) from authorities (Ministry of Transport, County Councils, The Norwegian Pollution Control Authority), Public Roads Administration, Taxi federation, Norwegian Federation of Transport Companies, and major public transport operators in Norway.
- *'Benchmarking: concept and application'*, a benchmarking training seminar for the Directorate General for Energy and Transport, organised by OGM (Brussels, Belgium, May 2002). The aim of the seminar was to raise awareness and increase understanding of benchmarking among transport policy-makers at the European Commission. The seminar provided an introduction to the concept of benchmarking and present examples of its application in the public sector at a European level and the lessons learnt from past and current the Directorate General for Energy and Transport benchmarking activities. The seminar was attended by approximately 15 the Directorate General for Energy and Transport civil servants. Presentations were made by OGM and Paul Leonard, benchmarking expert and member of the BEST steering committee.
- *'Possible involvement of AENA in the BEST and BOB Projects'* by Miguel de Bernardo, INECO, at a meeting with the International Division of AENA (Madrid, Spain, August 2002). The aim of the presentation was to present the BEST and BOB projects and to encourage the active participation of ANEA in both projects.
- *'Benchmarking transport policy: the use of benchmarking in effectively developing and implementing transport policy'*, paper by Nils Fearnley (TOI), Lucy Gordon (OGM) and JanJaap de Vlieger (Erasmus) at the European Transport Conference, (Cambridge, UK, September 2002). The paper was based on the findings of the BEST project and was jointly presented by JanJaap de Vlieger and Lucy Gordon in a specific session on Benchmarking in Transport. The session was attended by approximately 30 representatives of transport authorities and operators, research institutes and consultants from different countries in Europe.
- *'European Benchmarking for Regional Transport Authorities'* by Elke Stellbrink and Markus Podbregar, FAV, at a seminar organised by FAV (Berlin, Germany, October 2002). The presentation was based on the BEST experiences, particularly with regard to benchmarking in the field of transport policy, and described the use of benchmarking as a tool to compare and learn between regions and cities in order to encourage

regional and local authorities to continue/start benchmarking activities. The seminar was attended by 20 high level representatives from local government, small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), research facilities and other stakeholders in Berlin and Brandenburg.

- *Presentation by WUT at a seminar organised by the IKKU (Continuing Education in Transport Engineering) (Warsaw, Poland, April 2003).* The seminar was attended by Polish urban transport authorities.

Articles and Publications:

- 'Benchmarking European Sustainable Transport', by Nils Fearnley, TOI, published in the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign newsletter No. 24, 2002;
- 'The BEST Moves', by Lucy Gordon, OGM, published in the Public Sector Benchmarking Service newsletter, Edition 2, January 2002.
- 'Comparative analysis - Benchmarking - in local passenger transport systems: definitions, examples and recommendations', Pascal Vincent, CERTU, November 2001. This report was published by CERTU and includes a chapter on European benchmarking initiatives in which BEST is mentioned. The report can be downloaded (in French) from www.certu.fr.
- Article on benchmarking by Nils Fearnley (TOI), published in Samferdsel, a Norwegian public transport newsletter, May 2002. The publication provides updates on Norwegian public transport matters as well as relevant European developments. It has a circulation of about 8000 readers. The article on benchmarking, was based on the findings of BEST and referred to the BEST and BOB projects.
- CERTU has used the results of BEST in teaching material prepared in the framework of the EU sponsored PORTAL project - Promotion of Results in Transport research And Learning (www.eu-portal.net). The 3-year PORTAL project (2000-2003) develops teaching material, which is based on EU transport projects and aimed at transport education institutes throughout Europe. By integrating the results of BEST into one of its key topics "Quality and Benchmarking in public transport", the PORTAL project helps to promote a common approach to benchmarking in the transport sector that has been promoted by BEST.
- Summary of BEST project findings and recommendations, article by Wojciech Suchorzewski, WUT, published in "Przegląd Komunikacyjny", a monthly magazine published by the Polish Association of Transport Engineers (SITK). A shortened version of this article will also be published in the Bulletin of IGKM (Chamber of Urban Transport).
- 'EU assesses how to get the 'best' out of benchmarking', interview with project coordinator, published by CORDIS News, 12 June 2003. CORDIS (Community Research and Development Information Service) provides information about current Community RTD projects in all sectors. 'CORDIS News' is published on the CORDIS website, on the 'Today' page (www.cordis.lu).

Articles about BEST have also been published in the newsletters of the consortium members' organisations, including the newsletters of the TOI Public Transport Forum, FAV, and NEA. Summaries of the projects have been published on partners' websites and other relevant national websites, for example in Germany: www.technologiestiftung-berlin.de and www.berlinews.de.

Participation in events:

These events were attended by principal contractors because the themes of the event were particularly relevant to the issues covered in BEST, the participants at the event were useful contacts for the network, and there were good opportunities for speaking informally to other transport professionals about the aims and results of BEST. Some events mentioned below took place annually and were regularly attended by the principal contractors. The events included a mixture of international/European level conferences as well as national and regional/local seminars.

International/European:

- *Citizens' Network Benchmarking Initiative, Launch Conference (April 2001) and Final Conference (February 2002), Brussels.* This one-year benchmarking initiative was sponsored by the Directorate General for Energy and Transport, European Commission, and was aimed at improving the performance of European local and regional transport. The benchmarking network involved up to 40 regions and cities from throughout Europe. Approximately 150 participants attended the launch and final conferences: local, regional, national authorities, operators, European Commission officials, research institutes, transport associations and representatives of other transport networks/initiatives. Principal contractors who attended: Yves Mathieu and Lucy Gordon, OGM, and JanJaap de Vlieger, Erasmus.
- *Seminar of the IMPRINT project: Implementing Pricing Reform in Transport - Effective Use of Research on Pricing (November 2001, Brussels).* The seminar was attended by approximately 50 participants who were mainly representatives of the European Commission and national Ministries of Transport, in addition to some transport operators and researchers. The IMPRINT project brings together policy-makers, operators, researchers and other stakeholders in order to promote the implementation of fair and efficient transport prices. The seminar addressed recent policy developments, links to other transport and land-use policy instruments and barriers to implementation. Principal contractor who attended: Elke Stellbrink, FAV.
- *Land Use and Transport Research and Policy stakeholders' Workshop, Sustainable Urban Mobility' (Brussels, January 2002), attended by Lucy Gordon (OGM).* The workshop was co-organised by the European Parliament and the European Commission. Over 100 participants attended the workshop, including city representatives, local, regional, national authorities, transport operators, mobility agencies, Members of the European Parliament, research institutes and consultants, and European Commission officials. One of the main objectives of the meeting was to help policy makers to define an appropriate policy framework and regulatory context to achieve urban sustainability. Principal contractor who attended: Lucy Gordon, OGM.
- *Biennial UITP World Congress, London 2001 and Madrid 2003.* The three-day Congress is organised by the UITP (International Association of Public Transport) and is attended by over 8000 participants. The 54th World Congress in May 2001 took place in London and was held together with a Mobility and City Transport Exhibition at which transport operators, authorities, consultants and suppliers exhibit their products. OGM organised a transport benchmarking stand at which information about BEST was displayed. The 55th World Congress and took place in Madrid 2003 and addressed the themes of multimodality and integration. BEST newsletters were distributed at the Congress. Principal contractor who attended: Yves Mathieu, OGM.

- *INNOTRANS 2002: International Trade Fair for Transport Technology, organised by MESSE BERLIN GmbH (Berlin, Germany, September 2002).* More than 1000 exhibitors from 31 countries and approximately 25000 professionals visited the Fair. The majority of participants was small and medium sized enterprises and global players in the rail transport sector. The Fair provided a forum for companies to display and market their products, and also included a programme of round table discussions and seminars. Principal contractor who attended: Markus Podbregar, FAV.
- *'Building Energy and Transport Infrastructures for Tomorrow's Europe', Second Annual European Energy and Transport Conference, organised by the Directorate General for Energy and Transport, European Commission (Barcelona, Spain, November 2002).* The conference was attended by approximately 800 participants who were representatives of public authorities, private companies, research institutes, suppliers and associations active in the fields of transport and energy. The main aim of the conference was to disseminate information about several initiatives in the energy and transport sector and to provide an opportunity to exchange views on energy and transport infrastructures. In parallel to the conference, there was an exhibition on Trans-European Networks and the results of EU research programmes. Principal contractors who attended: Beatriz Pelaez, OGM, Pieter Hilferink, NEA.
- *'What regulations in freight transport to ensure the internal market?', Workshop organised by the European Federation for Transport and the Environment (Brussels, December 2002).* The workshop was attended by approximately 50 participants who were representatives of the European Commission, Regional Representations based in Brussels, Members of the European Parliament, research institutions, Ministries of Transport, universities, non-governmental organisations and consultants. The objectives of the workshop were to address the issues of pricing and charging for access to infrastructure. Principal contractor who attended: Robert Jones, OGM.
- *Final conference of the PORTAL project (Braunwald, Switzerland, March 2003), organised by project coordinator FGM/AMOR (Austrian consultancy) and ETHZ (Swiss consultancy).* The conference was attended by approximately 60 participants from EU and Accession Countries. The objective of the conference was to present the experiences of the PORTAL project which developed teaching material based on EU transport projects and aimed at transport education institutes throughout Europe. Principal contractor who attended: Nicolas Crossonneau, CERTU.

National:

- *Annual Congress of UTP (French Association of Public Transport), (Bordeaux, November 2001 and Grenoble, November 2002).* The UTP Congress is attended by approximately 2000 participants representing a wide range of transport professionals in France and other European countries - authorities, operators, infrastructure providers, user associations, education and research institutes. Principal contractors who attended: Yves Mathieu, OGM, and Nicolas Crossonneau, CERTU.
- *'The White Paper on European Transport Policy', seminar organised by the Spanish Transport Association and the College of Civil Engineers (Madrid, Spain, October 2002).* The seminar was attended by approximately 60 participants who were representatives of the Ministry of Transport, RENFE (Spanish Railways) and AENA. Principal contractor who attended: Miguel de Bernardo, INECO.
- *Fourth National Conference on Congestion (Poznan, Poland, May 2003).* Principal contractor who attended: Wojciech Suchorzewski, WUT.

Regional/Local:

- *Conference of European network of mobility agencies*, organised by the regional transport authority of Emilia Romagna Region (*Emilia Romagna, Italy, March 2002*). This conference was attended by approximately 20 participants from 10 regions (5 Italian, 5 from other EU countries). The objective of the conferences was to create a pan-European framework for benchmarking mobility agencies and to promote good practices in the field of mobility agencies. Principal contractor who attended: Yves Mathieu, OGM.
- Berlin Energy Days: Clean Energy - Contribution to a sustainable mobility, event organised by the local administration for city development, "Berliner Impulse" and the "German Energy Agency" (Berlin, Germany, May 2002). The event was attended by approximately 60 participants, who were representatives of research institutes, local public authorities and associations. The objective of the event was to raise awareness of innovative energy technologies and energy policies in order to contribute to the German energy debate. Principal contractor who attended: Markus Podregar, FAV.
- Europe and Transport in South East England, seminar organised by South East England House Partnership (Brussels, Belgium, December 2002). The seminar was attended by approximately 60 participants who were representatives of UK local authorities, the South East Regional Assembly, non-governmental organisations, EU officials and representatives from other European Regional Brussels Representation Offices. The objective of the seminar was to provide an up-to-date analysis of EU transport policy and its impact on the South East regional transport strategy. Principal contractor who attended: Robert Jones, OGM.

Additional dissemination activities:

One of the most useful and frequent dissemination activities has been the informal presentation of BEST to the contacts and clients of the principal contractors in the framework of meetings for other, related projects. For example, during the past year:

- OGM managed a project for the Finnish Ministry of Transport, in the course of which it was possible to distribute information about BEST to a wide range of transport professionals (national and regional authorities, rail and coach operators, mayors etc.) in Finland. (October 2002 to March 2003)
- OGM organised a meeting with the Public Sector Benchmarking Service (PSBS) in order to exchange information about the work of BEST and the PSBS. The Public Sector Benchmarking Service was set up in 2000 by the Cabinet Office and HM Customs and Excise of the UK Government. Its objective is to promote and support effective benchmarking and sharing of good practices across the public sector by providing practical help and a database of useful contacts and information. (March 2002)
- WUT provided information about BEST to the Warsaw Chamber of Urban Transport and the Association of Polish Cities in its discussions about the inclusion of benchmarking in their continuous education programmes. (January 2003)
- NEA referred to BEST in a presentation on the role of benchmarking in transport policy implementation at a seminar organised in the framework of a project for the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport. (May 2003).

- CERTU spoke about BEST in the framework of its work with the Scientific and Technical Network which includes seven transport research centres in France. (October 2002 and June 2003)

Results:

The main results of the dissemination activities of the BEST project consortium are:

- *Increased awareness of the BEST project at European, national and regional/local levels:* The variety of dissemination activities undertaken by the principal contractors have raised awareness of the project among a wide range of transport professionals throughout Europe (and beyond). This has helped to raise the profile of and increase interest in benchmarking in the transport sector. For example, as a result of its close contact with the work of BEST, the Association of European Transport, organisers of the annual European Transport Conference, decided to include a benchmarking workshop in the Conference in 2001, and the following year it built on the interest in the topic by including an entire session on transport benchmarking.
- *Valuable links to other initiatives and networks:* Through participation in events, the principal contractors have created links between BEST and other relevant networks and initiatives, which has resulted in increased interest in BEST and led to an expansion of the BEST network, which benefits BEST participants as they are provided with a continuously growing source of knowledge and contacts. For example:
 - (i) Links with the Citizens' Network Benchmarking Initiative (CNBI) resulted in the participation of some local/regional transport authorities in BEST conferences, therefore expanding the impact of BEST, and enabled the BEST participants to learn about the CNBI when it was presented at BEST Conference 2;
 - (ii) Links with the Public Sector Benchmarking Service (PSBS) have resulted in a Transport Benchmarking section being added to the Knowledge Bank of the PSBS website. The PSBS made useful contributions to BEST Conferences: it provided information about the Centre for Policy and Management Studies whose work was presented at BEST Conference 5; the PSBS was presented at BEST Conference 6; and the PSBS also provided BEST conference participants with a guide to benchmarking in the public sector.
 - (iii) Exchanges with UITP (International Association of Public Transport) have resulted in productive links between BEST and UITP. For example, UITP adopted the BEST approach in the organisation of a seminar on "How to build a successful mobility project financed by the Structural Funds" (March 2003, Budapest, Hungary). BEST representatives of national ministries in Accession Countries were invited to the seminar, so there was mutual benefit for BEST and UITP.
 - (iv) Links with the PORTAL project have resulted in the use of BEST results in the educational material produced on 'Quality and Benchmarking in public transport'. This has contributed to a better understanding of benchmarking among students of transport who will be able to implement benchmarking in their future work as professionals in the sector.
- *Contact with experts in the field:* Participation in conferences provided opportunities for principal contractors to meet experts who were useful contributors to BEST. For example, Anthony May (University of Leeds, UK) was one of the speakers at the Land Use and Transport Research and Policy stakeholders' Workshop (January 2002) and was subsequently invited to chair the second day of the fifth BEST conference.

- *Better understanding of key European transport issues to address within BEST:* The dissemination activities of the principal contractors enabled them to be well informed about major transport, benchmarking, and related issues being debated at a European level and also in individual countries and regions. This resulted in BEST conferences which addressed topical issues of key interest to participants. Continuous and active dissemination activities helped the BEST project to maintain its dynamism and relevance over its three-year duration. For example, participation in the European Commission conference on Energy and Transport (November 2002) was a good opportunity to be updated on European transport and energy policy developments. The final BEST conference included a presentation on benchmarking in the energy sector as well as several examples from the transport sector.

3.2.6 Links with BOB

The BEST project was associated with a 'sister' project, BOB, an accompanying measure under the Fifth Framework Programme. Three practical benchmarking pilot projects were carried out in BOB. The two projects were interlinked: BEST provided input to BOB and in turn, the results of BOB were fed into BEST. The timing of the BOB project - starting a year after BEST and finishing three months before BEST - enabled BOB to benefit from the information gathered in BEST Conferences 1 to 4, and then to present the results of the pilots at the final conference of BEST. The material gathered in BEST informed and supported the work carried out in BOB, as outlined below.

BEST conferences:

- All BOB participants were invited to participate in the BEST conferences⁷. The BEST conferences provided the opportunity for BOB participants to learn about the application of benchmarking in the transport sector and to meet other practitioners and experts with whom to exchange experiences.
- BEST Conferences 1 and 2 provided information about the state of the art of benchmarking and examples of successful benchmarking projects in the transport sector. BEST Conference 2 addressed areas of particular relevance to the BOB pilots (passenger rail transport, road safety, and airport accessibility): Benchmarking World Metros; Benchmarking Dutch Railways, International Road Transport Union best practice guide, and the IATA Global Airport Monitor. The information about the key success factors and main challenges for benchmarking provided input to the preparatory phases of the BOB pilot projects.
- BEST Conference 3 provided specific information about benchmarking criteria. The conference presented case studies of particular interest to the BOB project, for example, air-rail links benchmarking exercise carried out by the International Air-Rail Organisation, relevant to the work of the BOB airport pilot. In addition to the conference report, recommendations on indicators were produced in order to maximise the value of the BEST findings for the work of BOB. The recommendations from Conferences 3 were drawn from the whole range of material covered at Conference 3 and outlined the principles and themes relating to the use of indicators for benchmarking in the transport sector: defining and developing indicators, and establishing and maintaining indicator systems.

⁷ As the BOB project started in May 2001, no formal BOB participants attended the first two BEST conferences. 7 BOB participants attended Conference 3 (June 2001); 10 attended Conference 4 (October 2001); 20 attended Conference 5 (June 2002); and 13 attended the Final Conference (March 2003).

- BEST Conference 4 provided specific information about benchmarking methodology. Conference 4 presented a wide range of approaches to benchmarking, helpful to the BOB the project, for example, a public transport benchmarking project to improve customer satisfaction (Nordic BEST), particularly relevant to the work of the BOB rail pilot. Particular attention was given to the BOB pilots at the conference: group discussions following presentations took into account the needs of the BOB pilots and BOB participants were encouraged to express their views.
- In addition to the conference report, recommendations on benchmarking methodology were produced in order to maximise the value of the BEST findings for the work of BOB. The recommendations served two purposes: firstly, they propose ways in which the European Commission can promote and facilitate a common approach, at European level, to benchmarking methodology in the transport sector; and secondly, they provide a 'benchmarking methodology menu' of different approaches to benchmarking and set out useful and practical guidelines for participants in a benchmarking exercise.
- Updates of the BOB pilots were presented at the BEST conferences. The pilot leaders presented the overall objectives and process of the pilots, and participants were invited to present their first-hand experience of participating in the pilots, explaining their reasons for benchmarking and expectations from the exercise. The final results of the BOB pilots were presented at the Final BEST Conference. This enable the wider BEST network to follow the progress of the BOB pilots and to learn about the challenges of practical benchmarking.

BEST-BOB workshop:

- In the framework of BEST, a workshop was organised (November 2002) in order to evaluate the BOB project. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity for all parties involved in the pilots - project leaders, participants and the European Commission - to discuss their experiences of the pilots and to evaluate the benchmarking process carried out in BOB with reference to the findings of BEST.

BEST dissemination activities:

- The BEST website, with its extensive source of information on a wide range of benchmarking projects and links to other benchmarking initiatives, also provided support to BOB. The dedicated BOB page on the BEST website enabled BOB participants to have updated information about all three pilots.
- The BEST newsletters provided information about the BOB pilots and enabled the BOB participants to express their views on the benefits of participation in BOB, for example, Newsletter 5 included contributions from participants in each of the pilots, and Newsletter 6 included an article by a participant in the rail pilot.
- At the official start-up meetings of each of the pilots⁸, BEST was presented by the BEST project coordinator (OGM) and the links between BEST and BOB were explained.
- All BEST deliverables were distributed to BOB participants either at the BEST conferences or at the individual pilot meetings. The BEST material provided valuable input to the Benchmarking Guide and Assessment Guide produced by the BOB project.
- Information about BOB was regularly disseminated together with information about BEST at relevant transport events (e.g. dissemination activities in section 2.3.5 above).

⁸ Passenger Rail, October 2001, Road Safety, November 2001, Airport Accessibility, November 2001.

The dissemination activities of the BEST network have led to increased awareness about the BOB pilots.

4 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Main results

The main results of the project are:

- **The creation of a comprehensive network of transport policy makers and other stakeholders:**

BEST created the first international network that addressed the use of benchmarking in the transport sector. During three years of activity, the network brought together over 100 representatives of public authorities, operators, associations, organisations, research institutes and consultants from all sectors of transport (passenger and freight, rail, air, road, intermodal, urban, cycling etc.), as well as non transport sectors (telecommunications, manufacturing, business etc.), and from different levels (international, European, national, regional and local). An important added value of the project has been its diversity and outward-looking approach, involving experts and professionals from different countries within and outside Europe (EU Member States, Accession Countries, Norway, Switzerland, USA, Canada and New Zealand). This approach increased the learning potential of network participants who were exposed to a wide range of expertise and experiences. It also contributed to a better understanding of the work being carried out by transport policy makers in different countries (and continents) and different transport sub-sectors. In this way, the network identified synergies and facilitated dialogue between related initiatives and projects.

- **Increased awareness of the potential of benchmarking in the transport sector:**

The series of six BEST conferences, together with the project website and newsletter, helped to increase significantly awareness of benchmarking (methodology, benefits and barriers) among transport policy makers and other stakeholders in the transport sector. BEST provided expert and practical information about benchmarking methodology, key success factors, benefits, limitations, and the challenges involved in benchmarking. Through the presentation of examples of successful benchmarking projects, participants learned about the benefits of benchmarking as well as the challenges and problems that can be encountered.

- **Increased understanding of the use of benchmarking in relation to policy:**

BEST was a particularly innovative project because it addressed the issue of benchmarking in relation to policy. Before BEST, benchmarking was most commonly known in the transport sector as a tool to improve operations and production. Building on the successful experiences of benchmarking in other sectors and at other levels, BEST covered new ground by exploring the potential of benchmarking at the levels of policy and strategy. As a result of the debates and exchanges at BEST conferences, five types of benchmarking in relation to policy have been identified⁹: (i) policy on benchmarking; (ii) benchmarking into policy; (iii) benchmarking for policy; (iv) benchmarking of policy; and (v) benchmarking of policy making. The identification of these different types of benchmarking has led to a clearer understanding of why and how benchmarking should be used to support the development of EU sustainable transport policies.

⁹ For more details, see the Final BEST Recommendations which will soon be available on www.besttransport.org.

- **The production of new material about benchmarking:**

During the course of the project, new material about benchmarking was produced, particularly for the conferences, as well as for the website and newsletter. Approximately 60 original papers were produced for the BEST conferences, which provide an overview of the state of the art of benchmarking in the transport sector. Six BEST conference reports have also been produced, which provide summaries of the conference proceedings and conclusions. This has resulted in a valuable collection of case studies, papers and reports that can be drawn on by policy makers to support current and future benchmarking activities.

- **Recommendations to the European Commission:**

BEST produced six sets of recommendations to the European Commission. Each set of recommendations related to a specific topic addressed by the BEST conferences (state of the art, criteria, methodology, policy etc.). For each topic, recommendations were made on the role of the Commission in the area of benchmarking in the transport sector, as well as proposals for further research and activities. In summary, the recommendations propose that the Commission take an active role in promoting and facilitating benchmarking at a European level by: adopting a policy that supports benchmarking as a tool to improve the quality, efficiency and sustainability of transport in Europe; providing practical assistance (information, guidelines, help desk etc.) to benchmarking initiatives undertaken by authorities, operators and other organisations in Member States and Accession Countries; and funding benchmarking projects directly related to specific EU policy objectives.

- **A comprehensive website on transport benchmarking:**

The creation of the BEST website has resulted in a unique database of information about benchmarking in the transport sector. The website acts as a 'one-stop-shop' and comprehensive resource centre on transport benchmarking. In total there have been 8140 visits to the website since its creation. The contact facility (best@ogm.be) is frequently used with enquiries coming from researchers, transport authorities, transport operators and consultants from Europe and as far a field as Mexico and Canada. Most users of the site are looking for general information about sustainable transport and/or benchmarking. Some users require specific information for a study or project that they are undertaking.

- **Increased benchmarking activities in Europe:**

The BEST project has led to an increase in benchmarking and related activities by participants in the network. Approximately 93% of participants who replied to the post-conference questionnaire (March 2003) said that BEST had had an impact on their work. For example, as a result of BEST, the Ministry of Transport and Communications in Finland undertook an external evaluation of its national public transport strategy. Through participating in the BEST conferences and learning about the benefits of evaluation and comparison with others, the Finnish representative brought back her knowledge to her Ministry and initiated the external strategy evaluation. Another example is the initiative of the Ministry of Transport of Norway that has started an urban public transport benchmarking exercise, partly due to their participation in BEST. The objective of the initiative is to build up a data set that describes the developments in the participating cities, which are undergoing a trial scheme for the alternative organisation of public responsibility for public transport. The most important area for benchmarking is therefore public transport, but the impact of private car use is also relevant.

- **The development of an innovative approach to conferences:**

The interactive and dynamic format of the BEST conferences has played an important part in the success of the project and has become a 'hallmark' of BEST. Participants were seated around tables to encourage discussion, and seating plans were used to make sure that different sectors and countries were mixed equally. Introduction activities were also used as 'ice-breakers' at the beginning of conferences to make participants more at ease about expressing their views. Rather than sitting passively listening for two days, participants were encouraged to contribute actively, particularly by taking part in the group work and video interviews. Approximately 87% of participants who replied to a post-conference questionnaire (Conference 4, October 2001) found the interactive approach effective, and as a result, the same approach is being used at national and regional levels, for example at the National Traffic Safety Conference in Poland (May 2004).

4.2 Dissemination plans

The BEST consortium will disseminate the results of the project at relevant events (conferences, seminars etc.), in publications (newsletters, journals, reports etc.) and in the course of their work on other projects when relevant (meetings, studies, networks etc.). Particular dissemination activities already planned include:

Presentations:

- 'Benchmarking European Sustainable Transport', presentation by Lucy Gordon, OGM, at a seminar organised by the European New Towns Platform (Craigavon, Northern Ireland, July 2003). The seminar addressed a range of issues relating to sustainable development, particularly in cities: the environment, energy, urban planning, transport, and EU enlargement. The conference was attended by approximately 70 people, representatives of the European Commission, United Nations, local public authorities, associations and research institutes. The presentation of BEST gave an overview of the project and showed how benchmarking could contribute to the development of sustainable transport.
- 'EU work in transport benchmarking', presentation by JanJaap de Vlieger and Peran van Reeve, Erasmus, at the Air//Rail Conference 2003, supported by the International Air Rail Organisation, Frankfurt Airport, Deutsche Bahn and Lufthansa (Frankfurt, Germany, September 2003). The conference will be attended by approximately 75 people, representatives of air and rail organisations (airport authorities, rail operators etc.) in Europe. The conference will address air-rail intermodality, including issues such as integrated transport policy in Europe, ITS, mobility management and benchmarking. The presentation by Erasmus will focus on the results of the BOB airport accessibility, but will also integrate findings of the BEST project.
- The BOB rail pilot will be presented by Pieter Hilferink, NEA, at the European Transport Conference, organised by the Association of European Transport (Strasbourg, France, October 2003). The European Transport Conference is an annual event where transport professionals come together to keep up-to-date with policy issues, research findings and best practices across a broad spectrum of transport. Approximately 800 delegates from throughout the world attend the three-day conference. The presentation by NEA will focus on the results of the BOB rail pilot, but will also integrate findings of the BEST project.
- WUT will present the BEST and BOB projects at the Fifth National Conference on Traffic Safety in Warsaw, Poland, May 2004.

- NEA will present the BEST and BOB projects at the Transportberatung Europa Conference in Bulgaria, September 2003 and at the NEA Transport Conference, 2004.

Publication of articles/reports:

- An article about BEST will be published in the FAV newsletter (September 2003) which will be disseminated to local authorities and administration departments (100), companies (80), research institutes (75) and other national and international contacts (440).
- An article about BEST by Markus Podbregar, FAV, will be published (August 2003) in the Technology Foundation Innovation Centre Berlin (TSB). The TSB is a platform for dialogue between technology and politics. It helps to establish contacts, sets up networks and stimulates discussions aimed at strengthening the economic potential of the region. The online-newsletter is published every month and will be disseminated to approximately 600 international, national and regional contacts.
- TOI will publish a report 'BOB and BEST: Benchmarking European Sustainable Transport: documentation of the EU-funded projects BOB and BEST' (September or October 2003). The report will summarise the findings of the projects and be used to disseminate the project results to key actors in the Norwegian transport sector (the report will be available in Norwegian only).
- WUT will publish several articles about BEST and benchmarking in professional journals, for example: Przegląd Komunikacyjny (Transport Review); Ekonomika transportu (Transport Economics); Transport Miejski (Urban Transport - a monthly magazine); Przegląd Komunikacyjny (Urban Transport); Rynki Kolejowe (Transport Markets); Przegląd Kolejowy (Railways Review) over the period of 2003 to 2004.

Other dissemination activities:

- OGM will use the results of BEST in the EU training programme¹⁰ which it is coordinating. The programme is being funded under the Community's Fifth Framework Programme and aims to deliver a comprehensive programme of European training seminars designed for mid-career transport managers and executives working in local/regional authorities and related bodies, or for public transport operators in the EU and future member states. The training programme consists of a cycle of four seminars, to be carried out on a yearly basis from 2003 to 2005. One of the annual seminars will focus on developing and monitoring urban transport strategies, and will address the topic of benchmarking and use the results of BEST in the development of training material.
- WUT will use the results of BEST in the preparation of teaching material for its courses on benchmarking methodology and urban transport benchmarking (2003 to 2004).
- TOI is taking the initiative to establish a forum of the main Norwegian public transport operators in order to enable them to share data on key indicators on a regular basis. This information can be used to identify trends and to make forecasts, and also to identify best practice and enable operators to learn from each other's good practice. The forum will use the benchmarking principles and success factors identified in the BEST material. The forum is planned to be up and running by September/October 2003.

¹⁰ For more information, visit the website: www.transport-training.org

ANNEX

- i. BEST newsletters
- ii. BEST conference programmes

i. BEST newsletters

Six BEST newsletters were published (January 2001; May 2001; September 2001; February 2002; September 2002; and April 2003). Each newsletter was sent to all BEST conference participants, as well as the contacts of the BEST consortium partners, which represented a total of approximately 900 recipients. The newsletters provided updates of the project work, particularly the conferences, together with articles by transport and/or benchmarking experts, interviews with conference delegates, and information about the BOB project.

ii. BEST conference and workshop programmes

Conference Number	Conference Title	Date
1	The State of the Art of Benchmarking	October 19-20, 2000
2	The State of the Art of Benchmarking in the Transport Sector	January 25-26, 2001
3	Indicators and Benchmarking in the Transport Sector	June 7-8, 2001
4	Putting benchmarking methodology into practice	October 4-5, 2001
5	Benchmarking transport policy	June 10-11, 2002
Workshop	BEST-BOB Workshop	November 18, 2002
6	Final BEST conference	March 12-13, 2003