

Prime Infrastructure Homepage



PRIME is an open forum of European rail infrastructure managers and of the European Commission.

Strategic note on climate change adaptation for European infrastructure managers

Climate change has both short- and long-term impacts, including extreme weather events and rising sea levels. Railway infrastructure is significantly affected, leading to deterioration, disruptions, and financial consequences. Launched in November 2022, the PRIME task force on adaptation to climate change has been a place for IMs to share knowledge concerning climate change risks, adaptation solutions and quantification of effects, and to engage in discussions regarding EU adaptation policies. The strategic note on Climate change adaptation for European infrastructure managers summarizes their work.

Strategic note on climate change adaptation for European infrastructure managers

[PRIME TF_ACC_Strategic note PUBLISHED.pdf](#)

Releasing the sixth PRIME Benchmarking Report

The Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers in Europe (PRIME) is pleased to announce the release of its sixth benchmarking report, covering the years 2017-2021. The platform was established in 2013 to promote cooperation between infrastructure managers in Europe and foster the rail sector. The report presents key figures and insights on European rail infrastructure managers' safety, performance, revenues, and expenditures.

About the findings

Despite the severe impact of the pandemic on the transport sector in 2020, the latest PRIME Benchmarking report demonstrates a significant recovery in rail traffic in 2021. Almost all infrastructure managers reported increased passenger train activity, with three companies surpassing their pre-pandemic levels. Freight train utilization also showed positive growth, with half of the infrastructure managers recording higher utilization rates compared to before the pandemic.

PRIME Work Programme 2024

[PRIME Work Programme 2024 ADOPTED.pdf](#)

While lower utilization had a positive impact on train punctuality in 2020, the punctuality levels decreased in 2021 as train activity returned to normal levels. The report also highlights an overall increase in spending, with OPEX figures rising by 4% and CAPEX by 9% compared to 2020.

Recognized as the mode of transport with the lowest emissions, rail plays a crucial role in reducing the environmental impact of the transport sector and achieving Europe's goal of becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The European Green Deal emphasizes the increased use of rail as a cornerstone of the EU's mobility strategy in the coming decades. The PRIME KPI and Benchmarking report also indicates figures on a greener rail industry. Participants increased their share of electrified main track-km by 0.6% compared to 2020, and the use of electricity-powered trains on the network increased by 1%.

About the report

19 participating infrastructure managers, four new performance indicators and a more complete dataset

This year, 19 infrastructure managers took part in the report, in which SŽ-I (Slovenia) participated for the first time. Compared to the first five reports, this edition includes a more complete dataset, less deviating figures, four new performance indicators and more detailed explanations to make the wealth of data more accessible.

Significance extends beyond the benchmarking subgroup

We believe that PRIME data and definitions can serve the needs of a large range of rail experts and policy makers. By measuring and sharing the results, we aim to demonstrate to the wider public that the rail sector is committed to improving its service provision.

Report presenting the recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic

The sixth PRIME Benchmarking Report presents 2021 data and is therefore the second report that reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rail sector. It shows that despite the adverse circumstances brought about by the pandemic, the rail industry is resilient and shows recovery.

About the background

Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers in Europe (PRIME)

The Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers in Europe (PRIME) was established between the European Commission's transport and mobility directorate general (DG MOVE), and rail infrastructure managers in 2013. A central idea behind PRIME is to give infrastructure managers, who are natural monopolies, an opportunity to learn from each other.

The establishment of a network of rail infrastructure managers was proposed by the 4th Railway Package. PRIME has grown significantly since its inception, both in terms of membership and the scope of activities. Alongside the European Commission and ERA, PRIME now has 37 industry members including all main infrastructure managers of EU Member States and of the EFTA members Switzerland and Norway. Four industry associations of European rail infrastructure managers participate as observers. The participation of the main infrastructure managers per country in PRIME is mandatory. Working groups have been set up to address the major topics: safety, KPIs and benchmarking, digitalisation, charging and financing.

The number of infrastructure managers participating in the KPI & benchmarking subgroup has steadily increased. It has currently 24 participants, 21 regular members and 3 organisations in transition.

PRIME External Report 2021

[PRIME External Report 2021.pdf](#)

Summary of PRIME study on charging of long-distance cross-border passenger services

Long-distance cross-border rail services play a key role in creating a sustainable transport offer and in connecting people across Europe. This has raised the question to which extent charges can be used to support the development of these services. This summary presents the key findings of a PRIME study, carried out in 2022, on long-distance cross-border passenger services, which analysed and compared services in the different networks with regards to the market segment they are allocated to and the elasticities and the ability to bear these services show.

Main findings show that:

- Infrastructure managers do not differentiate between national and cross-border services as such, but consider other aspects in their approach for charging direct cost and mark-ups.
- For railway undertakings charges for long-distance cross-border passenger services reflect a significant cost component, on top of other additional efforts that result from international services.
- To promote long-distance cross-border passenger services, new charging approaches (e.g. newcomer discounts, promotional rates for underutilised lines etc.) can be considered, and are partly already put into practice.
- Current systems of market segmentation and differentiation of track access charges seem to leave room for further promotion of cross-border services. At the same time, track access charges are part of the sustainable business model of infrastructure managers, and other funding sources need to balance the loss of income in case charges are reduced and used as a promotion instrument.

Study summary

[PRIME_DD_cross-border_Summary_Publication_20230327_clear copy_3.pdf](#)

Summary of PRIME study on Charging and State Funding of Infrastructure Managers

This summary presents the main findings of a deep dive study on charging and State funding of European infrastructure managers. The report is based on a survey about the funding systems and structure of participating PRIME members. To inform an interested public this summary describes similarities, differences, experiences, and difficulties of rail infrastructure managers in the area of funding. The analysis is divided into three sections:

1. Long-term network strategies, providing an overview of infrastructure managers' long-term network plans and their strategy for development
2. Funding frameworks, structuring the individual funding schemes and the respective amounts of individual elements within
3. Contractual agreements, describing the multi-annual contracts between infrastructure managers and the competent authority of the Member State based on Directive 2012/23/EU

Key findings

The study findings testify to the fact that infrastructure managers will be confronted with three main challenges in the coming years:

1. More than half of the infrastructure managers in the study are confronted with a backlog of their maintenance and/or renewal activities. These backlogs occur if maintenance and renewal is smaller than the wear and tear of the existing assets. The renewal of the infrastructure is a European priority.
2. The volume and certainty of the budget available is of considerable importance, but also important is how flexible infrastructure managers are in the allocation and use of the funds for upkeep, according to the life cycle costs of their assets.
3. Harmonizing the interplay of funding sources remains an ongoing challenge for infrastructure managers and member states. State funding and mark-ups must complement each other to cover the total cost that exceed direct cost.

Summary of the PRIME study on charging and State funding of European infrastructure managers

[PRIME_DD_Funding-Report_Summary_Publication_20220525.pdf](#)

**Discussion Paper: how infrastructure
managers are helping to create a low-
carbon transport system**

The new Platform of Rail Infrastructure Managers in Europe (PRIME) discussion paper explores members' initiatives and projects designed to mitigate climate change and support the transition to a climate-neutral economy. Against a background of increased demand for sustainable transport, the paper will support discussions on how infrastructure managers can help decarbonise transport, tackle capacity challenges, and adapt to the circular economy.

Rail infrastructure managers have a crucial role to play in improving and increasing railway services. If the EU wants to meet its objective of becoming climate neutral by 2050, transport patterns will need to change very rapidly. A strong focus should therefore be on existing rail lines, for instance on capacity gains from digitalisation and operational improvements, such as better cross-border coordination of timetabling, traffic management and works. To the same aim, the ongoing evaluation of Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 on rail freight corridors offers the sector an opportunity to identify possible improvements that would allow infrastructure managers, and the rail sector more broadly, to better serve freight clients through more efficient processes and coordination.

Infrastructure managers can also contribute to decarbonisation by improving their own processes, thereby mitigating climate change. The paper presents a number of existing initiatives, for example addressing green procurement and a circular economy approach to infrastructure components and materials. They demonstrate that maximising sustainability is already a concern for infrastructure managers, and that their actions could feed a broader European reflection.

[prime_ims_contributions_to_climate_mitigation_final.pdf](#)

SNCF Réseau promotes the results of the PRIME Benchmarking work

SNCF Réseau organised a meeting (20 September, 2019, Paris) to present the results of the PRIME Benchmarking work

The idea was to present PRIME generally and in particular its work in benchmarking the performance of European rail infrastructure managers. Invited were French rail regulatory body ARAFER, French RUs / clients of SNCF Réseau, LISEA, French ministry in charge of transportation, SNCF administration, PRIME KPI subgroup members. There were in total around 50 participants and all gave a positive feed-back about the information given and format of the event. Transparency, sharing and communications were a key points during this meeting.

The focus was on costs, quality of service (with intervention of Lisea) and utilisation of network, where the results of SNCF Réseau were presented in comparison to other European IMs. In addition, ProRail, the Dutch rail infrastructure manager shared its benchmarking experience. Stakeholders present had an opportunity to ask questions about PRIME benchmarking.

Presenters were Alain Quinet (PRIME industry co-chair & DGD SNCF Réseau), Maurizio Castelletti (European Commission), Julien Brunel (head of economic studies at SNCF Réseau), Paul Mazataud (Director of International Affairs, SNCF Réseau), Patrick Pressard (Director of Operations , LISEA), Cécile Cheze (Costs analysis unit, SNCF Réseau), Justus Hartkamp (International Affairs, ProRail).

SNCF Réseau presentation

[prime_snctr_20092019.pdf](#)

[PRIME au service de la performance
ferroviaire européenne](#)

