EU: Infrastructure Safety Management

The Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers is the professional qualifying institution for practitioner engineers and has published UK standard advice on motorcycling. Our comments draw on the experience of our road safety members.

i) Do you agree with the assessment and definition of the problem?

Broad agreement, but for new road infrastructure or rehabilitation projects, the assessment ignores the design process itself which can have a significant influence on safety. For example in some countries the design process is not fully integrated and schemes are designed in layers with little interaction between those that design the carriageway, road signs, lighting, drainage etc. It also does not mention that the method of procurement on new major schemes can produce low-cost designs which may have adverse safety implications. Therefore best practice in infrastructure management, design and safety engineering needs to be applied.

ii) Do you agree with the policy options defined and assessed?

Objective a) should be targeted towards accident / casualty reduction and references to 'optimise use of limited funds for more efficient construction and maintenance roads' can be counterproductive and conflicts with the overall safety objectives.

iii) Point 4 and other measures

It would be better to use route accident studies or possibly EuroRAP assessments once the pilot programme has been developed and peer reviewed.

Much of this depends heavily on the quality of the recorded road accident data both in terms of location and accident descriptors so there is a need to ensure that this basic information is consistent and reliable.

The cost / benefit analysis approach means that accident / casualty costs need to be more consistently applied and agreed across the EU Members and potential EU member states. This will assist in the justification of safety engineering measures.

Road Safety Audits – Auditors' experience in road design should not be a major factor in the qualification of auditors, knowledge of road safety engineering and auditing of similar schemes is of far greater importance.

For Network management, infrastructure providers need to use experienced road safety engineering / audit practitioners to ensure that the potential for accident savings is maximised.

iv) Cost Benefits of different instruments / measures.

Construction costs will vary by country but a consistent approach to casualty and accident costs is required to ensure funds can be effectively targeted.

v) Other comments.

There is not much here on accident data. Reporting, recording, analysis systems and interrogation. This is crucial in many member stats where this side of things is poor.

The objectives should include some specific target reductions so that the effectiveness of the proposed approach to infrastructure management can be properly assessed in the future.

There is no mention of how this integrates with Education and Enforcement as tools to reduce accidents to meet the targets.