

Collaboration in Rail Supply Chains: The Effects of Inter-Organisational Network Characteristics (R1.104)

Background

The rail industry needs to focus on developing long-term relationships with its suppliers. A central theme of supply chain management is increasing collaboration between suppliers and customers. Despite this, issues arise in achieving cooperation among supply chain members. A closer integration and smarter tasking of the supply system not only improves internal productivity, but also provides better tracking, handling and mobilisation of the commodities themselves, thereby leading to shared competitive advantage. However, effective integration depends on developing collaborative relations in supply chains.

Objective

This project applies a theoretical framework for assessing inter-organisational network collaboration in rail supply chains in order to identify the network characteristics that significantly affect collaboration. The project aims to promote cooperation and collaboration by providing a framework for mutual learning by rail organisations and their suppliers.

Outcomes

The key deliverables are a tested theoretical framework for identifying network factors in supply chains that affect collaboration, a tested instrument for assessing and comparing the importance of different network characteristics in terms of their effects on collaboration, and a report on factors affecting collaboration in the supply chains selected for the project.

Benefits

The project provides a methodology for improving collaboration with suppliers. Suppliers will benefit since their collaboration with rail organisations and other supply chain members is aimed at finding mutually advantageous solutions to supply chain problems. Rail customers and associated stakeholders will benefit from outcomes of collaboration such as reduced costs, improved efficiency and safety, and favourable environmental impacts. Organisations and individuals involved in supply chains and those involved in other kinds of inter-organisational networks will also benefit from the dissemination of project outputs.

Project timeframe

1 June 2008 to 31 August 2009 - Completed