

Network Rail and the Office of Rail
Regulation

**Part A Independent Reporter
Mandate**

Mandate AO/003:NR Annual Return
General Audit 2009/10

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Glossary

CAF	Cost Analysis Framework
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MUC	Maintenance Unit Cost
ORR	Office of Rail Regulation
SSM	Stations Stewardship Measure

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report provides the results of a review of the measures reported in the 2009/2010 Network Rail Annual Return that were covered in the course of the 2009/10 Independent Reporter (Part A) rolling programme of KPI reviews.

The findings are summarised below.

Review of Measures Covered by 2009/10 Rolling Programme of KPI Reviews

The results reported in the Annual Return are generally consistent with the data and results reviewed in the course of the 2009/10 rolling programme of KPI reviews. A table of the confidence ratings awarded during 2009/10 is provided in Chapter 2 of the report. There are, however, some inconsistencies, most of which appear to be due to simple transcription or typographical errors. The sources of these errors should nonetheless be ascertained, and a simple, but rigorous, checking procedure put in place for future years to avoid recurrences.

There were some gaps in the availability of data for checking the measures reported in the Annual Return. These should be filled; in future years, the Independent Reporter will ensure that any such requests for data are made in as timely a manner as possible, to maximise the likelihood of the data being made available. It is also planned in future years to conduct a detailed review of some of the measures presented in the Annual Return, tracing them through from initial data collection and processing to their presentation in the Annual Return, and thus providing an enhanced degree of data assurance for the Annual Return itself.

1 Introduction

1.1 Network Rail Annual Return 2009/10

Network Rail is required to produce the Annual Return document at the end of each financial year under the terms of Condition 12 of the Network Licence. The Annual Return reports Network Rail's performance against a range of regulatory parameters, which relate to the outputs for Control Period 4 (2009-14) specified in the ORR Periodic Review 2008.

ORR has asked the Part A Independent Reporter to undertake the following in relation to Network Rail's 2010 Annual Return:

- High-level reviews of the Annual Return preparation process and of the contents of the Annual Return, to check for consistency with the findings of our 2009/10 rolling programme of KPI reviews;
- An audit of the unit costs in the CAF and MUC to check that they have been calculated in accordance with company's unit cost handbook; and
- An assessment of the confidence that we can have in the underlying 2009-10 data for each of the unit costs in the CAF and MUC, and assignment of a Confidence Grading for each measure.

(Note: the CAF and MUC coverage is described in a separate report.)

1.2 Report Structure

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents our comparison of the contents of the Annual Return with the findings of our 2009/10 rolling programme of KPI reviews.

2 KPI Data Reviewed during 2009/10 Rolling Programme

This section of the report describes our review of the elements of the Annual Return that were covered in the course of our 2009/10 rolling programme of quarterly KPI reviews, and the findings obtained.

Prior to 2009/10, the Part A Independent Reporter conducted a single review of the contents of the Annual Return, covering all measures in a single, concentrated effort at the end of the financial and reporting year. In contrast to this approach, from 2009/10 onwards, a rolling programme of reviews has been adopted, with different KPIs being reviewed in detail during each quarter of the year, and reported upon in quarterly reports (in 2009/10, because of the time required to establish the new process and overlap with the previous Reporter, only three quarterly reports were issued, in Quarters 2, 3 and 4). Many of the measures presented in the Annual Return have thus already been reviewed in detail during 2009/10, and coverage of the non-financial elements of the Annual Return is therefore restricted to a comparatively 'high-level' check of those elements that have already been covered in detail, comparing the results presented in the Annual Return with the equivalent (updated as necessary) data seen during the quarterly reviews.

The KPIs covered during the 2009/10 rolling programme are listed below in Table 2.1, by the Quarter in which they were covered. The confidence ratings awarded by the Reporter, and the location of their coverage within the Annual Return, are also shown. It should be noted that not all the confidence ratings quoted in the Annual Return by Network Rail reflect those shown in the table; where discrepancies occur, the ratings shown in Table 2.1 should be taken as the definitive versions. The Annual Return should quote the Reporter's confidence ratings in the KPI data, and, where these differ from Network Rail's view, this difference should be clearly stated; otherwise this is potentially confusing and misleading to the reader.

2009/10 Reporting Quarter	KPI	Confidence Grading Awarded	Location in 2009/10 Annual Return
Quarter 2	Public Performance Measure (PPM)	A1	Section 1
	Cancellations and Significant Lateness (CaSL)	B2	Section 1
	Network Rail Delay Minutes to TOCs	A1	Section 1
	Network Rail Delay Minutes to FOCs/100 Train km	A3	Section 1
	Asset Management (Track/non-Track Delay Minutes)	A1	Section 1
Quarter 3	Fatalities and Weighted Injuries Rate	B2	Section 5

2009/10 Reporting Quarter	KPI	Confidence Grading Awarded	Location in 2009/10 Annual Return
	Accident Frequency Rate	B2	N/A
	Passenger Safety Indicator	B3	Section 5
	Category A SPADs +20	A1	Section 5
	Irregular Working	B3	Section 5
	Infrastructure Wrong Side Failures	A1	Section 5
	Level Crossing Misuse	A3	Section 5
	Route Crime	B3	Section 5
	Possessions Disruption Index – Passenger (PDI-P)	B3	Section 2
	Possessions Disruption Index – Freight (PDI-F)	C3	Section 2
	Infrastructure Condition Report, Network Condition Report (ICR, NCR)	B2	Section 3
Quarter 4	Customer Satisfaction – TOC and FOC	B2	Section 1
	Asset Management – Stations Stewardship Measure	C4	Section 3
	Asset Management – Light Maintenance Depot Condition	C5	Section 3
	Network Capability: Linespeed (C1)	B2	Section 2
	Gauge Capability (C2)	B2	Section 2
	Route Availability (C3)	B2	Section 2
	Electrified Track Capability (C4)	B2	Section 2
	Ongoing Short-Term Network Change Proposals and Discrepancies between Actual and Published Capability Arising from the Infrastructure Capability Programme	BX	Section 2
	Passenger and Freight Train Mileage, Gross Freight Tonne Mileage	B2	Section 2
	Track Mileage and Layout	B2	N/A
Environmental	B3	Section 5	

2009/10 Reporting Quarter	KPI	Confidence Grading Awarded	Location in 2009/10 Annual Return
	Initiatives/Measures		
	CAF	C3	Section 7
	MUCs	C4	Section 7

Table 2.1: KPIs Covered in 2009/10 Rolling Programme

The process used for, and the results obtained from, the review of individual sections of the Annual Return are presented in the following sub-sections of this report, in the order in which they appear in the Annual Return.

2.1 Section 1: Operational performance and stakeholder relationships

Section 1 of the Annual Return contains coverage of operational performance and stakeholder relationships, including the Public Performance Measure (PPM), Cancellations and Significant Lateness (CaSL) and Customer Satisfaction – Passenger and Freight Operators, which were covered in Quarters 2 (July - September) and 4 (January – March) of the 2009/10 rolling programme of reviews. These elements of the Annual Return are reviewed in the following sub-sections. Although the remit for this chapter of the report is strictly limited to those measures in the Annual Return that were previously covered by the rolling programme, we have also commented on some other elements of the Annual Return for which we had comparator data available: in this section, we have therefore included coverage of some elements of the Summarised network-wide data (delays to major operators). The checks were performed using data obtained from Network Rail for the purposes of the 2010/11 Q1 Performance data and process review, since the equivalent data reviewed during 2009/10 had been superseded by the generation of additional, more recent data by the time the Annual Return was published.

2.2 Public Performance Measure (PPM)

PPM results are reported in Tables 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4 of the Annual Return, which show overall PPM results by year, PPM by Train Operating Company and PPM by sector for England, Wales and Scotland.

The quoted values were checked against data obtained from Network Rail in the course of our 2010/11 Quarter 1 review of Performance measures. The data source used was the spreadsheet ‘PPM & CaSL (2) Consolidation.xls’ (worksheet ‘PPM MAA’), part of a suite of spreadsheets used by Network Rail to collate, analyse and produce industry performance data.

The PPM values contained in Table 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4 of the Annual Return were found to be 100% consistent with the data contained in the spreadsheet. Although no PPM value was explicitly presented for Scotland in the spreadsheet, we understand that the Scotland PPM value is defined as that for First ScotRail, which is available directly from the spreadsheet. For clarity, we recommend that the Scotland PPM value be quoted explicitly in the PPM and CaSL spreadsheet in future.

2.2.1 Summarised network-wide data (delays to major operators)

Annual network-wide total delays to passenger train services are summarised in Table 1.5 of the Annual Return. The annual delay minutes shown for 2009/10 were compared with aggregated IPPR data for 2009/10 Periods 1-13, obtained from Network Rail for the 2010/11 Q1 Performance KPI review, and found to differ by less than 0.01%.

Table 1.9 of the Annual Return contains Network Rail-attributed delays to individual Operators for 2009/10. The values quoted for Franchised Operators were again compared with the results shown in the 2010/11 Period 2 IPPR. 80% of the results were found to have variations of less than 0.1%; the results for three Operators (London Overground, First Great Western and National Express East Anglia) varied by between 0.1% and 0.4%, and the results for First ScotRail varied by 0.8%.

The discrepancies observed in the two tables are all quite small, at less than 1%, and thus unlikely to affect the validity of the Annual Return. We understand that the observed differences are likely to be due to the ongoing dispute resolution process, whereby disputed delay minutes are re-allocated between Network Rail and the Operators. The comparatively large discrepancy observed for ScotRail reflects the significant levels of disruption caused by severe winter weather, and thus an increased number of disputed delays, and an associated increase in the time required to resolve them. We will wish to review this in more detail next year to ensure our understanding of the cause is correct.

2.2.2 Cancellations and Significant Lateness (CaSL)

CaSL results for each Period in 2009/10 are reported for England & Wales overall in Table 1.36 of the Annual Return, and also sub-divided into London & South East, Long Distance and Regional.

The same data source as used for the PPM checks referred to above, i.e. spreadsheet 'PPM & CaSL (2) Consolidation.xls' was employed for the review, using worksheets 'CaSL' and 'CaSL MAA'.

The two sets of values were found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.3 Customer satisfaction – passenger and freight operators

Annual customer satisfaction results for passenger and freight operators are reported in Tables 1.38 and 1.39 respectively of the Annual Return, while mean satisfaction levels, overall and for TOCs and FOCs separately, are shown in Table 1.40.

These results were compared with those contained in the document 'Customer Satisfaction Survey Topline KPI Results February 2010', provided by Network Rail via ORR for our review of the Customer Satisfaction KPIs in 2009/10 Q4, and were found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.4 Section 2: Network capability, traffic and network availability

Section 2 of the Annual Return contains coverage of the capability of Network Rail's infrastructure to carry passenger and freight traffic, of the volumes of traffic carried, and of the extent of the availability of that network to traffic as a result of possessions management. The network capability and traffic volume measures

were reviewed in our 2009/10 Q4 report, while the network availability measures were reviewed and reported upon in the course of a bespoke mandate (AO/004), the findings of which were summarised in our 2009/10 Q3 report. Updated versions of the data reviewed in those earlier reports, covering the entire year 2009/10 and thus corresponding to the values quoted in the Annual Return, were obtained and used for the purposes of this review and report.

2.2.5 Linespeed capability (C1)

Linespeed capability (i.e. the km of track in different speed categories) is reported by year and band, and by operating route and band, in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 respectively of the Annual Return, while changes in capability from the preceding year (2008/09) are presented in Tables 2.3 (increases in linespeed) and 2.4 (decreases in line speed).

The values quoted were compared with the data reviewed in 2009/10 Q4, provided by Network Rail. The results contained in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 for 2009/10 were checked and found to be 100% consistent. The results contained in Tables 2.3 and 2.4 were sampled, because of the tables' sizes, and again found to be 100% consistent – the change records (i.e. of increases and decreases in linespeed) were reviewed in detail for our 2009/10 Q4 report, and were found to be 100% accurate.

2.2.6 Gauge capability (C2)

Gauge capability (i.e. the km of route capable of accommodating different freight vehicle types and loads in terms of cross-sectional size) is reported by year and band and by operating route and band in Tables 2.5 and 2.6 of the Annual Return.

The values presented were again compared with the data reviewed in 2009/10 Q4, and found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.7 Route availability value (C3)

Route Availability (i.e. the km of track capable of accommodating trains of different weights, as governed by the strength of underbridges) is reported by year and band and by operating route and band in Tables 2.7 and 2.8 of the Annual Return.

The values shown in the tables were again compared with the data reviewed in 2009/10 Q4, and found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.8 Electrified track capability (C4)

Electrified track capability (i.e. the km of track with 250V A.C. overhead electrification, 1,500V D.C. electrification or 650/750V third rail electrification) is reported by year and category and by operating route and category in Tables 2.9 and 2.10 of the Annual Return.

The values presented in the tables were again compared with the data reviewed in 2009/10 Q4, and found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.9 Passenger and freight mileage

Passenger and freight train mileage (i.e. the numbers of miles travelled by revenue-earning passenger and freight trains) are presented by operator and year in Tables 2.11 (passenger) and 2.12 (freight) of the Annual Return.

The values presented in the tables were compared with data obtained directly from the Track Access Billing System (TABS) for 2009/10. The results were again found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.10 Gross Tonne Miles by freight train operators

Gross freight tonne miles (i.e. freight train mileage multiplied by train weight) are reported by operator and by year in Table 2.13 of the Annual Return.

The values shown in the Annual Return were again compared with data obtained directly from TABS, and found to be 100% consistent in value, although the value assigned to AMEC in the Annual Return was attributed to Colas in TABS (this is a minor issue, and presumably reflects AMEC's sale of its rail business to Colas, but the use of AMEC in reports should be avoided, for consistency and to prevent confusion).

2.2.11 Discrepancies between actual and published capability

Discrepancies between actual and published network capability, as identified by Network Rail's Infrastructure Capability Programme (ICP), are listed in Table 2.14 of the Annual Return, while Short-Term and Permanent Network Changes resulting from the ICP are shown in Tables 2.15 and 2.16.

The list of discrepancies was compared with that held in the National Electronic Sectional Appendix (NESA), and found to be identical. The contents of Tables 2.15 and 2.16 were compared with the contents of a copy of the spreadsheet used by Network Rail to produce them. Since this spreadsheet is 'live' and presents the Network Change process in 'real-time', it no longer reflects the situation as presented in the Annual Return.

However, the individual Permanent Network Changes contained in Table 2.16 of the Annual Return are all included in the spreadsheet, and the numbers of Short-Term Network Changes expiring in each year, as shown in the spreadsheet, are all greater than or equal to those shown in Table 2.15 of the Annual Return, thus indicating that the two Tables are subsets of the data contained in the master spreadsheet, and that the Annual Return data are 100% consistent with the contents of the spreadsheet.

2.2.12 Disruption to passengers and freight as a result of planned engineering possessions

The Network Availability measures comprising the remainder of this section of the review (i.e. sub-sections 2.2.8 – 2.2.14) are new to the 2009/10 Annual Return. Of these the Possession Disruption Indices for Passenger (PDI-P) and Freight (PDI-F) traffic are the principal, regulated measures.

The 2009/10 Actual PDI-P and PDI-F values shown in Table 2.17 of the Annual Return were compared with the values quoted in the equivalent section of the 2009/10 Period 13 Possession Indicator Report, and with the underlying spreadsheet data, both of which were provided by Network Rail. The national PDI-P value of 0.63 quoted in Table 2.17 is the MAA value for Period 12, rather than the intended Period 13, and Network Rail have confirmed that this is due to a typographical/transcription error, probably related to the fact that the data are reported a period in arrears (i.e. the Period 12 result is reported in Period 13). The quoted national PDI-F value is correct.

The TOC-specific PDI-P values shown in Table 2.18 were checked against the equivalent MAA TOC values in the underlying data, and found to be identical. The FOC-specific PDI-F values shown in Table 2.19 were checked against the corresponding MAA FOC values in the underlying spreadsheet data and also found to be identical.

2.2.13 Working timetable weekend compliance

The Possession Indicator Report for Period 13 2009/10 was used to check the percentage of the working timetable run by TOCs. Only the national figure was available, and this was found to correspond with the value contained in Table 2.20 of the Annual Return.

2.2.14 Rail replacement bus hours

Data supplied by Network Rail were used to check the periodic average values quoted in Table 2.2.1 of the Annual Return. Apart from minor rounding errors (i.e. the values for several Operators were found to have been truncated/rounded down, rather than rounded up), the values quoted in the Annual Return were found to accurately reflect the underlying data.

2.2.15 Possession notification discount factor

These results are shown in Table 2.22 of the Annual Return. The values shown were compared with the underlying data, and found to be 100% consistent to the first decimal place (i.e. the underlying values appear to have been rounded to one decimal place, and then presented to two decimal places in the Annual Return).

2.2.16 Late Possession changes

These results are shown in Table 2.23 of the Annual Return. The values shown were compared with the underlying data, and found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.17 Very Late Possession changes

These results are shown in Table 2.24 of the Annual Return. Again, the values shown were compared with the underlying data, and found to be 100% consistent.

2.2.18 Delay minutes and cancellation minutes due to possession overruns

The Possession Indicator Report Period 01 2010/11 was again used for the checking of this measure, the results of which are shown in Table 2.25 of the Annual Return. Values for individual operating Routes, as well as the network average values, were checked for 2009/10. The network average value was 100% consistently reported, as were those for the Anglia, Kent, London North Eastern and London North Western Routes. However, for the rest of the Routes, the values for delay minutes and cancellation minutes have been allocated to the wrong Routes in Table 2.25. Since the correct values are shown, but have been misallocated, this is almost certainly the result of a simple typographical or transcription error, rather than anything more serious or significant.

2.3 Section 3: Asset management

Network Rail's internally reported data, refreshed at Period 01 2010/11 and provided by Network Rail, were used for checking this section of the Annual Return. This data source does not cover some of the measures reported in this

section of the Annual Return, and these measures were therefore excluded from the assessment, since the underlying data were not reviewed during the course of the 2009/10 rolling programme of reviews.

2.3.1 Broken rails (M1)

These data are shown by Route and by Route Classification in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 of the Annual Return. Only the network total value was checked, as the data source used for checking purposes did not include detailed Route level data. These checks indicated that the data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.2 Track geometry - Good track geometry (M3)

These data are shown in Tables 3.13 and 3.14 of the Annual Return. Checks were conducted on overall network and individual Route data, shown in tabular format in Network Rail's internally-reported data, which confirmed that the data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.3 Track geometry - Poor track geometry (M3)

These data are shown in Tables 3.15 and 3.16 of the Annual Return. Visual checks were conducted of overall network and individual Route results shown in chart format in Network Rail's internally-reported data, which indicated that the data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.4 Track geometry faults (M5)

Track Geometry Faults per 100km by operating Route are shown in Table 3.21 of the Annual Return. The data were checked by means of visual inspection of the corresponding chart in Network Rail's internally-reported data (the data underlying the chart were not included in the dataset used for checking purposes), which indicated that the data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.5 Earthwork failures (M6)

These data are shown in Tables 3.23 and 3.24 of the Annual Return. Only the network total value was checked, as the data source used did not include detailed Route level data. The checks indicated that data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.6 Signalling failures (M9)

These data are shown in Table 3.28 of the Annual Return. Only the network total value was checked as the data source used did not include detailed Route-level data. The checks showed that data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.7 Alternating current traction power incidents causing train delays (M11)

These data are shown in Table 3.32 of the Annual Return. Only the network total value was checked as the data source used did not include detailed Route level data. The checks showed that the data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.8 Direct current traction power incidents causing train delays (M12)

These data are shown in Table 3.33 of the Annual Return. Again, only the network total value was checked as the data source used did not include detailed Route level data. The checks showed that data have been consistently reported in the Annual Return.

2.3.9 Electrification condition – DC traction contact systems (M16)

These data are shown in Tables 3.38 and 3.39 of the Annual Return. Again, only the network average condition grade was checked as the data source used did not include detailed Route level data. The checks showed that data are 100% consistent with the reported value in the Annual Return.

2.3.10 Station stewardship measure (M17)

These data are shown in Tables 3.41 and 3.42 of the Annual Return, with Table 3.41 showing average and target Station Stewardship Measure (SSM) values by station category (bands A to F and Scotland); Table 3.42 further disaggregates the data by inclusion or otherwise in the National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP). As noted in a letter from Network Rail to ORR dated 12th August 2010, two different methods are available for calculating the average values, with each producing slightly different results: the category average results shown in Table 3.41 of the Annual Return are as calculated at Network Rail route level.

The results shown in Table 3.41 have been checked against the underlying spreadsheet data and found to be fully consistent. The results obtained using the alternative calculation method, as set out in Network Rail's letter to ORR, have also been checked against the underlying data, and again have been found to be correct.

The contents of Table 3.42 have also been checked against the underlying spreadsheet data and found to be mostly correct. However, the SSM average value shown in the table for 'all other stations' in the overall network (2.51) is inconsistent with that shown in the underlying spreadsheet data (2.47), and it has been confirmed by Network Rail that this is due to a typographical error.

2.3.11 Light maintenance depot stewardship measure (M19)

These data are shown in Table 3.43 of the Annual Return. The quoted values were checked against the underlying dataset provided by Network Rail, and found to be correct.

2.4 Section 5: Safety and Environment

The source data used to conduct the checks for this section are contained in the Safety and Environment Assurance Report Period 13 of 2009/10, ('SEAR Period 13 2009/10.pdf': this updates and supersedes the earlier data used for the checking of the safety-related KPIs during Quarter 3 of the 2009/10 rolling programme), and in updated end-of-year data obtained from Network Rail's Environment team.

2.4.1 Passenger safety

These data are contained in Table 5.1 of the Annual Return, and were found to be 100% consistent with the contents of the SEAR.

2.4.2 Workforce safety

These data are contained in Table 5.2 of the Annual Return, and were again found to be 100% consistent with the contents of the SEAR.

2.4.3 Infrastructure wrong side failures

These data are contained in Table 5.3 of the Annual Return. One discrepancy was observed, whereby the number of 'Structures and Earthworks' wrong side failures is shown as 11 in the Annual Return, whereas nine are recorded in the SEAR. While this may reflect the ongoing updating of safety data (see sub-section 2.4.5 below), it is more likely to be due to a typographical error in the Annual Return, since the accompanying chart (Figure 5.3) indicates a 2009/10 total of nine Structures and Earthworks wrong side failures, and the total number of failures in Table 5.3 is consistent with the SEAR, and with nine, rather than 11, Structures and Earthworks wrong side failures (i.e. the sum shown in the table is incorrect as it stands).

2.4.4 Level crossing misuse

These data are contained in Table 5.4 of the Annual Return, and were again found to be consistent with the contents of the SEAR.

2.4.5 Signals Passed At Danger (SPADs)

These data are contained in Table 5.5 of the Annual Return. The total number of Category A SPADs in 2009/10 is shown as 277, whereas the equivalent value in the SEAR is 279. The source of this inconsistency is unclear, but we understand that, similar to the performance case referred to in sub-section 2.1.2 above, it is likely to be due to the ongoing updating of safety data, as the details and allocations of incidents are resolved following investigations, whereby the data quoted in the Annual Return have been updated and have 'moved on' since the publication of the SEAR. We understand that steps are being taken by Network Rail to ensure that the data reported in the Annual Return are consistent with those in the SEAR and/or a commentary is provided to explain any differences that do occur. No equivalent value for the Category A SPADs per 1,000 signals is contained in the SEAR.

2.4.6 Environmental measures

These data are contained in Table 5.8 of the Annual Return. Up-to-date equivalent data for the following Performance Indicators were obtained from Network Rail:

- Energy – Non-Traction consumption
- KPI 127 – Contractor CO₂ Emissions
- KPI 128 – Sustainably sourced wood
- KPI 129 – Non track waste
- KPI 132 – Non Traction (discrepancy of 0.03%)
- KPI 133 – Passenger traction
- KPI 134 – National Delivery Service
- KPI 137 – SSSIs England (Only favourable/recovering condition values available)

- KPI 146 – Reuse of water
- KPI 147 – freight traction

Apart from the differences noted in brackets above, the contents of the Annual Return were found to be 100% consistent with the equivalent data.

2.5 Annual Return Process

An updated process was put in place during 2009/10 for the preparation and production of the Annual Return. Under the new process, the various Network Rail data champions were advised by e-mail of the overall timescales for the preparation of the Annual Return, and of the deadlines and required formats for their individual draft and final data submissions. They were also issued with tailored reporting templates, to assist them with the provision of data and commentary in the required, standardised format.

Despite these efforts made to assist individual data providers, and to standardise and streamline the overall process and encourage (and assist with) the provision of data and commentary in a timely manner, we understand that the required data and supporting information were not always provided on schedule, leading to delays in the preparation of the Annual Return.

We commend the efforts made to streamline and standardise the process, and to assist data providers in their tasks, and acknowledge the challenges and difficulties involved in the coordination of the provision, collation and checking of the required information. In order to build upon the progress made in 2009/10, and to avoid a repeat of the delays in data provision, the importance of providing the required data and commentary in a timely manner should be re-iterated to individual data providers and their line managers at the beginning of the 2010/11 Annual Return process.

In the course of the equivalent 2010/11 review of the Annual Return, we propose to conduct a detailed review of some of its contents, tracking selected measures through from data collection and processing during the year, to their reporting and presentation in the Annual Return.

2.6 Conclusions

In conclusion, the results reported in the Annual Return are generally consistent with the data and results reviewed in the course of the 2009/10 rolling programme of KPI reviews. There are, however, some inconsistencies, most of which appear to be due to simple transcription or typographical errors. The sources of these errors should nonetheless be ascertained, and a simple, but rigorous, checking procedure put in place for future years to avoid recurrences.

There were some gaps in the availability of data for checking the measures reported in the Annual Return. These should be filled; in future years, the Independent Reporter will ensure that any such requests for data are made in as timely a manner as possible, to maximise the likelihood of the data being made available.

Significant improvements have been made to the guidance provided and process used for the preparation of the Annual Return. This should be built upon by further impressing upon the various data providers the need to provide data and commentary in accordance with the specified formats and timescales.

2.7 Recommendations

Table 2.2 contains a set of draft recommendations in respect of the wider Annual Return. The recommendations are numbered 2010.AR.1, 2010.AR.2, etc. to reflect the (end of the) year 2009/10 and the Annual Return.

No.	Recommendation to Network Rail	Locations in Text	NR Data Champion	Due Date
2010.AR.1	The Annual Return should quote the Independent Reporter's confidence ratings, to avoid confusion.	2	Angelique Tjen	June 2011
2010.AR.2	The Scotland PPM value should be quoted explicitly in Network Rail spreadsheet outputs	2.1.1	Angelique Tjen	June 2011
2010.AR.3	Incorrect references to AMEC should be removed from future reports	2.2.6	Angelique Tjen	June 2011
2010.AR.4	The timely provision of data and commentary for inclusion in the Annual Return should be further encouraged and enforced by Network Rail senior management (i.e. the sponsors and directors with overall responsibility for the production of the Annual Return and its individual elements), to build upon the progress made in 2009/10 in its preparation.	2.5	Angelique Tjen, Network Rail senior management	June 2011
2010.AR.5	A simple, but rigorous checking system should be put in place to identify and remove errors and inconsistencies arising in the Annual Return as a result of transcription and typographical errors.	2.6	Angelique Tjen	June 2011

Table 2.2: Wider Annual Return Recommendations