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2nd UIC World Conference on Asset Management held in Paris

(Paris, 14 October 2015) The 2nd UIC World Conference on Asset Management was successfully held at Paris UIC HQ from 12 – 13 October. Following the extremely high level of interest shown at the 2013 conference, this year's edition focused on the slogan *"Put your assets on the right track"* and was attended by around 100 participants. The conference reflected the benefits of asset management in finding the optimum solution between costs, risks and performance for railway domains and others.

Rail continues to face a series of challenges and something of dichotomy – if there is not the need for rail services from potential customers then it is not easy to attract the levels of investment that are needed to meet the rail system's structural challenges.

The customer is seeking attractiveness of the products that rail can offer (price, reliability etc.), coupled with good connectivity. But rail suffers when either the infrastructure or the rolling stock fail to live up to these customer expectations.

The main one is 24-hour punctuality and availability. This request is for a high level of safety, availability and control of performance, and everything is linked to Asset Management.

It is by linking all of these points together that the system becomes whole and rail can only work efficiently if it is designed, constructed, operated and maintained as a system.

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, reminded the audience of UIC's role, which is aimed at *"promoting rail transport at world level, promoting interoperability and creating new world standards, proposing new ways to improve the technical and environmental performance of rail transport and finally supporting UIC members in their strategies to improve their competitiveness and business focus."*

As a consequence of the European legislation, infrastructure managers and railway undertakings have to adopt a more business-like attitude: their management focus has shifted from a technical approach towards cost and performance over the long term. This alternative way of managing infrastructure is called 'asset management'.

In addition, for rail infrastructure managers it is essential to perform a balanced trade-off between objectives, as can be illustrated by the following stakeholder interests: government (owner and financier of the infrastructure), operators (the main users of the infrastructure), local authorities, and public/customer."

This conference was a great opportunity for open, relevant, and comprehensive exchange of information between multi-sector and international organisations. In the railway sector, participants could explore the UIC Asset Management Working Group's results and benefit

from its unique experience accumulated since 2008. Participants could also learn how other industries have adopted Asset Management theories and practices in order to improve their own.

A wide range of session topics covering the whole asset management process enabled participants to get a clear view on the challenges that organisations are now facing. Best practices of the application ISO 55000 were also exchanged. The technical but important question of the right tools and models was presented, as well as relevant topics such as the impact of digitalisation and large data: it is essential to think of infrastructure as a system; innovation must be developed in order to empower people in their daily work.

Participants felt the importance of the general intent to get the best of our assets and to demonstrate it, and that the systematic approach can really make the difference: we can develop standards for all sectors.

One of the objectives of asset management is to create bridges between sectors (controlling, finance...) and time (short and long term). For infrastructure managers and suppliers it is a big challenge to address together, plus there is a need to reach out to top-level managers in the future.

For the next conference, the idea of discussing enablers together with organisational points was raised, in order to achieve greater commitment.

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