

Subtheme D conclusions

The title of subtheme D was "Research and the Future of Transport Industries".

Our first session dealt with INDUSTRY RESEARCH POLICY. The future of our industry is not only affected by research, we - the industry - have a hand in the shaping of future through our own research and development, industrialization and marketing.

Industry's contributions have traditionally been in the field of technology, lately some in systems analysis but very little in soci-economics.

On the other hand a national research policy is very much concerned to find a proper balance between technology systems and soci-economics. It is only at the national level that such a balance can be ascertained by the proper distribution of funds.

A similar balance was reflected in our session on SYSTEM EVALUATION, where we concluded that any single-valued monetary measure such as a benefit-to-cost ratio is inappropriate as a basis for decision. Not only is it impossible and therefore arbitrary and open to manipulation - it also effectively hides all relevant characteristics behind one number and shortcuts political debate. An alternative characteristics approach ensures that also the soci-economic goals can be evaluated and met without having to be priced.

Our sessions on BUS TECHNOLOGY showed that the bus industry - with government support - have been able to produce new transit options based on public priorities, using existing technology and at reasonable cost.

Finally in our session on TRANSPORT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, we have learned how the role of the vehicle industry has been extended from that of a supplier into that of ensuring maximum performance of a comprehensive transportation system delivered turn-key. Examples show that if the supplier extends his services to include training, workshops, planning and management then the performance and the value for money will more than double.

A conference like this serves an important purpose in providing a forum for cross-fertilization between academia, users and industry. This is necessary in order to ensure that new systems do fulfil social needs and at the same time are cost effective.

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