European Commission

Quantitative Road Safety Targets 2018

Summary

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Transport

Quantitative Road Safety Targets - Summary

What are quantitative targets?

Quantitative road safety targets represent the road safety results which a country, jurisdiction or organization wishes to achieve over a given time-frame. Increasingly, they are set as step-wise, interim targets towards achieving the ultimate Safe System goal of eliminating death and long-term injury. The following types of targets can be distinguished:

- Final outcome targets: They are used widely in many countries in national, regional and local road safety strategies and programmes, aiming at reducing numbers of deaths or serious injuries, and are usually expressed as targeted percentage reductions.
- Intermediate outcome targets: These are measurable targets causally linked to the final outcomes and they represent the result of interventions known to improve final outcomes, e.g. reducing motor vehicle speeds, increasing seat belt use, improving the safety rating of the road network using Euro RAP rating, improving the efficiency of emergency medical response etc.
- Institutional output targets: These represent physical deliverables of the key stakeholders which are used to achieve intermediate outcome targets. Examples include: number of random breath tests, number of speed checks, number of road safety audits or inspections etc.

Why set targets?

Research and experience have identified several effects, such as the following:

Increase political will and stakeholder accountabilities for road safety

Experience in Europe indicates that targets get and keep road safety on to the political agenda. Furthermore, targets are an efficient management tool for defining responsibilities for different levels of administration and among other actors.

Better safety programmes

Setting targets and monitoring safety performance is the key to effective road safety management, programming and use of public resources. Research shows that quantitative targets can lead to better programmes and a more effective use of scarce resources.

Better safety performance

Countries with quantitative targets perform better than those without targets. Research has indicated that overall, countries with targets had 10,4% lower fatalities than the countries without targets in the first three years of the target period and with a sustained effect of 4% over the whole target period. Also, targets that are ambitious are associated with better performance than less ambitious targets

Increased motivation of stakeholders

The setting of challenging but achievable quantitative targets strengthen motivation to contribute to casualty reduction and this can be maintained by regular and transparent monitoring of progress towards targets.

How to set targets?

Current best practice involves some combination of top-down long-term goals as well as bottom-up interim and intermediate outcome targets (usually of 10 years in duration) which are soundly related to the selected interventions stated measures and their likely effectiveness, as well as the management capacity required to deliver them.

How to ensure target accountability?

Targets need to be agreed across the road safety partnership since they specify the desired safety performance which is endorsed by governments at all levels, stakeholders and the community. Good practice indicates that governmental and professional consultation on road safety strategy targets is usually conducted within the national road safety coordination hierarchy followed by a public consultation process. Governmental approval of the targets and national strategy is carried out within the upper tier of the multi-sectoral coordination body. Memoranda of understanding are used to cement working partnerships towards target delivery. Public service targets and annual performance agreements are means by which Government demonstrates its role and accountability for road safety responsibilities. Top management is fully involved in consulting on and establishing long-term goals and step-wise targets in organizations.

How to monitor targets?

This involves continuous monitoring of targeted and other safety performance indicators, establishing the effectiveness of specific road safety measures by carrying out before and after studies; reviewing and updating of policies and measures with re-distribution of resources towards more cost-effective measures; identifying delays in implementation requiring corrective action and all aspects of the road safety management system which can contribute to success or failure; and establishing the level of public support for interventions. Good practice monitoring also involves independent review.

Avoiding pitfalls

Research has shown that there are several pitfalls which need to be avoided in setting quantitative targets:

- Targets that do not have political support are unlikely to obtain the level of funding or other resources needed for their attainment.
- A purely symbolic target has no value. Targets need to be ambitious but realistic.
- Targets should be accompanied by safety programmes designed to realise them. A realistic programme should exist to ensure progress towards the targets, which should have currency in the actions and goals of all responsible key agencies.
- Many things can go wrong with implementation. Detecting problems early is important in order to steer the right course.
- Economic and demographic trends have an important influence on road safety outcomes, and this needs to be taken into account during monitoring. An economic downturn in the economy, for example, is often accompanied by a decrease in the number of fatalities on the roads, that may not be necessarily related to an improvement in road safety.

Notes

1. Country abbreviations

	Belgium	BE		Italy	IT		Romania	RO
	Bulgaria	BG		Cyprus	CY		Slovenia	SI
	Czech Republic	CZ		Latvia	LV		Slovakia	SK
	Denmark	DK		Lithuania	LT		Finland	FI
	Germany	DE		Luxembourg	LU		Sweden	SE
	Estonia	EE		Hungary	HU		United Kingdom	UK
	Ireland	IE		Malta	MT			
	Greece	EL		Netherlands	NL		Iceland	IS
	Spain	ES		Austria	AT		Liechtenstein	LI
	France	FR		Poland	PL		Norway	NO
	Croatia	HR		Portugal	PT		Switzerland	CH

2. This 2018 edition of Traffic Safety Synthesis on Quantitative Road Safety Targets updates the previous versions produced within the EU co-funded research projects SafetyNet (2008) and DaCoTA (2012). This Synthesis on Quantitative Road Safety Targets was originally written in 2008 and then updated in 2012 and in 2016 by Jeanne Breen, Jeanne Breen Consulting.

3. All Traffic Safety Syntheses of the European Road Safety Observatory have been peer reviewed by the Scientific Editorial Board composed by: George Yannis, NTUA (chair), Robert Bauer, KFV, Christophe Nicodème, ERF, Klaus Machata, KFV, Eleonora Papadimitriou, NTUA, Pete Thomas, Un. Loughborough.

4. Disclaimer

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5. Please refer to this Report as follows:

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