



## How BSI certification to ISO 44001 helps Network Rail work collaboratively, drive change through consistency – and build Organizational Resilience

“We see BSI certification to ISO 44001 as independent testament to our increasing collaborative capability, helping to create excellence and drive broader consistency across our business and supply chain.”

**Stephen Blakey**  
Commercial Projects Director,  
Network Rail

### Certification benefits

- Improves and refines collaborative business relationships
- Drives project performance and customer/supplier satisfaction
- Demonstrates collaborative working to stakeholders
- Assists the spread of best practice across the group and its supply chain
- Contributes to overall organizational resilience

### At a glance

Network Rail recognizes that a key way of delivering greater value with its supply chain is through collaboration, and this lies at the heart of its five-year delivery strategy. But fulfilling such an expansive programme in a large, complex organization poses significant challenges. BSI certification to ISO 44001 – the globally-recognized standard for collaborative business relationship management – is playing a key role in embedding successful collaboration and boosting overall Organizational Resilience.

## Business background

Network Rail employs 36,000 staff and is responsible for Britain's extensive rail infrastructure, which includes tracks, electrification, signals, bridges, tunnels, level-crossings, viaducts and 18 key stations. The Infrastructure Projects division employs almost 5,000 staff, working cross-functionally to deliver on £6 billion of annual investment.

At the heart of the rail industry, Network Rail is faced with a perennial challenge: the safe, consistent and timely delivery of 'more for less' fault and dispute-free, in a way that is sustainable throughout its supply chain and instils stakeholder confidence in the capability of its people, processes and systems.

As Stephen Blakey, Commercial Projects Director, explains, "We know that through effective supply chain engagement, progressive procurement and competent stewardship of collaborative forms of contract, we can meet this challenge."

Blakey says that iconic infrastructure improvement programmes, such as those at Reading and London Bridge – as well as alliances including Stafford, Wessex Capacity, Northern Hub and East West Rail – demonstrate that collaboration and its highest form, *alliancing*, are credible approaches that deliver real added value. "Through such projects we are building our collaborative capability," he says.

To this end, Network Rail has recently launched several complementary initiatives, including its Collaborative Refresh Strategy in 2017.

The word 'refresh' is pertinent, because Network Rail already has an established track record of collaboration. In 2012, it became the first organization in the rail sector to implement and gain certification by BSI to the collaborative business relationships standard, BS 11000, the predecessor of the internationally-recognized ISO 44001.

## Why certification?

First launched in 2017, ISO 44001 builds on BS 11000, specifying requirements for the effective identification, development and management of collaborative business relationships within or between organizations. It is applicable to private and public organizations of all sizes, from

large multinational corporations and government organizations, to non-profit organizations and small businesses.

Network Rail first adopted BS 11000 as a framework for developing the policies, processes, culture and behaviours required to drive continual improvement with key suppliers. The aim was to seek greater collaboration between organizations in the rail industry to deliver cost-efficiencies and improved value for passengers and taxpayers. This remained the key driver for its more recent BSI certification to ISO 44001, and today the organization's alliances must work in accordance with ISO 44001's structure and terminology in developing the collaborative culture, people, process and systems.

## Driving change and consistency

BSI certification to ISO 44001 helps to underpin Network Rail's Collaborative Refresh Strategy, which consists of various work streams, including leadership, stewardship and control, people, process, systems, assurance, and communication and engagement.

"It is designed to re-engage key stakeholders and practitioners to bring greater consistency across the business through regularizing corporate processes, systems and capabilities," says Blakey.

The key area of assurance has involved developing a self-assurance regime to assess corporate maturity, capability, pockets of excellence, and improvement areas. An important achievement has been to integrate these self-assurance measures with BSI's external assessments to preserve and expand certification.

## Certification benefits

Certification by BSI to ISO 44001 has benefited Network Rail by providing stakeholders with clear evidence of its collaborative intent and capability. Key advantages of mutually beneficial business collaboration include:

- defined roles and responsibilities to improve the decision-making process and develop value
- sharing of cost, risk, resources and responsibilities between partners
- training and interchangeability of staff, providing them with wider opportunities and developing their collaborative capabilities

- improved performance, including greater innovation and delivery of cost-efficiencies

"The rigour that comes from a formalized BSI certification programme to ISO 44001, and the external challenge it provides, allows us to identify better how relationship management can help us achieve our business goals, as well as guiding us to select the right partners to help us deliver them," says Blakey.

He continues, "The expertise of BSI's auditors, together with their vast experience of collaboration in different industry sectors, enables them to offer us essential guidance and feedback throughout the assessment process."

## Looking to the future

Network Rail now has many multi-site teams working to common objectives with a single suite of processes and systems, with integrated and transparent data, supported by BIM (building information modelling) and other collaboration-enhancing technology.

"We see BSI certification to ISO 44001 as independent testament to our commitment to lead our industry and our increasing collaborative capability," says Blakey. "But we recognize the need to continue to learn and share if we are to move from pockets of excellence and drive broader consistency and a maturing capability across our business and supply chain."

He concludes, "Ultimately, certification to ISO 44001 is an important building block for Network Rail in our aim of strengthening our overall Organizational Resilience."

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