

BUILDING CAPACITY IN THE SAFE SYSTEM

Independent Process Evaluation Report

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About this Report

This report provides an independent process evaluation of the 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project, conducted by Agilysis and commissioned by Transport Scotland. This report provides an evaluation of the capacity-building activities delivered as part of the Transport Scotland funded project designed to enhance the Safe System approach among road safety practitioners and leaders in Scotland.

About the Author

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Elizabeth's doctorate in Transport Psychology focused on [developing and trialling pre-driver education interventions grounded in behavioural science](#), with the resulting intervention being awarded a [Prince Michael International Road Safety Award in 2023](#). On completing her doctoral studies Elizabeth founded ECM Research Solutions Ltd to provide consultancy services to public and private sector clients to support the development of high-quality evidence-based public safety interventions.

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Disclaimer

This report has been prepared for Transport Scotland and Agilysis by Dr Elizabeth Box, Director of ECM Research Solutions Ltd. Any errors or omissions are the author's sole responsibility. The report content reflects the views of the author and not necessarily those of the research funding and/or supporting organisations.

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Executive Summary

This independent process evaluation report has been commissioned to evaluate the 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project delivered by Agilysis on behalf of Transport Scotland. This report aims to provide an evaluation of the capacity-building activities delivered as part of the Transport Scotland funded project designed to enhance the Safe System approach among road safety practitioners and leaders in Scotland. This report is intended for multiple stakeholders, including Transport Scotland, Agilysis, and other relevant entities who Transport Scotland, as the commissioner of this study, decides to share the report with.

The primary goal of the evaluation conducted was to determine whether the project objectives were met according to the agreed milestones and to assess the overall satisfaction of Transport Scotland with the project's implementation. This report also seeks to identify the key successes, challenges, and barriers encountered during the project's execution to derive actionable insights and recommendations for future initiatives. This report serves as a review of how well the project's milestones have been delivered and perceived, and how the project contributes to the ongoing improvement of road safety practices in the country.

The findings of this evaluation highlight several critical aspects of the project's implementation. The project successfully met its milestones, with some necessary flexibility to accommodate the interdependent nature of various aspects of the programme. Strong leadership, effective communication, and close coordination between the client and contractor were pivotal in driving the programme forward. Notable successes included the high level of enthusiasm from many practitioners and external experts, the creation of innovative resources, and the integration of the Safe System approach across the road safety sector. These achievements have laid a strong foundation for future advancements in road safety practices in Scotland.

However, the project also faced several challenges, including initial resistance from some partners, resource and time constraints, and difficulties in engaging stakeholders consistently. Addressing these challenges required significant effort in fostering a collaborative mindset and ensuring broader and more consistent involvement from all stakeholders. The report recommends continued investment in people and processes, enhancing understanding of Safe System terminology and practical implementation, and leveraging the project's successes to drive further advancements. By addressing these recommendations, future work taking forward the outcomes of this project will be best placed to contribute to a safer road safety system in Scotland.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This Safe System Capacity and Capability Study Independent Process Evaluation report has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to provide an evaluation of the 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project delivered by Agilysis. This report is intended for multiple stakeholders, including Transport Scotland, Agilysis, and other relevant entities involved in road safety initiatives within Scotland with whom Transport Scotland and/or Agilysis would like to share report results with.

The primary aim of this report is to evaluate the effectiveness of the capacity-building activities aimed at enhancing the Safe System approach among those delivering road safety in Scotland. The evaluation seeks to determine whether the project objectives were met according to the agreed milestones and to assess the overall satisfaction of Transport Scotland with the implementation of the project. Additionally, the report aims to identify key successes, challenges, and barriers encountered during the project's execution to derive actionable insights and recommendations for future initiatives.

By providing a comprehensive process evaluation, this report ensures accountability and informs future project planning, thereby enhancing the overall approach to building Safe System capacity in Scotland. It serves as an important document for understanding how well the milestones within this project have been delivered and perceived, and consequently how the project contributes to the ongoing improvement of road safety practices in the country.

1.2 Structure of the Report

The **Executive Summary** offers a brief overview of the report, summarising key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It provides a snapshot of the project evaluation for quick reference by stakeholders.

The **Introduction** sets out the purpose and scope of the report, outlining the context of the Safe System Capacity and Capability Study and introducing the main objectives of the evaluation.

The **Project Background** provides relevant background information on the project. It describes the project's aims, objectives, key activities, and the rationale behind Transport Scotland's initiative to enhance road safety practices through this project.

The **Methodology** section describes the approach taken to the evaluation. It includes details on the data collection methods, such as document reviews and stakeholder interviews. This section also explains the data analysis techniques used and discusses any limitations encountered during the evaluation process.

Evaluation **Findings** are presented, divided into four subsections for a detailed analysis of various aspects of the project. An assessment is made on how the project was implemented, including adherence to timelines, milestones, and planned activities. Client and consultant experiences and perceptions of the project are summarised, highlighting areas of satisfaction and/or concern. The main successes and positive outcomes of the project are also reviewed, showcasing what worked well and why. Finally any challenges or barriers encountered during the project are outlined, providing insights into how any arising issues were managed.

The **Conclusions and Recommendations** section synthesises the findings to draw overall conclusions about the project's effectiveness. It provides actionable recommendations for Transport Scotland and Agilysis to consider for future initiatives, aiming to enhance the planning and implementation of similar projects.

2.0 Project Background

The 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project is a strategic initiative spearheaded by Transport Scotland, aiming to enhance road safety practices across the country by embedding the Safe System approach among those involved in delivering road safety measures. This project is part of a broader effort to reduce road traffic injuries and fatalities by promoting a systemic and proactive approach to road safety.

2.1 Rationale

Transport Scotland's initiative to enhance road safety practices through the 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project is driven by recognition of the complex and multifaceted nature of road safety challenges. Traditional approaches, which often focus on individual interventions, have proven insufficient in addressing the multiple casual factors related to road traffic incidents. The Safe System approach advocates for a broader view, considering all elements of the road traffic system—roads and roadsides, speeds, vehicles, and road users—and their interactions.

The rationale behind this project was to shift the focus from reactive measures to proactive strategies that prevent road traffic incidents from occurring in the first place. By investing in a Safe System culture, providing tailored training resources, enhancing data capabilities, and developing a comprehensive manual, Transport Scotland has sought to equip road safety practitioners with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively implement Safe System principles. This strategic investment is expected to lead to a significant reduction in road traffic injuries and fatalities, aligning with Scotland's broader road safety goals.

In summary, the 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project represents a forward-thinking and comprehensive approach to road safety, aiming to transform how road safety is understood and practised in Scotland. Through this initiative, Transport Scotland seeks to create a safer road environment for all users by embedding a culture of safety and proactive risk management across the country.

2.2 Project Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the project was to support Transport Scotland in developing Safe System capacity among road safety practitioners. The specific objectives were as follows:

- **Invest in Safe System Culture:** To ensure that the Safe System approach is adopted and ingrained as a standard practice across Scotland.
- **Create Tailored Training Resources:** To develop a suite of training materials specifically designed to meet the needs of those involved in road safety in Scotland.
- **Enhance Performance and Analysis:** To work with analytical teams to identify and implement data improvements that support the Safe System approach.
- **Develop a Safe System Manual:** To collaborate with international experts to create a comprehensive guidebook for Scottish practitioners, facilitating the application of Safe System principles.

2.3 Key Activities

To achieve these objectives, the project encompasses a series of key activities, including:

- **Safe System Primer eLearning Course:** An introductory online course to familiarise road safety professionals with the fundamental concepts of the Safe System approach.
- **Data RoadMap:** A strategic plan outlining steps to enhance the collection, analysis, and utilisation of road safety data.
- **Safe System Foundation Courses:** Two foundational training courses designed to build core competencies in Safe System principles among road safety professionals.
- **Safe System Implementation Course Curriculum and Facilitation Guide:** Detailed curriculum and guidance for implementing Safe System strategies.
- **Safe System Culture Playbook:** A resource providing guidance on cultivating a Safe System culture within road safety organisations.
- **Framework for Safe System Manual:** A structured outline for a comprehensive manual to guide Safe System practices in Scotland.

3.0 Methodology

A comprehensive approach was adopted to conduct the process evaluation of the ‘Building Capacity in the Safe System’ project. This evaluation was designed to provide a thorough analysis of the project’s implementation and outcomes. The following subsections detail the data collection methods, data analysis techniques and limitations encountered during the evaluation process.

3.1 Data Collection Methods

To ensure a robust evaluation, several data collection methods were employed. The author was provided with relevant project documents for review including plans, milestone tracking records, deliverables and communication records between Transport Scotland and Agilysis. These documents provided valuable updates on the project’s planned activities, progress, and adherence to timelines.

Structured interviews were conducted with both the client (Transport Scotland) and contractor (Agilysis), each lasting for approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were designed to gather qualitative data on stakeholder experiences, perceptions, and satisfaction with the project’s implementation and outcomes (See Annex A for client and contractor interview guides).

On commission, it was envisaged that other interviews and surveys would be held with a broader group of stakeholders to collect quantitative data on their experiences and perceptions of the project. The client and contractor were contacted for suitable contacts, but it was agreed by both that this additional data collection was not necessary as the client confirmed that they had secured good feedback themselves from partners as part of the overall project process.

3.2 Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected through the above methods were analysed using a combination of qualitative techniques. The qualitative data from the interviews and open-ended survey responses were analysed using thematic analysis, using NVIVO. This involved coding the data to identify common themes and patterns related to the project's implementation, client and contractor experiences, key successes and challenges. This analysis helped in understanding the nuanced perspectives of those involved with the project and provided in-depth insights into the project's impact.

3.3 Limitations

While the evaluation was conducted rigorously, there are several limitations with the approach taken which should be noted. Given the nature of the project, the author was not privy to all project documentation as it would have been impractical for this to have been the case. However, importantly, the author was able to review milestone logs which provided critical insights into the project's progress. Originally, surveys with a broader spectrum of stakeholders were planned, but the client did not consider this necessary to follow-up. This broader survey may have revealed some different perspectives that were not captured through the interviews conducted with the client and the contractor. Despite these minor limitations, the evaluation methodology employed provides a worthwhile assessment of the 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project, with actionable outcomes.

4.0 Findings

This section presents the findings of the process evaluation. These insights gathered, from the interviews conducted and other documents provided about the delivery of the project, provide an overview of the 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project's performance and impact.

4.1 Project Implementation

The 'Building Capacity in the Safe System' project was described by the contractor as part of an ambitious and important programme of work led by Transport Scotland to improve the capacity of leaders and practitioners in Scotland's road safety system.

“So obviously Transport Scotland have got their Vision Zero strategy, which is great. You know, it is quite an ambitious strategy with the safety performance indicators and a clear direction of what they want to do by when. But I think it became quite clear to them that having a strategy in and of itself doesn't lead to a change in action and delivery. So the idea really was, there is a need within Scotland to improve capacity around what safe system is, what it means for people's roles and how they really embedded this practice as business as usual” (Contractor)

“It's great having a strategy and declaring you're doing safe system, but what does it mean to really embed it and to be it?” (Contractor)

Consequently, the project aimed to instil a comprehensive understanding of the Safe System and how to deliver using this approach. This strategic shift from delivering traditional, reactive measures to proactive, systemic strategies was described by the client as crucial for making significant advancements in road safety practices.

“From our perspective, when we launched the Road Safety Framework everyone within our road safety partners played a part, understood the theory of the Safe System and kind of understood what it meant. But when you asked the question, how many of you are actually implementing the safe system within your role, there’s very little. So I think that there was a distinct lack of understanding about not what the principles are, but how do I actually do it? What does that mean? And I think that that’s why we were keen to be moving forward with educating our partners to get them up to the highest standard that they possibly can be, and then produce a manual that is different from any other manual that’s out there at the moment which generally only speak about the theory and the principles.” (Client)

Throughout the project milestones were met, although some flexibility in delivery was necessary to accommodate the independent nature of various aspects of the programme of work. This flexibility allowed the project to adapt to emerging needs and opportunities, ensuring that the deliverables remained relevant and effective. For instance, certain areas, such as data analysis, experienced growth to meet evolving requirements, demonstrating the project’s adaptive capacity. The approach of running multiple workstreams concurrently, rather than in a linear fashion, also proved beneficial as it allowed for greater integration and synergy between different aspects of the project.

“I think running the four strands alongside each other has really helped to enrich them all. I think it would have been really easy to embark on, I don’t know, the training, and then it not really have any effect because the culture wasn’t ready for it or people didn’t have the tools.” (Contractor)

“I think we probably would have been further ahead if we’d seen them as discrete projects. But I think it’s probably to the benefit of the project that we pushed things back a little bit to allow them to inform each other.” (Contractor)

Regular in-person catch-ups, effective communication, and the maintenance of an action log was reported as facilitating smooth coordination between the client and contractor. This close communication ensured that both parties remained aligned on the project goals and allowed for timely adjustments when needed. Additionally, the availability of people and resources, as well as the excellent support from the client in engaging with relevant partners, were described as pivotal in driving the programme forward.

“There was great engagement with them throughout the project...we felt that it was important to work alongside Agilysis because of the contacts that we had in Scotland” (Client)

4.2 Client and Contractors Experiences

The experiences of the client and contractors revealed several key insights into the project’s execution. One of the most notable aspects was the reported high level of enthusiasm expressed about the project by external experts and practitioners, which underscores the project’s relevance and the willingness of stakeholders to engage with its goals. Practitioners were also keen to participate in training programmes, indicating a strong interest in learning about the Safe System approach and its practical applications.

“I think one of the things is lots and lots of practitioners across Scotland are knocking on George’s door for the training. So there is just an enthusiasm, which I don’t think was there

at the beginning of, hey, look, we really want to get involved in this. So, I think there is a desire to continue the momentum” (Contractor)

External experts, with busy schedules, were also reported as keen to be involved in project. This positive reception was crucial for the project’s success.

“The manual workshops were brilliant...they really engaged with this, willing to give up their time for free to help to help Scotland set this out.” (Contractor)

The collaboration between the client and contractor was marked by excellent support and adaptability. It was reported that the client provided significant support in engaging relevant partners, which was crucial for the project’s outreach and impact, with the contractors commenting *“I’m not sure that they could have done much more to help”*. The contractor was praised for demonstrating adaptability by providing additional support when needed, such as delivering presentations to boards and adjusting the project plans to meet emerging requirements.

“I’ll give you one example. We wanted to get our entire senior management team together to get them up to speed because we felt that was absolutely right, which was very, very difficult to achieve. So Agilysis went above and beyond. They adapted the programme of work and gave a presentation to our senior management team. The Chief Executive, every director and the feedback from that was unbelievable. The best presentation that they had ever had.” (Client)

This flexibility and responsiveness helped maintain momentum and ensured that the project could address any challenges that arose.

Despite these positive experiences, the project did encounter some challenges in engaging wider partners consistently. Survey participation and the availability of stakeholders were particular areas of concern, with difficulties experienced in securing individual rather than organisational responses to the cultural maturity survey in some cases. While overall engagement was positive, these challenges highlight the need for effective strategies to ensure a broad and more consistent involvement from all stakeholders, with the client stating that *“it’s not just about doing your own job all the time. It’s about kind of breaking down some of those barriers”*, whilst also recognising that getting *“100% engagement all the time...it’s very difficult.”* Addressing these issues in future projects will be important for achieving even greater levels of engagement and impact, with the client recognising that the current project *“sets the foundations of where we’re going”*.

4.3 Key Successes

The project achieved several notable successes that significantly advanced its objectives. One of the most critical factors contributing to these successes was the leadership and passion demonstrated by the client. Their ability to engage at a high level and influence stakeholders played a pivotal role in driving the project’s momentum. The client’s authority and commitment were instrumental in fostering a supportive environment for the project’s initiatives and ensuring that the project received the necessary attention and resources from all involved parties. The client was described as *“blend[ing] commitment to the cause”*, *“having significant ownership of the road safety framework and the need to deliver it”* and the *“kind of capability and currency within the organisation”* that other jurisdictions rarely enjoyed (Contractor).

Another key success was the decision to run four strands of work concurrently, which proved to be complementary and mutually reinforcing. This approach allowed different aspects of the project to enhance each other, creating a more cohesive and integrated effort. The concurrent workstreams included the development of innovative resources, such as the Safe System Culture Playbook, and the delivery of successful online sessions with experts. These outputs provided valuable tools and insights for ongoing road safety efforts and were well-received by practitioners and stakeholders alike.

The project also supported integration across the road safety sector, breaking down barriers and fostering a more collaborative approach. This integration is expected to have long-term benefits, enhancing capacity and capability throughout the sector. By opening up discussions with partners and promoting a shared understanding of the Safe System approach, the project has laid the groundwork for future advancements in road safety practices.

“I think that knowledge and capability has increased, I would say a lot, but actually implementing that is going to take a little longer. We've set the foundations and, you know, we're going in the right direction now. And I think that what this gives us is a clear approach of where we should be going and how we should be delivering.” (Client)

This sector-wide integration is a significant achievement, as it not only improves current practices but also sets the stage for sustained progress in the future, with the client noting *“I can see it being hopefully something that in years to come we will look back on as really that sort of groundbreaking initiative, on top of the framework, to have made great strides in reducing deaths in our country.”*

4.4 Challenges and Barriers

Despite its many successes, the project faced several challenges and barriers that needed to be addressed. One of the primary challenges was the initial resistance from some partners who were accustomed to traditional approaches to road safety. The ongoing challenge of breaking down silo thinking was particularly notable, as it required stakeholders to move beyond their established ways of working and embrace a new, integrated framework. The client noted that during the course of the project *“we've broken down barriers which will lead to increased capability delivery in the future.”*

Resource and time constraints also posed challenges. The limited availability of stakeholders and delays in sign-offs for certain outputs, such as videos, required careful management to keep the project on track. These constraints highlighted the importance of effective planning and resource allocation to ensure that the project could meet its objectives despite these hurdles. Additionally, engaging individuals for the cultural survey proved more challenging than anticipated, with institutional perspectives often overshadowing individual views. This challenge underscored the need for strategies to ensure that a diverse range of voices and perspectives are included in future efforts.

Another challenge was the need to build up relationships for truly collaborative working, ensuring that the initiative was not seen as solely driven by one organisation. This required ongoing effort to foster a sense of shared ownership and commitment among all stakeholders. The slight resistance from some partners, who felt that the project was prescribing how they should do their jobs, also needed to be managed carefully. Addressing these challenges involved promoting the benefits of the Safe System approach and demonstrating its value in enhancing road safety practices.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings from this process evaluation underscore the need for continued efforts and next steps to build on the project's successes and address the identified challenges. One of the key recommendations is the importance of ongoing commitment and investment in people and processes. The work conducted thus far has set a strong foundation, but continued support and resources will be crucial for maintaining momentum and achieving long-term success. The client's ongoing commitment to this programme is particularly important for ensuring that the project can continue to drive significant improvements in road safety practices.

"We've got a commitment to kind of roll this out across the entire country. It's something that we wish to do free of charge and invest in people working in road safety and beyond in Scotland showing that we are the most knowledgeable country that we possibly can be. And if that costs X amount per year, but we are seeing the benefits of the overall road safety delivery, then it will be the best money that we've ever invested" (Client)

Another critical recommendation is the need to enhance understanding of Safe System terminology and practical implementation. While the project has clearly made significant strides in promoting the Safe System approach, there is still a need for further education and training to ensure that these principles are fully understood and effectively applied across the sector. Future work should focus on providing clear guidance and practical examples to help practitioners translate Safe System concepts into actionable strategies. As highlighted by the client this work *"highlights the real need for the next stages...it really kind of sets the scene of where we need to go as an organisation and as a country in the future as well."*

Leveraging the project's successes, such as the innovative elements and sector-wide integration, will be essential for advancing road safety practices. These achievements provide a strong platform for future initiatives, and it is important to build on this foundation to achieve even greater impact. By promoting a culture of continuous improvement and fostering strong partnerships, future developments have the potential to continue to drive significant advancements in road safety. This approach will not only enhance current practices but also set the stage for sustained progress and innovation in the field.

By addressing these recommendations, the future work that is developed on the basis of this project can continue to drive significant improvements in road safety practices, ultimately contributing to the reduction of road traffic injuries and fatalities.

6.0 Annex A – Process Evaluation Interview Questions

This set of questions were designed to gather insights from both the contractor and client perspectives, to facilitate a detailed understanding of the project's process, outcomes, and areas for improvement.

For the Contractor (Agilysis):

- Can you give me a summary overview of the aims and objectives of this project that you are running for Transport Scotland?
- Can you describe the milestones agreed upon at the start of the project and your approach towards achieving them?
- In what ways did you ensure that the programme's delivery was aligned with the project's goals and objectives?
- What has gone well in the delivery of the programme?
- How did you address challenges or obstacles encountered during the project implementation?
- Are there any areas you believe require improvement or changes for future projects?
- Could you provide examples of how feedback from stakeholders was integrated into the project?
- What measures were taken to ensure the development of Safe System capacity and capability?
- How do you evaluate the success of the programme in terms of delivery and impact?

For the Client (Transport Scotland):

- What drove the initiation of this programme of work?
- How well do you believe Agilysis delivered on the agreed milestones and objectives of the project?
- Were your expectations met in terms of the quality and timeliness of the work delivered?
- Can you describe your overall satisfaction with the programme and its outcomes?
- How effective was the communication and collaboration between your team and the contractor throughout the project?
- In what ways has the project impacted your capacity and capability in relation to the Safe System approach?
- Are there any significant learnings or insights from the project that you would like to highlight?
- What improvements or changes would you suggest for future initiatives based on your experience?