

19 August 2016

Half-yearly NS figures: increased customer satisfaction and punctuality

Summary

The operational results from first six months of 2016 showed improvement on those of last year, with no major disruptions. During the first half of 2016, 92.3% of all train travellers arrived on time, a slight increase compared to H1 2015 (+0.7%). In H1 2016, NS realised turnover of €2,573 million, an increase of nearly 9% with respect to 2015 (€2,369 million). Net profit over H1 was 23% higher than for the same period in 2015 (€ 69 million compared to € 56 million). The new strategy was presented on 1 March, and implementation is now in full swing.

Customer satisfaction and punctuality

At 76.2%, customer satisfaction was higher than in H1 2015 (75.0%). This was due to higher scores on transport capacity, the hospitality of station staff and the approachability of both on-board and station employees. Customer satisfaction with HSL South was 75.1%.

Unlike last year, the first half of 2016 saw hardly any major disruptions with nationwide ramifications. International train traffic suffered from strikes in Belgium and Germany, and the impact of the attacks in Brussels. The 92.3% punctuality rate represents the percentage of passengers who arrived at their destination on time with a delay of no more than five minutes, provided they made their connection and the train was not cancelled. Punctuality during the same period in 2015 was 91.6%.

Financial

In H1 2016, NS realised turnover of €2,573 million, an increase of nearly 9% with respect to 2015 (€2,369 million). Net profit in H1 totalled €69 million, compared to €56 million for the equivalent period in 2015. This increase was mainly due to higher transport revenue, and proceeds from the divestment of real estate. The investments of €333 million during H1 2016 went mostly towards new rolling stock. NS will continue to make significant investments in new trains over the years ahead.

New trains, station renovations

This spring, the new (Flirt) Sprinter trains arrived in the Netherlands for testing and admission to the network. These trains will be put into service starting December 2016. In late April, Eurostar also started making initial test runs in the Netherlands in order to prepare for a direct connection from Amsterdam to London.

NS has signed a contract with Alstom for 79 high-speed Intercity trains that will be used on both the High Speed Line (HSL) and the main rail network from 2021 onwards. Over the years ahead, NS will be investing more than €2.5 billion in fleet modernisation and expansion, including 176 new Sprinter trains.

ProRail is increasing rail capacity in and around Utrecht, providing room for more trains to run in the future. Major steps were taken during the first half of 2016: at the renovated station in Lunetten, Intercity trains are now driving through newly built dive-unders, resulting in time efficiencies because trains no longer need to cross each other. All four new tracks in Houten are now operational, allowing Sprinter and Intercity trains to pass one another.

The newly renovated station in The Hague opened on 1 February 2016, with the renovations preparing the station for the expected growth. Around 190,000 people currently use the station daily; this figure is expected to reach 270,000 by 2025.

Crowded trains

In late 2015, NS announced extra measures for addressing the issue of crowded trains during peak times. As part of this programme, 1000 first-class seats in Sprinter trains have been converted to second class,

and eleven existing double-decker trains have been modernised and added to the train fleet to be used for the new timetable starting in the autumn. NS has implemented a 'pitstop' system to ensure the fast repair of minor train defects. The system means that trains spend less time being repaired, creating an additional 4500 seats. NS has applied for temporary peak-time buses on a number of busy lines from Brabant to Utrecht Central after the summer.

Recruitment of extra staff

This spring, NS began recruiting two hundred additional employees: 140 extra senior conductors, and 60 Security & Service staff. This will make it possible to put two conductors on all trains after 10 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. These recruitment activities are one of the measures being implemented by NS to increase the safety and sense of security for both travellers and staff. Recruitment is expected to be complete and the new staff trained and ready for work during the course of 2017.

Check-out reminder

NS has launched a new service – NS Extra – that includes a reminder for travellers who have forgotten to check out. NS Extra members will receive an automatic e-mail within a few days, after which their credit will be returned to them via a card machine. During the first month, 3,000 reminders were sent and 180,000 passengers signed up for the service.

1,000 new OV-bikes

In April, NS distributed 1,000 new OV-bikes across stations in the Netherlands, as trip numbers have increased from 600,000 in 2009 to nearly 1.9 million in 2015. Around 2,000 more new bikes will follow after this delivery.

Abellio: new concessions in Germany and the United Kingdom

In early August, the British Department for Transport selected Abellio as its preferred transport company for East Anglia. Abellio has been operating this large concession under the Greater Anglia name since 2012, and may continue to do so until 2025. East Anglia is one of the most successful and fastest-growing regions in Great Britain.

Earlier this year, NS subsidiary Abellio Germany was officially awarded the *Stuttgarter Netz* train concession, where Abellio will provide the train services starting in June 2019. In July it was announced that, starting in late 2019, Abellio will be running a large proportion of the regional S-bahn train services in the Rhine-Ruhr region. This concession will last for 15 years.

Finalisation of Fyra and the Limburg tender

On 29 April the cabinet responded to the findings of the Fyra investigative committee. Over the recent period, NS has been working hard on implementing the lessons learned from the Fyra affair. In response to the irregularities regarding the tender procedure in Limburg, the Public Prosecution Department has announced that it will launch proceedings against NS; a procedure is currently running with the Consumer & Market Authority regarding possible abuse of power by NS; and Veolia has made NS liable for alleged damages suffered as a result of the Limburg tender.

Sustainability

Starting in 2017 – a year earlier than planned – all NS trains will operate on green energy. NS wishes to use water and energy responsibly, and treat waste in an environmentally friendly manner. NS currently purchases 75% green energy. In December, NS also launched the 'Waste separation and recycling' pilot programme at Zwolle station, alerting passengers to the fact that waste is separated at the station. A special type of rubbish bin on the new Flirt trains will allow passengers to dispose of waste separately. In January 2016, the refurbished NedTrain rail workshop in The Hague was the first in Europe to receive a four-star Breeam rating, an assessment method for determining building sustainability performance.

Implementation of new strategy

On 1 March, NS presented its new strategy for 2016-2019, titled 'On track for improvement' (*Spoorslags Beter*). To improve performance for our passengers in the years ahead, NS will focus specifically on three core activities: improving services on the main rail network, ensuring quality service at stations and improving door-to-door travel. In line with this new strategy, NS is looking for a new Qbuzz owner, and will be selling the HTM shares to the City of The Hague. NS and HTM will continue to work together on improving door-to-door travel.

Note to editorial staff:

See www.ns.nl/jaarverslag for the half-yearly report, and key financial and other data.