

Decision Analysis of the Methods and Techniques for Diagnosing the Level of Performance and Competitiveness of the STB S.A. Organization

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Abstract. Organisational performance evaluation systems are crucial for driving continuous improvement and enhancing organisational competitiveness. They provide a structured framework for identifying strengths and areas for improvement, thereby supporting the development of effective long-term strategies. Proper implementation of these systems allows organizations to optimize their processes and better respond to the demands of the market. The review of the specialized literature indicates that while some frameworks focus on macroeconomic factors, others are more suitable for organizational-level evaluations. This paper proposes a detailed comparison of six methods and tools for diagnosing performance and competitiveness, intending to identify the most appropriate tool for the assessment of Bucharest Public Transport Company STB S.A. (STB S.A.). The analysis focuses on the specific methodologies and applications of each method and tool, including renowned tools such as CompNet Competitiveness Diagnostic Toolkit, WEF Global Competitiveness Index, World Bank Doing Business Report, European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), IMD World Competitiveness Center (WCC) and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria Model. The assessment is based on nine (9) key criteria, including clarity of objectives, completeness of applicability, flexibility, impact on strategic decisions and resources required for implementation. The highest ranked results are for the "Malcolm Baldrige Model", suggesting that the model is well suited to follow STB S.A.'s strategies due to its broad applicability, clarity of objectives and international recognition. The conclusion of the paper emphasizes the importance of using robust diagnostic methods to support any type of organization, and STB S.A. this situation, for developing effective strategies tailored to the needs of a more efficient public transport network.

Keywords: Public transport, Organizational excellence, Competitiveness diagnostics, Institutional performance, Development strategies, International assessment methods and tools.

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Introduction

In the current context of economic, technological, and social changes, public sector organizations are increasingly pressured to optimize their performance to meet the complex demands of society. Organizational performance evaluation systems are essential tools for developing effective managerial conduct and for supporting data-driven decision-making processes. In the

specific case of the STB S.A., a key entity in urban mobility infrastructure, it is imperative to identify an appropriate framework to support the analysis and continuous improvement of performance [1].

This research provides a comparative analysis of six international models for evaluating performance and competitiveness, selected for their methodological diversity and potential applicability in organizational contexts. The aim of the study is to determine which of these systems is best suited for evaluating and supporting the performance of STB S.A., considering the specific characteristics of an urban public transport organization. The analysis is based on six essential evaluation criteria: relevance for improving internal processes, customer orientation, adaptability to the local context, impact on organizational performance, emphasis on organizational culture, and compatibility with other models [2].

The research question posed is: *Which of the international performance evaluation models offers the most suitable framework for diagnosing and strategically developing a public transport organization, such as STB S.A.?* The working hypothesis argues that models focused on organizational excellence, with a flexible structure and operational-level applicability, are better suited for such evaluations than tools with a predominantly macroeconomic character [3].

Literature Review

Organizational performance has been a topic of constant interest in the literature, being analyzed from multiple perspectives: economic, managerial, strategic and operational. Traditionally, performance assessment models have focused either at the macroeconomic level, through the analysis of competitiveness at the national or sectoral level, or at the microeconomic level, through tools aimed at improving internal processes and organizational culture [4].

A first key concept is that of competitiveness, defined in the literature as “the ability of an organization or a nation to maintain and improve its position in the marketplace through efficiency, innovation and adaptability” [5]. This concept is addressed in instruments such as the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index or the World Bank's Doing Business Report, both of which focus on macroeconomic and institutional factors. While these instruments provide valuable insights into the external environment in which organizations operate, the literature reports that their direct applicability at the organizational level is limited [5, 6].

On the other hand, organizational excellence models, such as EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), provide robust frameworks for assessing and improving performance internally. They integrate dimensions such as leadership, employee involvement, customer focus, process management and organizational results, thus providing a holistic model for performance management. For example, the EFQM model uses the RADAR tool to structure and measure performance concerning the organization's strategic objectives [7, 8].

The CompNet toolkit and the IMD - World Competitiveness Centre competitiveness model contribute relevant data and methodologies for industry and region-level analysis and are useful for benchmarking. However, the literature draws attention to the fact that these tools are more suitable for large-scale comparative research than for specific operational assessments [9, 10].

The definition of organizational performance varies by approach, but is generally associated with the degree to which an organization achieves its strategic plus operational and financial objectives. Baldrige or EFQM-type models are appreciated in the literature precisely for their ability to link these dimensions in an integrated and actionable framework [7, 8]. A review of recent research highlights a growing trend towards integrating macro and microeconomic systems to gain a complete understanding of performance. However, there is a significant gap in the applied literature on the choice of the most appropriate models for public transport organizations, where operational specificities, customer relationships and resource constraints require a different analytical framework than private [10].

The contribution of this paper consists of a systematic comparative approach of six international performance assessment tools and models, specifically applied to the context of STB S.A. While the literature provides consistent theoretical perspectives on each model, the present research proposes an integrated assessment, oriented towards the selection of the most appropriate model according to criteria of practical relevance for an urban public transport organization [11].

Methodology

The present research uses an analytical-comparative approach in order to identify the most appropriate organizational performance assessment model for the Bucharest Transport Company, STB S.A. The study was designed around a formulated research question: *Which of the international performance assessment models offers the most appropriate framework for the diagnosis and strategic development of a public transport organization such as STB S.A.?*

To answer this question, a comparative analysis of six established models for assessing competitiveness and organizational excellence was carried out:

- CompNet Competitiveness Diagnostic Toolkit;

- World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Index;
- World Bank Doing Business Report;
- World Competitiveness Centre (WCC) Competitiveness Model – IMD;
- EFQM Model - Radar Monitor;
- Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria Model [6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16].

For the comparative evaluation of these models, six analytical criteria have been defined, selected according to their relevance for the specificity of an urban public transport organization such as STB S.A. These are:

1. Relevance for internal process improvement;
2. Focus on customer satisfaction;
3. Flexibility and adaptability to the local context;
4. Impact on organizational performance;
5. Employee involvement and organizational culture;
6. Compatibility with other evaluation systems [10, 12, 17].

For each criterion, a qualitative assessment was made, supported by a literature review and a contextualized interpretation of each model concerning the activity of STB S.A.. Each criterion was associated with a score on a scale from 7 to 10, reflecting the adequacy of the model in relation to the dimension assessed. This evaluation was carried out by triangulating information from academic literature, official documentation of each model and observations on the specific requirements and constraints of public transport systems in Romanian urban areas.

Since the research is exploratory and evaluative, no advanced quantitative methods or statistical software were used. However, the data were organized and processed using tabular processing tools (Microsoft Excel) in order to build a comparative matrix and to highlight aggregated scores. This approach allowed a clear visualization of the relative performance of each model and informed the selection of the most appropriate framework for STB S.A..

The study is rooted in the comparative methodology used and in previous similar research, such as that conducted by Andy Neely on integrated performance management frameworks, and by Eskildsen & Dahlgaard on the validation of the EFQM and Baldrige models in European organizations. The research also provides a useful framework for understanding the limitations of the applicability of macroeconomic models in organizational assessments [17, 18].

Grading was based on the following domains, with each score reflecting performance in that specific area as explained below:

Relevance to internal process improvement

- Score 9-10: Systems that provide a clear, structured and scalable framework for identifying, monitoring and improving internal processes with a demonstrable impact on operational efficiency.
- Score 7-8: Systems with useful elements for improvement, but with limited applicability or lacking detailed methodologies for various types of organizational processes.

Focus on Customer Satisfaction

- Note 9-10: Models that integrate customer satisfaction as a central objective and provide concrete tools for evaluation and continuous improvement of the customer relationship.
- Score 7-8: Systems that mention customer satisfaction, but treat it superficially or indirectly, without clear evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.

Flexibility and adaptability to the local context

- Note 9-10: Models with a flexible architecture, capable of being customized and effectively applied in diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.
- Score 7-8: Rigid systems that require significant modifications to be applied in contexts other than those for which they were originally designed.

Impact on organizational performance

- Note 9-10: Systems with empirical evidence of improved overall performance, including financial, operational and sustainability indicators.
- Note 7-8: Models that target performance but without a clear correlation between implementation and organizational results or with impact limited to certain functional areas.

Employee Engagement and Organizational Culture

- Note 9-10: Models that actively promote employee engagement, the development of a collaborative culture, and alignment of organizational values.
- Score 7-8: Systems that recognize the importance of employee engagement but do not propose concrete strategies or tools to cultivate it.

Compatibility with other assessment systems

- Note 9-10: Systems that are easily integrated with other frameworks (e.g. ISO, Balanced Scorecard, sectoral models), facilitating multidimensional assessment coherence.
- Score 7-8: Useful models, but with significant methodological overlaps or integration difficulties with other assessment tools [19, 5, 3]

Results and Discussion

This section presents the comparative evaluation of the six models, according to the six criteria relevant to STB S.A.. The scores given, on a scale from 7 to 10, reflect the degree of suitability of each model to the specific requirements of the urban public transport organization.

The assessment combines theoretical perspectives, existing case studies and contextualized interpretations, highlighting the differences in applicability between macroeconomic and organizational excellence-oriented frameworks. Table 1 presents the Diagnostic Toolkit for Competitiveness, which corresponds to the CompNet tool developed under the auspices of the European Commission. It is designed to assess competitiveness at the macroeconomic level, in particular in terms of the performance of national economies and sectors. It provides a robust framework for structural analysis of competitiveness factors, but its direct applicability at the level of an individual organization, such as STB S.A., is limited.

Table 1: Competitiveness Diagnostic Toolkit - CompNet

Evaluation Criterion	Criterion Assessment	Criterion Score
1. Relevance for improving internal processes	CompNet focuses on assessing economic competitiveness at the country or regional level rather than on the internal processes of a specific organization.	7
2. Focus on customer satisfaction	CompNet does not have a direct focus on customer satisfaction, being more oriented towards overall market performance.	7
3. Flexibility and adaptability to local context	CompNet is a tool more suited to evaluating general economic competitiveness and may be less relevant to the specific context of an organization.	7
4. Impact on organizational performance	CompNet analyzes performance at the macroeconomic level, which may indirectly affect organizations but does not have a direct impact on the daily operations of STB S.A.	7
5. Employee involvement and organizational culture	CompNet does not focus on organizational culture or employee involvement, as its focus is on assessing economic competitiveness.	7
6. Compatibility with other evaluation systems	CompNet can be used alongside other macroeconomic evaluations, but it does not align very well with internal organizational performance models.	7

CompNet score: 42 p

The CompNet assessment showed uniform scores (7) on all six criteria, reflecting low relevance to internal process improvement, customer satisfaction or organizational culture. While providing a useful macroeconomic picture, this tool is not suitable for operational analysis of a public transportation company.

Table 2 presents the analysis of the Global Competitiveness Index developed by the World Economic Forum (WEF). The WEF Global Competitiveness Index is one of the most influential tools for assessing national performance concerning the global economy. It provides a detailed picture of the economic and institutional context, but it is designed for assessments on a national scale, not for specific organizations.

Table 2: Global Competitiveness Index - World Economic Forum (WEF)

Evaluation Criterion	Criterion Assessment	Criterion Score
1. Relevance for improving internal processes	The WEF Index measures competitiveness at a global and national level; it is not directly applicable to the internal processes of a transport organization.	7
2. Focus on customer satisfaction	WEF focuses more on macroeconomic and policy factors, not on customer satisfaction at the organizational level.	7
3. Flexibility and adaptability to local context	WEF provides a global assessment of competitiveness, but is less flexible for specific local or organizational evaluations.	7
4. Impact on organizational performance	The WEF Index may indirectly influence organizational performance through analysis of the economic environment, but it has less direct impact on daily operations.	9
5. Employee involvement and organizational culture	WEF does not directly address employee involvement or the organizational culture of a specific company.	7
6. Compatibility with other evaluation systems	WEF is useful for global comparisons and can be complemented with other economic evaluations, but it does not align with organizational excellence models.	7

WEF score: 44 p

The WEF model was rated with scores of 7 for most criteria, except for the impact on organizational performance, where it scored 9. This result (44p) reflects the fact that the index can provide useful information on the general economic context, but does not provide direct support for optimizing the internal activities of STB S.A..

In Table 3, the Doing Business Report - World Bank has been analyzed. The Doing Business Report, developed by the World Bank, assesses the legislative framework and administrative efficiency concerning a country's business environment. While it provides useful information on the external environment, its applicability in assessing the operations of a public transportation company is indirect and limited.

Table 3: Doing Business Report - World Bank

Evaluation Criterion	Criterion Assessment	Criterion Score
1. Relevance for improving internal processes	Doing Business analyzes the business environment at the macroeconomic level, but it does not have a direct impact on the internal processes of a transport organization.	7
2. Focus on customer satisfaction	It does not focus on customer satisfaction from the perspective of a transport organization, but rather on general business environment conditions.	7
3. Flexibility and adaptability to local context	The report is adapted to evaluate economic regulations and the local business environment, but does not address individual organizations.	7
4. Impact on organizational performance	It has an indirect impact on organizations by improving general business conditions, but it does not aim to improve the internal operations of a transport organization.	7
5. Employee involvement and organizational culture	It does not address the topic of employee involvement or organizational culture.	7
6. Compatibility with other evaluation systems	It can be used as a complement in assessing global business performance, but it is not detailed enough to be compared with excellence models.	7

Doing Business score: 42 p

The scores given to this model were uniform (7 for all criteria), indicating a contextual value (42p), but a low degree of usefulness in an organization's internal processes. It does not focus on aspects such as organizational culture, customer satisfaction or employee engagement.

In Table 4 was analyzed the IMD World Competitiveness Centre (WCC) Competitiveness Model. The IMD WCC Competitiveness Model analyzes the performance of national economies from the perspective of four main pillars: government efficiency, economic performance, infrastructure and business efficiency. Being oriented towards macro-level competitiveness analysis, the model has low utility in specifically diagnosing the performance of an organizational entity.

Table 4: Competitiveness Model - IMD World Competitiveness Centre (WCC)

Evaluation Criterion	Criterion Assessment	Criterion Score
1. Relevance for improving internal processes	The IMD model primarily analyzes national competitiveness and economic regions, having an indirect impact on the internal processes of organizations.	7
2. Focus on customer satisfaction	It does not directly focus on customer satisfaction or interaction, being more oriented toward global competitiveness.	7
3. Flexibility and adaptability to local context	It can be applied at the local level, but it focuses on assessing the economic performance of regions and countries, not individual companies.	7
4. Impact on organizational performance	It has an indirect impact on organizations, as it provides a general overview of economic competitiveness but does not focus on internal aspects.	7
5. Employee involvement and organizational culture	It does not directly address leadership or employee engagement aspects.	7
6. Compatibility with other evaluation systems	It can be complemented with other economic performance assessments, but it does not align with internal organizational excellence models.	8

Score for IMD/WCC: 43 p

The evaluation revealed scores of 7 for five of the six criteria, and a score of 8 for compatibility with other systems. While it may be useful for completing an external analysis of the operating environment, the IMD model is not sufficiently granular for an internal assessment applied to STB S.A..

The EFQM Model is one of the most widely used excellence frameworks in Europe, providing a coherent system for organizational self-assessment and improvement. With its structure based on criteria such as leadership, strategy and customer orientation, the EFQM model is considered highly suitable for organizations pursuing operational and cultural excellence.

Table 5: EFQM Model - Radar Monitor

Evaluation Criterion	Criterion Assessment	Criterion Score
1. Relevance for improving internal processes	EFQM focuses on the continuous improvement of internal processes, being highly relevant for organizations aiming to enhance their efficiency and performance.	9
2. Focus on customer satisfaction	EFQM places strong emphasis on customer satisfaction, helping organizations improve their relationships and interactions with customers.	9
3. Flexibility and adaptability to local context	EFQM is a fairly flexible model, applicable across various industries and local contexts, including urban public transport.	9
4. Impact on organizational performance	The impact on organizational performance is significant, as EFQM targets improvement across all organizational aspects.	9
5. Employee involvement and organizational culture	EFQM focuses on developing a culture of excellence, which can address employee engagement and leadership.	9
6. Compatibility with other evaluation systems	EFQM integrates well with other models and tools for evaluating performance and organizational excellence.	9

EFQM score: 54 p

The high scores (9) given for all six criteria confirm the high applicability of this model at the organizational level. EFQM provides a flexible and results-oriented framework, which makes it highly suitable for implementation by STB S.A. in a strategic transformation and continuous improvement approach.

In Table 6, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria Model was analyzed. The Baldrige Model is an internationally recognized framework for assessing organizational performance, promoted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). It combines a rigorous, continuous improvement approach with strategic focus and employee involvement, making it highly suitable for analyzing the performance of a public service organization such as STB S.A.

Table 6: Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria Model

Evaluation Criterion	Criterion Assessment	Criterion Score
1. Relevance for improving internal processes	Baldrige is highly relevant for improving internal processes, with a strong focus on optimizing operations and production processes.	10
2. Focus on customer satisfaction	Baldrige places significant emphasis on customer satisfaction and improving customer relationships, an essential aspect for a public transport organization.	9
3. Flexibility and adaptability to local context	Baldrige is very flexible and can be adapted to a specific local context, such as urban public transport.	9
4. Impact on organizational performance	Baldrige has a significant impact on organizational performance, both operationally and financially.	10
5. Employee involvement and organizational culture	Baldrige places special emphasis on leadership and organizational culture, supporting employee involvement in continuous improvement.	9
6. Compatibility with other evaluation systems	Baldrige integrates easily with other evaluation systems and can be combined with various external tools.	9

Score for Baldrige: 56 p

The scores obtained (56p) are the highest of all the models analyzed: 10 for impact and relevance, 9 for the rest of the criteria. The results suggest that the Baldrige model is best suited for an integrated approach to organizational performance, providing a clear and applicable framework for the overall improvement of STB S.A. services and operations.

Conclusion

The analysis of the six organizational performance diagnostic models revealed significant differences in their applicability to a public transport organization such as STB S.A. The models focused on assessing national competitiveness and the macroeconomic environment, such as CompNet, WEF, Doing Business and IMD - provide valuable contextual information, but do not directly address the operational, cultural and strategic needs of an organization.

Table 7 presents the final outcomes of a comparative evaluation involving six well-known systems of excellence. These frameworks—widely recognized in both academic and professional contexts—have been assessed based on a set of rigorous criteria to determine their overall effectiveness in diagnosing and supporting organizational or national performance. While each model offers distinct strengths and areas of focus, the results highlight meaningful differences in their comprehensiveness and practical utility. The following table summarizes the final scores assigned to each system.

Table 7: Final results of the evaluation of systems of excellence

Diagnostic System	Final Score
Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (CPE) Criteria Model	56 pts
EFQM Model - Radar Monitor	54 pts
WEF Global Competitiveness Index	44 pts
World Competitiveness Centre (WCC) Competitiveness Model	43 pts
CompNet Competitiveness Diagnostic Toolkit	42 pts
World Bank Doing Business Report	42 pts

On the other hand, the models built for organizational excellence - Malcolm Baldrige and EFQM - stand out for their relevance, clarity and adaptability. The scores obtained confirm the value of these frameworks as robust diagnostic and performance improvement tools. Of these, the Malcolm Baldrige Model stands out as the most appropriate for STB S.A., due to its integrated approach to performance, strategic orientation and focus on leadership and customer satisfaction.

These findings provide a solid basis for the strategic recommendations in the final section of the paper and can underpin a coherent organizational development plan based on excellence.

This study set out to compare six internationally recognized performance evaluation frameworks, with the aim of identifying the most suitable tool for assessing and guiding the strategic development of a public transport organization—specifically, STB S.A. The models were assessed across six carefully selected criteria, with final scores ranging from 42 to 56 points. The results clearly show that not all frameworks are equally applicable when it comes to internal diagnostics and organizational development in the public service sector.

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria Model achieved the highest score, with 56 points. Its strength lies in the balance it strikes between strategic direction and operational improvement. The model scored a perfect 10 on two critical dimensions: relevance to internal process improvement and overall impact on organizational performance. With high scores (9 points) in areas like customer satisfaction, flexibility, employee engagement, and system compatibility, Baldrige demonstrates a strong ability to address both the technical and human aspects of transformation. For STB S.A., this translates into a practical, measurable, and scalable roadmap for change.

The second-highest score, 54 points, was recorded by the EFQM Model (Radar Monitor). EFQM mirrors many of Baldrige's strengths, particularly its focus on leadership, strategic alignment, and continuous improvement. It scored 9 out of 10 across all criteria, reflecting its comprehensive and adaptable structure. The model is particularly effective for organizations seeking to embed a culture of excellence while remaining agile in the face of local or operational constraints—making it highly relevant for a large, dynamic service provider like STB S.A.

In the middle of the ranking, the WEF Global Competitiveness Index and the WCC Competitiveness Model (IMD) scored 44 and 43 points, respectively. These frameworks are well-established and valuable in understanding the national economic landscape. However, their utility at the organizational level is limited. The WEF model did score 9 points in terms of its indirect impact on performance—thanks to its insights into economic and institutional environments—but received only 7s in all other areas, due to its limited internal focus. Similarly, the IMD model earned mostly 7s, with a slightly higher score (8) for compatibility with other systems. Both tools are informative but not directly useful for improving the internal operations of a transport company.

At the lower end of the ranking are the World Bank's Doing Business Report and the CompNet Competitiveness Diagnostic Toolkit, each scoring 42 points. These tools are firmly rooted in macroeconomic analysis. While useful for understanding broader business environments or sectoral dynamics, they scored uniformly low (7 out of 10) across all criteria due to their lack of focus on internal processes, employee engagement, or organizational culture. Their applicability to STB S.A.'s operational realities is minimal.

These results underscore a key insight: the most effective diagnostic frameworks for public transport organizations are those designed around internal excellence, not macroeconomic benchmarking. While models like WEF, IMD, World Bank or CompNet may enrich the strategic context by providing insight into the external environment, they lack the granularity and focus required to drive internal change.

Baldrige and EFQM, by contrast, offer holistic yet practical systems for managing performance. They allow organizations to link vision with execution, align strategic goals with day-to-day activities, and improve service delivery while engaging employees and responding to customer needs. For STB S.A., these models do not just offer a theoretical evaluation—they provide a hands-on toolkit for organizational transformation, grounded in real-world applicability.

In conclusion, the research supports the view that organizational excellence models are best suited for public service entities like STB S.A., where operational performance, customer experience, and employee involvement must work in harmony. The selection of the right model is not a neutral choice—it carries strategic weight and long-term implications. Given the evidence, the Malcolm Baldrige and EFQM frameworks stand out as the most actionable and relevant options for guiding the evolution of a more efficient, responsive, and performance-driven public transport system.

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