

Commercialization of air traffic control greatly improves performance

April 22 2008

The air transportation industry is imperative to modern society. This industry depends, in turn, on a network of air navigation service providers (ANSPs) to manage the flow of air traffic. A new study in *Canadian Public Administration*, the journal of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, reveals that the commercialization of air traffic control organizations has greatly improved performance with respect to cost, safety, and technical modernization.

Led by Glen McDougall, President of MBS Ottawa Inc. and Senior Fellow at George Mason University, the study examined the performance of ten international commercial ANSPs from 1997 to 2004 and compared them to the benchmark of a government department, the United States Federal Aviation Administration.

Researchers performed a quantitative analysis of data provided by the ANSPs which was verified by safety regulators. Legal descriptions of the governance structure of each of the commercial ATC organizations were also reviewed. In addition, over two hundred interviews were conducted with senior managers of the ATC organizations, union representatives, regulators, policy officials, and airline customers.

The evidence shows that the success of the reforms is greatest when governance design limits government micro-management, involves customers in decision making, and ensures effective government oversight of safety. Over the course of this study, costs have generally been reduced, service quality has improved, and several ANSPs have

modernized workplace technologies.

This study provides proof that the reforms have been effective in various ways and provides an understanding of the features of governance structures which lead to greater performance. The study also provides a methodology for undertaking similar studies in other fields. The quantitative analysis in particular uses normalized trends to allow comparisons of data between countries.

Source: Wiley

Citation: Commercialization of air traffic control greatly improves performance (2008, April 22) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-04-commercialization-air-traffic-greatly.html>

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