

Urban Matrix - First Demand Survey 2006. Summary

Urban Matrix (UM) aims to create a knowledge dissemination platform designed to support European local authorities in addressing Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) in all its complexity and many dimensions. The demand survey we have carried out is a key part of Work Package 2, the major objective of which is to:

Develop a methodology to chart the demand of information and support on research results, products, guidelines and methodologies in the field of Sustainable Urban Development coming from European cities.

Any survey represents a snap-shot but the current survey will help us to begin to build up a picture of the knowledge demand of local authorities; this will be enhanced by two further demand surveys to be carried out during the course of the UM project. While the survey demonstrated that there clearly are overarching pan-European, and even global issues (e.g. climate change), that are driving the sustainable urban development agenda for cities, overall the main drivers appear to relate to issues that local authorities see as specifically impacting upon them in their day-to-day operations and their aspirations for future development. There is certainly no clear indication that the SUD agenda is being driven by the EU, although we can speculate that issues imposed on local authorities by higher-level authorities (including the EU) will drive the activities of many of them. But how they respond to these will be determined by the national system of local government, their own local priorities and future plans, and their approaches to sustainable urban development, which according to the responses vary considerably.

The top 10 issues on which cities requested knowledge were:

- Social Cohesion
- Benchmarking
- Citizen participation
- Regeneration
- Public Private Partnerships
- Integrated transport systems
- Eco-friendly transport
- Competitiveness
- Evaluation
- Compact cities

What is also interesting about the above is that these are not new issues. They have all been on the European and national policy agendas for at least 10-15 years and cities have developed a great deal of knowledge on these issues; this would seem to suggest that there is a 'knowledge *dissemination* deficit'.

The survey also indicated that cities have a strong desire for practice knowledge but also for research knowledge. We can infer from this that cities are most interested in 'how to' forms of knowledge.

Overall the survey indicates that:

- There is a strong interest in practice knowledge
- Past knowledge dissemination has not always been effective
- Thematic Workshops should therefore have a concrete focus – offering transferable examples of best practice and 'how to do it' in way that attendees can take home with them