



Urban Matrix, Demand Survey, 2007

Summary report

Urban Matrix aims to create a knowledge dissemination platform to support European local authorities in addressing Sustainable Urban Development. As part of this work, three demand surveys are being carried out. This is a summary of the results of the second, 2007, survey.

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URBAN MATRIX SURVEY 2007 – SUMMARY OF RESULTS

There were **62 responses** from **54 cities** in **21 countries**. The countries were Austria, Belgium (3), Czech Republic (3), Denmark (2), Finland (6), Germany (3), Greece, Italy (3), Lithuania (2), Netherlands (8), Northern Ireland, Poland (2), Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain (3), Sweden (5), Switzerland, Turkey (2), UK (12), USA. *(Number of cities in each country in brackets, if more than one)*

The survey therefore gives a good insight into thinking on key issues across Europe. Most of those responding to the survey are employed by public authorities (in a variety of departments and posts – including planning, economic development, posts with an explicitly environmental focus, and European or international departments).

WHAT DRIVES INTEREST IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Level 1 of the survey includes an *open* question about the key driver(s) stimulating local authorities' interest in sustainable urban development. In 2007 key drivers were:

- **Integrated approaches to sustainable development.** As in 2006, many respondents were explicit about the links between drivers and the need for a holistic approach. Cities are clearly interested in sustainable development at European, national and local levels and have broad concerns for sustainability.
- **Climate change.** This was mentioned directly by at least a dozen cities (and of course concern with this issue may underpin other drivers). A number of cities raised the related issue of **energy consumption**
- **Transport and traffic.** There was strong interest in traffic and transport issues (as there was in the 2006 survey). It is the issue that is mentioned most often (by 15 cities), some of which spell out the links with global environmental impact and/or immediate, local impact on the quality of city life.
- **The urban environment.** There were responses concerned with many aspects of the urban environment, including greening the environment, public spaces, biodiversity, urban sprawl and an urban village approach, minimising need to travel.
- **Urban change.** Some cities were particularly concerned with the impact of rapid urbanisation or population growth and associated pressures on housing and/or the urban environment. For some decreasing population was the challenge.
- **Disadvantage, migration and social cohesion.** The numbers referring to this issue are not large, but it is our overall impression that these may be growing issues for a number of cities. Respondents referred to concerns with disadvantage, crime and poverty, but also explicitly to social cohesion, inward migration and integration of migrants.
- **Finance and funding issues** including private/public partnerships; City Development Companies / local asset based vehicles; eligibility for EU funding; transparency of European funds; and inward / foreign investment.

WHAT DO CITIES WANT TO KNOW?

Respondents were asked to identify **issues on which knowledge is required**, by choosing from a list of keywords. The choice of keywords is often consistent with responses on drivers, but some things emerge more strongly in the keyword responses where the focus is on the need for knowledge – for example, public private partnerships and citizen participation.

Keywords chosen by 10 or more respondents (number of responses in brackets)

Public/Private Partnerships (24), Citizen participation (20),
Eco-friendly transport (18), Social Cohesion (15), Energy management (14),
Integrated transport systems (14), Environmental Impact Plans (13),
Competitiveness (13), Regeneration (13), Traffic management (13),
Benchmarking (12), Education/Awareness raising (10), Evaluation (10)
Spatial planning (10), Sustainable procurement (10)

Respondents were also asked about **workshop topics**. Answers were varied and detailed, but can be grouped under these headings: transport, social cohesion, participation and partnership, climate change/energy use, heritage/culture, economic development, finance, noise.

HOW CAN KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION BE SHARED?

Respondents were asked to identify the type of knowledge they required – practice, research, policy or network knowledge. Results show that there is strong support for the dissemination of knowledge on **good practice** (prioritised by 53 respondents).

In this survey, some additional questions were added on preferred methods of dissemination of knowledge / learning. The **web** was selected by 58 respondents. Generally, paper based forms did not appear popular. However, while these results no doubt reflect the growing importance of the web and of IT based sources of knowledge, it should be noted that **personal interaction** was also preferred by a great majority of respondents (47). (Knowledge exchange systems already used by respondents' departments/organisations, included intranets and a variety of other systems for sharing information, consultation and coordination (such as meetings, briefings, temporary project teams).

For the first time, we were able to ask about the use of Urban Matrix website. Only ten respondents confirmed that they had used it, but comments about it were very positive. For example, respondents said:

- ... simple to use website where there is plenty of knowledge to find.
- ... up-to-date information on the important urban research issues
- ... gave us very important ideas to develop our own project

This suggests that continued efforts to get good information on to the website, from workshops and from partners will pay off, as more people use and contribute to the site. (Survey respondents were asked if they could contribute information, on social cohesion, or other topics and a good number volunteered to do so)

Conclusion

Once again there has been a good response to the 2007 survey. The additional and up-to-date information it provides will continue to direct the work of Urban Matrix. The survey has now given helpful information about how dissemination works within organisations and cities which can also inform the approach Urban Matrix takes to its workshops and its website. The survey also has wider relevance, since it gives a clear indication of key issues of concern to European cities. Broadly speaking these concerns reflect those at the EU level and suggest a complementarity of interest/concern. Given the nature of the issues identified, it appears probable that respondents seek information because persistent problems are complex and challenging and in some cases because of past limitations in the dissemination of available information that might assist them. This would suggest a continued need for dissemination of knowledge on 'good practice' at a pan-European level and for the European Commission to continue to support and aid the development of knowledge dissemination platforms that support sustainable urban development.