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URBAN MATRIX

Targeted Knowledge Exchange on Urban Sustainability

# Urban Matrix Surveys: Final Overview Report 2009 FINAL

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## URBAN MATRIX SURVEYS - FINAL REPORT - SUMMARY

Supported by the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme, Urban Matrix (UM) was established to create a knowledge dissemination platform designed to support European local authorities in addressing Sustainable Urban Development (SUD). UM has developed within a wider context that allocates cities a key role in Europe's economic, social and political development<sup>1</sup> and responds to concerns about a 'dissemination deficit' which limits effective action on SUD. The project, led by Eurocities, has been developed with a number of European cities as key partners: Amsterdam, Helsinki, Seville, Malmo, Belfast, San Sebastian, Palermo, Stockholm and Sheffield. Also in the partnership are the Cities Research Centre at the University of the West of England and GHK Consulting.

Annual surveys (2006, 2007 & 2008) have enabled UM to identify knowledge gaps that may limit effective action on sustainability. The surveys, in English, have been placed on the UM web site and publicised by a variety of methods such as e-mail alerts, using the EUROCITIES database and partners' networks. Surveys have included questions about the key driver(s) stimulating local authorities' interest in SUD, their knowledge needs and knowledge access preferences; and questions on particular topics (e.g. social cohesion). The project has drawn on survey findings to select priority themes (four each year) on which to focus its information collection and workshops. Themes already covered in this way have included urban renewal, citizen participation, energy efficiency and urban transport.

In total, in all three surveys, responses were received from 89 cities and 23 countries in all regions of Europe.

Survey 1:	2006	126 responses	64 cities	17 countries
Survey 2:	2007	62 responses	54 cities,	21 countries
Survey 3:	2008	62 responses	49 cities	21 countries

**KEY DRIVERS:** the persistent themes which emerge in all three surveys include:

- **Integrated approaches to sustainable development**
- **The sustainable use of resources, energy; climate change**
- **Transport and traffic.**
- **Sustainable economic growth, urban change, the urban environment, urban regeneration**
- **Disadvantage, migration and social cohesion**

### KNOWLEDGE NEEDS: KEYWORD RESPONSES

The following keywords indicating knowledge needs were chosen by more than 20 respondents in 2006 and more than ten in each of the 2007 and 2008 surveys:

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

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Lisbon-Gothenburg Agenda, Rotterdam *Urban Aquis*, the Bristol Accord, the Leipzig Charter and the "Final statement by the ministers in charge of urban development" during the French EU Presidency of 2008

## **KNOWLEDGE NEEDS AND HOW BEST TO MEET THEM**

In all surveys, practice knowledge was the most sought after type of knowledge and the web the most popular source – in spite of some complaints that internet information was sometimes out of date, unreliable, too technical, or failed to offer a critical analysis. A wide variety of websites are frequently used to access a wide range of information – respondents showed a strong interest in case study material but also look to the internet for policy information/guidance on specific topics, research studies, news and information about events and contacts/experts. (Indeed some respondents complained about information overload.) Those who used the Matrix website found it to be helpful and generally user-friendly, although the numbers were small. Personal interaction was also important to respondents. Many reported attending conferences and workshops, preferring mid-size events (20-50 participants) and particularly valued practical case studies and networking opportunities.

In the 2007 survey respondents were asked about the knowledge exchange systems used within their organisations. While many gave examples of different ways of sharing information, some (22) said there were no systems in place, which may well have implications for forms of dissemination which rely on such systems for cascading / sharing information. Efficient and effective information sharing within city authorities must be seen as a basic prerequisite for developing an integrated approach to SUD, but it seems there may still be some way to go before the barriers to information sharing are overcome in many European cities.

Partnership working is widely recognised as a significant issue and the 2008 survey therefore looked at this issue in more detail, asking respondents, which local stakeholders they considered it most important to work with in developing SUD policies / action. In the light of comments in survey two, on internal arrangements for information sharing, it was interesting to find that internal communication was emphasised. Work with other public organisations was also seen as important by many, but, in spite of strong interest elsewhere in the surveys in public private partnerships, few saw the private sector, or local residents, as their most important partners. These responses suggest that while local authorities have taken on board much of the wider European rhetoric about partnership and engaging with citizens, there is still some way to go before such working relationships are achieved in practice. (When it came to knowledge support in this field, some emphasised public participation while for others stakeholder involvement and managing the partnership process appeared to be the central concerns.)

## **CONCLUSION**

The surveys suggest that there are a number of persistent themes of concern to cities and that a knowledge 'dissemination deficit' persists in relation to these, which calls for a well targeted and flexible response. UM has offered such a response and the opportunity provided by the surveys in particular, to explore issues in depth; to inform the project's other activities and increase their relevance; and to make connections with practitioners, based on their concerns, are all of value. However, UM, like most similar projects is time-limited and there is a clear need for a long term, sustained, system that can be developed in partnership with cities, of all sizes, across Europe, with a clear focus on SUD, but firmly linked to other existing, long term, urban knowledge dissemination initiatives in order to prevent unnecessary duplication of effort and use of resources and to exploit synergies between them.

**Detailed and summary reports on each of the three surveys are available at <http://www.eukn.org/urbanmatrix/survey/index.html>**

## URBAN MATRIX SURVEYS - FINAL REPORT

### URBAN MATRIX IN CONTEXT

Supported by the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme Urban Matrix (UM) was established to create a knowledge dissemination platform designed to support European local authorities in addressing Sustainable Urban Development (SUD). As part of UM's work programme, three demand surveys were carried out during the course of the project. These surveys have been the central activity 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.

It is important to bear in mind that UM has developed within a wider context that allocates cities a key role in Europe's economic, social and political development. Over the last decade there has been a renewed emphasis on the role of cities as part of the Lisbon-Gothenburg Agenda. Whilst the initial Lisbon Agenda emphasised the economic dimension, the Gothenburg declaration directed attention to the social and environmental dimensions, thereby emphasising sustainable (urban) development and thus providing the basis for a more rounded approach to cities and their wider role and impacts. More specifically with regard to sustainable urban development the Rotterdam *Urban Aquis*, the Bristol Accord, the Leipzig Charter and the "Final statement by the ministers in charge of urban development" during the French EU Presidency of 2008 took this matter forward.

Why are cities seen to be so important? On the one hand, cities are now home to the majority of Europe's citizens; are seen as the key drivers of economic growth; and are a vital part of Europe's social and cultural life. In the words of the Leipzig Charter they have:

evolved in the course of history to be valuable and irreplaceable economic, social and cultural assets' ... centres of knowledge and sources of growth and innovation ... At the same time, however, they suffer from demographic problems, social inequality, social exclusion of specific population groups, a lack of affordable and suitable housing and environmental problems.

There is, therefore, now growing concern for the future and increasing interest in how to create the sustainable city – a city that can meet the diverse needs of its residents, promote inclusion and opportunity and address environmental and other problems in a sustainable way.

... Cities cannot fulfill their function as engines of social progress and economic growth ... unless we succeed in maintaining the social balance within them, ensuring their cultural diversity and establishing high quality in ... urban design, architecture and the environment. We increasingly need holistic strategies and coordinated action<sup>2</sup>

UM is one example of EU concern with such issues, as the European Commission and Member States work towards creating a consensus around an 'urban agenda'<sup>3</sup> (Atkinson, 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities

<sup>3</sup> Atkinson, R. (2009) Urban Policies and Planning in Europe: An overview of recent developments; paper presented at CUREM *horizonte*: Urban Management in Europe conference, 15.01.09, Zurich

## THE URBAN MATRIX PROJECT

The Urban Matrix project, led by Eurocities, has been developed with a number of European cities as key partners: Amsterdam, Helsinki, Seville, Malmo, Belfast, San Sebastian, Palermo, Stockholm and Sheffield. Also in the partnership are the Cities Research Centre at the University of the West of England and GHK Consulting.

The overall objectives of the project are to:

- chart cities demands for knowledge on urban sustainability issues
- organise the supply of existing information available (research results and best practice)
- develop a methodology to match supply and demand – through an interactive website portal and knowledge exchange events
- evaluate this project methodology and make recommendations to the European Commission on effective means for exploiting and communicating existing knowledge and expertise

More specifically, the annual surveys which are the subject of this report have enabled UM to identify knowledge gaps that may limit effective action on sustainability. Survey 1 was carried out in the Summer of 2006, Survey 2 in Autumn 2007 and Survey 3 in Autumn 2008.

The project has drawn on survey findings to select **priority themes** (four each year) on which to focus its work. Themes already covered in this way have included urban renewal, citizen participation, energy efficiency and urban transport.

For each theme, the project collects examples of tried and tested local authority practice, case studies and research outputs for its **e-library**, which is linked to the wider European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) and available at [www.urban-matrix.net](http://www.urban-matrix.net).

In addition, **thematic workshops** are held each year, with a clear focus, offering transferable examples of best practice and facilitating mutual learning between city practitioners and researchers. Four thematic workshops have been held on:

- Spatial Planning and Sustainable Urban Development (Belfast, March 2007);
- Sustainable Development & Urban Transformation (Amsterdam, December 2007);
- Information and Participation for Sustainable Urban Development: support tools for effective decision-making and citizens' participation (Helsinki, May 2008)
- Energy management for sustainable cities (San Sebastian December 2008)

Further workshops (e.g. on Public-Private Partnerships & Sustainable Urban Development), based on the input of the surveys, will be held during the remainder of the project's life. Reports from the workshops (translated into different languages) are also available at [www.urban-matrix.net](http://www.urban-matrix.net).

Detailed and summary reports on each of the three surveys are available at <http://www.eukn.org/urbanmatrix/survey/index.html>

## THE SURVEYS

The surveys, in English, have been placed on the UM web site and publicised by a variety of methods such as e-mail alerts, using the EURO CITIES database and partners' networks. As the following section on survey responses by city, country and region shows, the survey has had a good response from across Europe. (UM

has recognised that the use of English may be a limiting factor, but did not have the resources for translation of the survey, or of responses to it, and while it might have been possible to translate and analyse a much simpler ‘tick box’ survey, responses to open questions have been a rich part of the survey data.)

All surveys included questions about:

- the respondent (name, organisation, country, etc)
- key driver(s) stimulating local authorities’ interest in sustainable urban development (open question)
- particular issues/themes on which knowledge is required, (using keywords)
- type of knowledge required - e.g. practice knowledge, research knowledge
- preferred means of accessing knowledge

Additional questions were included in only one or two of the surveys – for example:

- whether respondents required knowledge on integrating policy areas (S1&2)
- local systems in place for knowledge exchange (S2)
- suggested subjects for thematic workshops for knowledge dissemination (S2)
- use of the Urban Matrix website (S2&3)
- contributions to Urban Matrix – re social cohesion (S2) and generally via good practice templates (S1&2)
- use of UM website (S2&3) and UM workshops (S3)
- working with stakeholders (S3)
- use of the internet as an information resource(S3)
- attendance at - and their views about - conferences and workshops(S3)

## **SURVEY FINDINGS**

### **RESPONDENTS: CITIES AND COUNTRIES**

As would be expected, given the purpose and methods of Urban Matrix, most of those responding to the surveys are employed by public authorities, in a variety of posts (including senior or specialist staff), in various departments, including planning, economic development and European departments, as well as those with an explicit focus on the environment or sustainable development.

Survey 1:	2006	126 responses	64 cities	17 countries
Survey 2:	2007	62 responses	54 cities,	21 countries
Survey 3:	2008	62 responses,	49 cities,	21 countries

In total, in all three surveys, responses were received from 89 cities and 23 countries. See Table 1, overleaf, for further details of all survey responses by country and city

28 (European) cities in 12 countries responded to all 3 surveys; a smaller number of these responses came from the same individuals. The cities and countries were:

Austria	Vienna
Belgium	Antwerp, Brussels
Czech Republic	Brno, Prague
Denmark	Aalborg
Finland	Espoo, Helsinki, Oulu
Germany	Frankfurt Leipzig
Italy	Palermo
The Netherlands	Amsterdam, Utrecht
Poland	Lodz
UK /NI	Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield, Southampton, Belfast
Spain	Gijon, Terrassa
Sweden	Göteborg Helsingborg, Stockholm

TABLE 1: COUNTRIES/CITIES (**BOLD – RESPONSES TO ALL 3 SURVEYS**)

<b>COUNTRIES</b>	<b>SURVEY 3 - 2008</b>	<b>SURVEY 2 - 2007</b>	<b>SURVEY 1 - 2006</b>
<b>Austria</b>	<b>Vienna</b>	Vienna	Vienna
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Antwerp Brussels</b>	Antwerp, Brussels Namur	Antwerp, Brussels Gent, Namur
Bulgaria	Burgas		Varna
Croatia			Rijeka
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Brno, Prague</b>	Brno, Prague	Brno, Prague
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Aalborg</b>	Aalborg, Aarhus	Aalborg, Copenhagen
Estonia	Tallinn		
<b>Finland</b>	<b>Espoo, Helsinki, Oulu</b>	Espoo, Helsinki, Oulu, Tampere	Espoo, Helsinki Oulu, Tampere
France	Nantes		Bordeaux, Lyon
<b>Germany</b>	<b>Dortmund, Frankfurt Leipzig</b>	Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig	Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Leipzig Munich
Greece	Amaroussion, Thessaloniki	Amaroussion	
<b>Italy</b>	<b>Bologna, Genoa, Palermo (+ region)</b>	Florence, Palermo, Rome	Palermo, Turin, Venice
Lithuania		Klaipeda, Vilnius	Vilnius
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Amsterdam, Hengelo, Utrecht</b>	Amsterdam, Enschede, The Hague, Schiedam, Utrecht	Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Belfast</b>	Belfast	Belfast
Norway	Oslo		
<b>Poland</b>	<b>Lodz, Lublin, Warsaw</b>	Gdansk, Lodz	Bialystok, Gdansk, Krakow, Lodz, Warsaw
Portugal		Porto	Porto, Liboa
Romania	Timisoara	Bucharest	
Serbia		Novi Sad	
<b>Spain</b>	<b>Gijon, Murcia, Rubi, San Sebastian, Seville, Terrassa</b>	Gijon, San Sebastian, Terrassa	Gijon, Getxo, Rubi, Sevilla, Sitges, Terrassa, Zarautz
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Göteborg, Helsingborg, Malmo, Stockholm</b>	Göteborg, Helsingborg Sodertalje, Stockholm	Göteborg, Helsingborg Malmo, Stockholm
Switzerland	Zurich	Zurich	
Turkey		Istanbul, Sanliurfa	
<b>UK</b>	<b>Aberdeen Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield Southampton</b>	Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Leeds, LB Merton, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield, Southampton, Surrey	Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Ely, Hayes, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool London, Manchester Newcastle upon Tyne Sheffield, Southampton
USA		Washington, DC	

## RESPONSES BY REGION

Clearly, regions will have varying levels of interest in SUD depending on their history and their current position in Europe. As the following tables show, responses to the survey have been received from every part of Europe. (Only a few countries have not been reached in any round of the survey - Slovenia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovakia, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta.)

REGION	COUNTRY	CITIES		
		2008	2007	2006
<b>Alpine</b> Austria Slovenia	Austria	Vienna,	Vienna,	Vienna,
	Also, Switzerland	Zurich	Zurich	
<b>Baltic</b> Estonia Latvia Lithuania	Estonia	Tallinn		
	Lithuania	Klapiedia	Vilnius	Vilnius
<b>Mediterranean</b> Croatia Cyprus Greece Italy Malta Portugal Spain	Croatia			Rijeka
	Greece	Amaroussion Thessaloniki	Amaroussion	
	Italy	Bologna, Genoa, Palermo	Florence Palermo Rome	Palermo Turin Venice
	Portugal		Porto	Porto Liboa
	Spain	Gijon Murcia Rubi, San Sebastian Seville, Terrassa	Gijon San Sebastian Terrassa	Gijon Getxo Rubi Sevilla Sitges Terrassa Zarautz
	Also Turkey		Istanbul, Sanliurfa	
<b>Central East European</b> Bulgaria Czech Republic, Hungary Poland Romania Slovakia	Bulgaria	Burgas		Varna
	Czech Republic	Brno Prague	Brno Prague	Brno Prague
	Poland	Lodz Lublin Warsaw	Gdansk Lodz	Bialystok Gdansk Krakow Lodz Warsaw
	Romania	Timisoara	Bucharest	
	Also, Serbia		Novi Sad	

REGION	COUNTRY	CITIES		
		2008	2007	2006
<b>Benelux</b>  Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands	Belgium,	Antwerp Brussels	Antwerp, Brussels Namur	Antwerp, Brussels Gent Namur
	The Netherlands	Amsterdam, Hengelo, Utrecht	Amsterdam, Enschede, The Hague, Schiedam, Utrecht	Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht
<b>Central West European</b>  France Germany Ireland United Kingdom	France	Nantes		Bordeaux Lyon
	Germany	Dortmund, Frankfurt Leipzig	Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig	Berlin, Cologne Frankfurt Leipzig Munich
	England	Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield Southampton	Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, LB Merton Newcastle Nottingham Sheffield, Southampton Surrey	Birmingham Bristol Ely Hayes Hull Leeds Liverpool London Manchester Newcastle Sheffield Southampton
	Scotland	Aberdeen	Edinburgh	Edinburgh
	Northern Ireland	Belfast	Belfast	Belfast
	<b>Scandinavian</b>  Finland, Denmark, Sweden	Finland	Espoo Helsinki Oulu	Espoo Helsinki Oulu Tampere
Denmark	Aalborg	Aalborg Aarhus	Aalborg Copenhagen	
Sweden	Gteborg Helsingborg Malmo Stockholm	Gteborg Helsingborg Sodertalje Stockholm	Gteborg Helsingborg Malmo Stockholm	
Also Norway	Oslo			

## KEY DRIVERS

In each survey, respondents were asked about the key issues driving their city's interest in sustainable urban development. This was an open question. In the first, 2006, survey we reported that there were a very wide range of responses from which it was difficult to identify clearly dominant themes. However, some key issues did emerge: These included:

- 'core' sustainability issues, such as sustainable use of resources, energy and climate change;
- traffic and transport

- related issues such as governance, partnership, collaboration and participation
- economic development, particularly the relationship between economic growth and sustainability
- in a small number of cities, community cohesion

Across all three surveys, these are issues which have remained relevant – they are discussed in more detail below. However, while it is of obvious interest to note that there are persistent and important themes which do emerge from the responses, it would not be correct to conclude that the issue referred to by most cities in any particular survey is the most important driver for a majority of cities, not least because the connections between issues are often emphasised by respondents and the need for an integrated approach is itself seen as a key driver. In addition there was a clear focus on the connections between key issues and the need for an integrated approach.

### **Integrated approaches to sustainable development**

Cities are clearly interested in sustainable development at European, national and local levels and have broad concerns for sustainability – for instance one response cited “humanity’s intellectual and emotional duty to maintain and develop the planet Gaia for future generations” (Sodertalje-2007 survey). In each survey, many respondents did not see there being a ‘single driver’ but referred to a number of interrelated issues and some were explicit about the desire to develop a holistic approach to sustainable urban development. Some cities also emphasised the importance of **integrated approaches to city planning** for sustainable development (for example, Berlin, Amsterdam, Scheidam, San Sebastian and Stockholm in 2007).

### **The sustainable use of resources, energy; climate change**

Given such broad concerns for sustainability, it is not surprising to find that climate change was mentioned directly by at least a dozen cities in both the 2007 and 2008 surveys and, of course, a concern with this issue may underpin other drivers, even when it is not explicitly mentioned. The need for action climate change at other governance levels, above the city level, has been emphasised by some cities (for example, Belfast and Newcastle, in 2007). Most of those raising this issue, also expressed a wide range of other concerns, with what might be described as green or environmental issues; for others, climate change is an issue being tackled alongside concerns about the local economy, disadvantage and poverty or about liveability in cities in general.

In 2007, a small number of cities raised the closely related issue of energy consumption and in 2008, **energy issues** were referred to by 17 cities. Their concerns varied from a focus on finding ways to decrease consumption, energy efficiency and/or renewable energy to specific concerns about the operation of local heating systems.

### **Transport and traffic.**

There has been a particularly strong interest in traffic and transport issues in all surveys. In 2007 this was the issue mentioned most often, by at least 15 cities, and although five of these were in the UK, this was clearly an issue of concern across Europe. In the 2008 survey, these issues were referred to by 18 cities; this was reflected in comments concerned with traffic congestion and its negative effects, including pollution and noise; reductions in CO2 emissions; sustainable /eco friendly alternatives to the car – public transport, cycling, walking; and the need to popularise these alternatives.

## **Sustainable economic growth, urban change, the urban environment, urban regeneration**

The impact of **urban change** was an issue on which, while cities do have concerns in common, there were also some distinct differences which centred on how cities sought to respond to issues of growth and decline. This was particularly apparent in responses to the 2007 survey which indicated that for some the key concern is the impact of rapid urbanisation, or population growth and associated pressures on housing and/or the urban environment, while for others the concern is not with growth but with the 'adjustment of city functions and city space to the significant **decrease** of [the] number of inhabitants' (Lodz)

The related issue of **urban / city regeneration (including housing renewal)** was referred to by 13 cities in the 2008 survey. Here issues included, city revitalisation, the transformation of former harbour areas, newly built neighbourhoods, and other housing issues – including housing renewal (especially estates), the Sustainable Homes Code, Sustainable Communities Agenda and Housing Market Renewal (UK) and the need for social housing for the young and for immigrants.

The complex and interconnected nature of sustainable development issues has been clearly demonstrated in responses which are concerned with many aspects of the **urban environment** – for example (from the 2007 survey) - public spaces and green areas (Prague); air quality (Frankfurt, Prague, Utrecht) and the urban village approach to work, life and play, (Bristol) and (in the 2008 survey) mention of ecology and nature in the city, waste, air quality/pollution, and flooding and coastal protection.

**Economic/ employment** issues were raised by 17 cities in the 2008 survey, in comments about employment, business, competitiveness, land management for economic activities, tourism and the need for infrastructure investments in post communist cities.

### **Disadvantage, migration and social cohesion**

In the 2006 survey social cohesion appeared as a cause for concern in a relatively small number of cities. In 2008, while the numbers referring to this issue were not large, it was our overall impression that this was a growing issue for a number of cities. Respondents referred to overall concerns with disadvantage, crime and poverty, but also explicitly to social cohesion (for example, Zurich, Klaipeda, Nottingham) and there were also references to inward migration and integration of migrants (for example, Vienna). The 2008 survey confirms the significance of this issue, with fourteen cities referring to issues such as integration, segregation, exclusion and social cohesion.

**Other drivers** have included:

- finance and funding issues (including eligibility for and transparency of EU funding)
- cultural issues
- citizen participation
- monitoring, benchmarking, best practice

What this illustrates is that while there are a range of common issues across Europe, related to sustainable urban development, cities individual responses are, as one might expect, determined by their particular circumstances and the problems they face. Thus, for instance, a city with an increasing population will have rather different concerns compared to one with a declining population. This is one of the challenges that any European agenda on sustainable urban development has to take into account – it needs to be both coherent and flexible.

## **KEYWORD RESPONSES**

In each survey respondents have been asked to identify the particular issues/themes *on which knowledge is required*, using a series of keywords.

**Appendix 1** summarises the responses to this question across all three surveys

The focus of this part of the surveys is on the *knowledge needs* of cities. The information about *drivers* tells us a great deal about what matters to cities and this information is taken into account in the planning of UM activity. However, it cannot be assumed that the fact that an issue is important means that it is one where cities would identify a knowledge deficit. Here the focus is on such deficits and we investigated it through the use of a standard set of key words. This helps with the analysis, making it easier to identify common issues.

In the 2006 survey there were 33 keywords. In 2007 and 2008, an expanded list of 40 keywords was offered (see Appendix 1 for the full list). In all surveys, most respondents complied with the request to choose just five key words and - together with questions about key drivers and workshop interests - the responses have provided us with a good indication of knowledge needs which has informed the choice of topics for workshops and the subsequent collection of further information.

The choice of key words in all three surveys is generally consistent with responses on drivers – for example, in each survey many have selected keywords which reflect the strong interest in traffic/transport issues already mentioned. However, other issues emerge more strongly in the keyword responses – for example, public private partnerships and citizen participation have been key issues on which cities identified knowledge needs in all three surveys, reflecting the emphasis now placed on partnership.

Key words emerging more strongly in the most recent (2008) survey included compact cities, benchmarking, education and awareness raising, urban sprawl and urban health / healthy cities.

The following list shows those keywords chosen by more than 20 (of 126) respondents in 2006 and more than ten (of 62) respondents in each of the 2007 and 2008 surveys. These were:

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

Public private partnerships appeared at the top of the table in both the 2007 and 2008 surveys and this issue was the winter 2008 theme for Urban Matrix. Given the interest in 2007, additional questions on stakeholder working were added to the 2008 survey and further information is given on this later in this report. Other issues of persistent interest, which have already been the subject of workshops and or/ template collection, include citizen participation, social cohesion, regeneration and transport and traffic issues.

As noted from the first survey report onwards, what is striking here is that generally these issues – about which cities say they need to know more – are not 'new'. They may, of course, be 'new' in the sense that they are being addressed in a city for the first time, or are new to an officer starting out in a particular area of work – but they are generally issues which have been on European policy agenda for some time.

This appears to confirm the existence of the ‘dissemination deficit’ to which UM is a response. This issue is examined further in the conclusion to this report

## **KNOWLEDGE NEEDS AND HOW BEST TO MEET THEM**

### **KNOWLEDGE TYPE**

A question about the type of knowledge looked for has been asked in all three surveys and the following table summarises the results. In the final survey, network knowledge moved up from 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, and policy knowledge down from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> – a change from both previous surveys. Practice knowledge was the top choice throughout, however, and was chosen by all but a few respondents in all three surveys.

	2008	2007	2006
PRACTICE	1 <sup>st</sup> (54)	1 <sup>st</sup> (53)	1 <sup>st</sup> (100)
RESEARCH	2 <sup>nd</sup> (38)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (33)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (64)
NETWORK	3 <sup>rd</sup> (33)	4 <sup>th</sup> (24)	4 <sup>th</sup> (34)
POLICY	4 <sup>th</sup> (24)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (27)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (59)

## KNOWLEDGE ACCESS PREFERENCES

	2008	2007
WEB	50	58
PERSONAL	45	47
PAPER	16	14

There were similar responses to the question asked about knowledge access preferences in the 2007 and 2008 surveys. The web was selected by the greatest number of respondents. **Paper based forms** were the least popular in both surveys. However, the results also emphasised the importance of **personal interaction** which is clearly valued by respondents, alongside the growing importance of the web.

## USE OF THE INTERNET

In Survey 3, additional questions were asked about internet use. Respondents were asked how often they used the internet, not for everyday activities, such as email but as a tool to access knowledge on sustainable urban development. The responses suggested that people seek knowledge and information via the internet quite regularly. Although few turn to it on a daily basis, infrequent use (less than once a month) is even less common. Responses to other questions showed that a wide variety of sources are used, on at least some occasions, including international, EU, national and regional websites, dedicated websites on urban research (e.g. EUKN, UM, networks and mailing lists, forums, blogs and wikis). Unsurprisingly, people looked most often to sources in their own language – such as official, national and regional sites. Respondents reported using official EU and international sites more frequently than dedicated sites such as EUKN or Urban Matrix itself – but more encouragingly for UM, a majority reported making some use of such sites. Only a minority *never* use even the less popular sources.

As far as the type of information being sought is concerned, responses confirmed the strong interest in case study material that is typical of UM respondents, but also suggested that people look to the internet for policy information on specific topics, research studies, news and information about events and contacts/experts.

While significant numbers of respondents reported finding sufficient information via the internet and regarded it as comprehensive and reliable, there were also reported problems. In spite of the potential the internet offers for up to date information, some found that information was out of date. Others complained of information which was unreliable, too technical, or failed to offer a critical analysis. At least a third of those responding, faced problems which were to do with competing pressures on their time and some complained about having too much information and finding it difficult and time consuming to filter it and get to what they really needed – this may be an example of 'knowledge overload'.

### Use of the Urban Matrix website

In 2007, 10 out of 62 respondents reported having used the UM website and in 2008, the figure was 17 (of 62). Those who reported using it were generally positive. For example (in the 2008 survey) respondents said that final reports on the workshops held were useful, that other e-library documents were also helpful and that the site was a useful source of information from other cities. The site was seen as well structured and easy to use by several (2008) respondents).

However, it is necessary to note that this feedback is limited and together with the other responses on internet use, it suggests that more needs to be done to increase the use of the site. Suggestions for improvement included more information overall, and more signposting of the e-library to help people find the information they need. One (2007) respondent highlighted the need to create a 'critical mass' of site users and it does appear that sustained effort is needed to get good information on to the website, from workshops and from partners, so that a 'virtuous circle' is created in which more people are willing, not only to use information available on and via the site, but also to contribute to it.

## **CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS - SHARING INFORMATION WITH OTHER PRACTITIONERS**

In all three surveys questions were asked about participation in conferences and workshops. Responses indicated quite frequent participation in some kind of workshop or conference among respondents. This was more likely to be at the local or national than the European or international level. As far as topics were concerned, there were very diverse responses amongst which the most common themes were climate change and mobility. On conference format, it was interesting to note that there was a strong preference for the medium sized event (20-50 participants) over either the larger conference or the smaller (10-15) workshop or training event. (Some of the UM workshops have been small scale, but the Helsinki workshop was in the medium sized range.)

Finally, as far as the reasons for and value of attending such events is concerned, responses showed that a clear preference for practical case studies and networking was also considered important. Knowledge gained through key note speakers, technical presentations/demonstrations and the papers and material available were less highly valued. These findings are consistent with the emphasis on the sort of concrete outcomes that can be derived from practical case studies and sharing information via networking with other practitioners which can be found in other responses to all three surveys.

### **Attendance at Urban Matrix seminars.**

Respondents to Survey 3 were asked about attendance at UM workshops. Two respondents had attended Workshop 1, 4 had attended Workshop 2 and 6 had attended Workshop 3. Of course, it is not surprising to find attendance at the most recent workshop to be more common amongst current respondents. Those who attended earlier workshops may by now have changed jobs or responsibilities, for example. It should be noted that the UM workshops are part of a project which makes the strongest connections with its partner cities and that, were resources available, the Urban Matrix network would be capable of expansion.

## **SYSTEMS FOR INTER-DEPARTMENTAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

In Survey 2 (2007) respondents were asked about the knowledge exchange systems used within their departments / organisations. There were 24 responses to this question, with a number of respondents also commenting on systems for sharing information across departments / in their city. Again, reflecting the use of both IT based and more personal forms of interaction, the responses indicated that intranets are commonly used, as are a variety of more or less ad hoc systems for sharing information, consultation and coordination. These included annual planning exercises, inter-departmental cooperation, verbal and written briefings, 'salons' and 'jam sessions' and temporary project teams.

It is also of interest to note that, as well as those simply not answering this question, (11), there were 22 respondents who said a definite no. This, perhaps, has implications for forms of dissemination which rely on cascading or other methods of sharing information. It may imply that there is a lack of coordination within some local authorities, or between partners, or that coordination is confined to certain levels, such as senior officers, chief executives, and/or mayors. It is also of note that only one respondent clearly highlighted problems with the methods being used (referring to a system of file exchange to monitor progress that they thought was not very efficient or intelligible). However, it cannot be assumed that because a method is mentioned the respondent thinks it is working well, or is the best method that might be used. In terms of developing an integrated approach to sustainable urban development, efficient and effective information sharing within city authorities must be seen as a basic prerequisite for such a policy. It might be suggested that there is still some way to go before the barriers to information sharing are overcome in many European cities.

## **WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

Partnership working is widely recognised as a significant issue and is one which has been highlighted in survey responses. The 2008 survey therefore looked at this issue in more detail, first asking respondents, which local stakeholders they considered it most important to work with in developing SUD policies / action.

In the light of comments in Survey 2, on internal arrangements for information sharing, it was interesting to find that, as the table below indicates, internal communication was emphasised by many respondents and work with other public organisations was also seen as important by many. In spite of strong interest elsewhere in the surveys in public-private partnerships (see key word responses); few saw the private sector as their most important partner. What is also interesting in the table below is the relative lack of importance given to working with local residents. Taken together, these two responses suggest that while local authorities have taken on board much of the wider European rhetoric about engaging with the private sector and local residents (particularly with regard to sustainability) their primary focus remains on their own organisation (i.e. the local authority) and then somewhat behind this other public sector organisations. This may imply that in the first instance establishing integrated working (i.e. coordination) within the local authority is their primary target. It could also be taken as an indication that despite an emphasis on this issue for the last decade there is still some way to go before such working relationships are achieved in practice.

	<b>1 most</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 least</b>
Other local authority departments	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Other public sector organisations	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
Local residents	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>
Private sector organisations	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>
Non governmental organisations	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>

Respondents were asked to provide a short description of the organisational arrangements developed in their city for working with stakeholders, in relation to sustainable urban development. Of course, the (53) responses were very varied. Six of the seven UK respondents referred to their overall, city wide, partnership. Some responses described how sustainability matters were dealt with within a local authority. A number of other cities gave details of city wide forums, with an explicit

sustainability focus, while a number of the responses focused on planning and the consultation associated with the development of plans and strategies.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they needed knowledge / information to support work their work with stakeholders. A few of the (27) respondents said they did *not* need additional knowledge or information in this field – for example, because they had enough experience or already had access to information. Among those who did have knowledge needs, for some, public participation was the key issue, while for - others, gaining (and then maintaining); wider stakeholder involvement and managing the partnership process appeared to be the central concerns. Other respondents (3) expressed interest in the monitoring and evaluation of stakeholder processes – in evaluation methodologies, impact measurement tools and benchmarking methods.

## **CONCLUSION**

The issues of persistent concern to cities, as revealed particularly in responses to the drivers and keywords sections of the surveys, are clearly consistent with the overall EU agenda on sustainable development. Nevertheless, as we have noted, cities' concerns are also directly related to the particular problems that they face (e.g. population increase or decline). While there may also be particular regional dimensions, the lack of information makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions. So while, for instance, it may be reasonable to assume that cities in the Baltic region face somewhat different issues compared to their counterparts in the Alpine region, the level of detail available in responses does not allow us to draw more specific conclusions. What the surveys do show, are a number of persistent themes that appear to vary somewhat by region and country in terms of their significance and which change slowly over time. Moreover, the way in which common issues, such as climate change, impact on different cities and regions is likely to differ. This suggests that, while there is a need for a common framework (e.g. on climate change) it also needs to be flexible if it is to be relevant to cities across all regions of Europe.

The surveys have clearly indicated that there is a knowledge 'dissemination deficit'. While certain issues (e.g. social cohesion) have been on the European, national and local agenda for a number of years, many policies have been developed to address them and a considerable 'stock of knowledge' has been built up, cities are still asking for knowledge on these issues. This suggests that either the policies developed to date have not been successful or that information on them has not been widely disseminated (or at least not been disseminated in a form that is suitable for use by others). While there is no question that existing dissemination systems have achieved a degree of success, our survey results strongly imply the need for better coordination of existing dissemination systems/networks and for an approach that is better targeted to the needs of cities and is more able to take into account regional differences and local needs.

Our surveys have also indicated that, despite the almost universal acknowledgement of the importance of developing an integrated approach to sustainable urban development, there are still considerable obstacles to the development of such an approach. In part this seems to derive from the internal organisational structures and systems of cities whereby information is not adequately share between departments. In part it derives from professional boundaries that make it difficult to develop the sort of integrated working practices essential for sustainable development policies. Furthermore the apparent lack of emphasis on developing working relationships between cities and the private sector and civil society suggest that this is a substantial obstacle that needs to be overcome if sustainable urban development is to become a reality.

It is important that a 'scattergun approach' is not adopted if the 'dissemination gap' is to be addressed; there is a need for more effective targeting in relation to both content and the method of delivery. Our findings support those of the Expert Group which argued that what is required is not 'blanket solutions or recipes' but 'supportive frameworks' within which cities could explore innovative approaches appropriate to their local circumstances'<sup>4</sup>.

Urban Matrix has sought to respond to this need with a project which does attempt to offer such a supportive framework and to target cities' needs. Some key elements of the project which appear to be of particular value include:

- the support of an existing, established network
- the direct engagement of partner cities in direction and delivery
- demand surveys which inform thematic concerns for the project as a whole and ensure a wider evidence base than can be drawn from partner cities alone
- workshops and a website which respond to partner interests, engage partners and strengthen existing networks.

The opportunity offered by the surveys in particular, to explore issues in depth (e.g. social cohesion, stakeholder working); to inform the project's other activities and increase their relevance; and to make connections with practitioners, based on their concerns; are all of value.

However, UM, like most similar projects is time-limited and other initiatives such as EUKN and URBACT or network organisations like Eurocities do not specifically focus on sustainable urban development. As Urban Matrix comes to an end, it appears to leave a gap. Arguably what would be required is an initiative centered on the knowledge and skills vital to sustainable urban development. Equally importantly, such an initiative would need to be clearly and firmly linked to other existing long term urban knowledge dissemination initiatives in order to prevent unnecessary duplication of effort and use of resources and to exploit synergies between them

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<sup>4</sup> EC/ Expert Group on the Urban Environment (1996) European Sustainable Cities, Report, Second edition, Brussels: European Commission.

## APPENDIX ONE – KEYWORD RESPONSES

	Numbers selecting each keyword		
	2008	2007	2006
Public-Private Partnerships	18	24	34
Citizen participation	17	20	42
Eco-friendly transport	17	18	22
Compact cities	17	9	26
Benchmarking	16	12	42
Integrated transport systems	16	14	26
Social Cohesion	14	15	44
Urban sprawl	14	0	11
Education/Awareness raising	14	10	19
Traffic management	13	13	13
Urban health / healthy cities	11	0	-----
Regeneration	11	13	43
Competitiveness	10	13	25
Road pricing/congestion charging	10	9	11
Role of ICT	9	7	8
Urban Air quality	9	6	23
Public Spaces	8	8	27
Brownfield sites	8	7	13
Spatial planning	8	10	
Urban demographic change	8	9	-----
Waste Management	8	0	19
Energy management	7	14	24
Local Agenda 21 and similar initiatives	7	3	13
Sustainable procurement	7	10	
Eco-labelling	7	1	2
Noise reduction	6	6	-----
Mainstreaming	6	1	
Shrinking Cities	6	4	11
Water use	6	0	6
Building materials	5	3	7
Evaluation	5	10	19
Urban Biodiversity	5	7	11
Urban Heritage and Conservation	4		12
Urban safety / security	4	0	16
Environmental Impact Plans/Assess	4	13	21
Anti-discrimination	4	4	
Finance	4	8	18
Globalisation	4	8	14
EU	3	8	16
New build	2	2	11