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URBAN MATRIX – Knowledge transfer among European cities in addressing Sustainable Urban Development

PLUREL Conference
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OVERVIEW

- The URBAN MATRIX Project
- The knowledge needs of cities
- Cities as active participants in knowledge transfer / exchange
- Recommendations

THE URBAN MATRIX PROJECT

Duration: February 2006 – January 2010

Co-funded by the EU Framework Programme for R&TD, FP6, under Scientific Support to Policy

A coordination action to promote and facilitate knowledge transfer on Sustainable Urban development

THE URBAN MATRIX PROJECT

The Consortium…

EUROCITIES; University of the West of England; GHK Consulting; Amsterdam; Helsinki; Seville; Malmö; Belfast; San Sebastian; Palermo; Stockholm; Sheffield

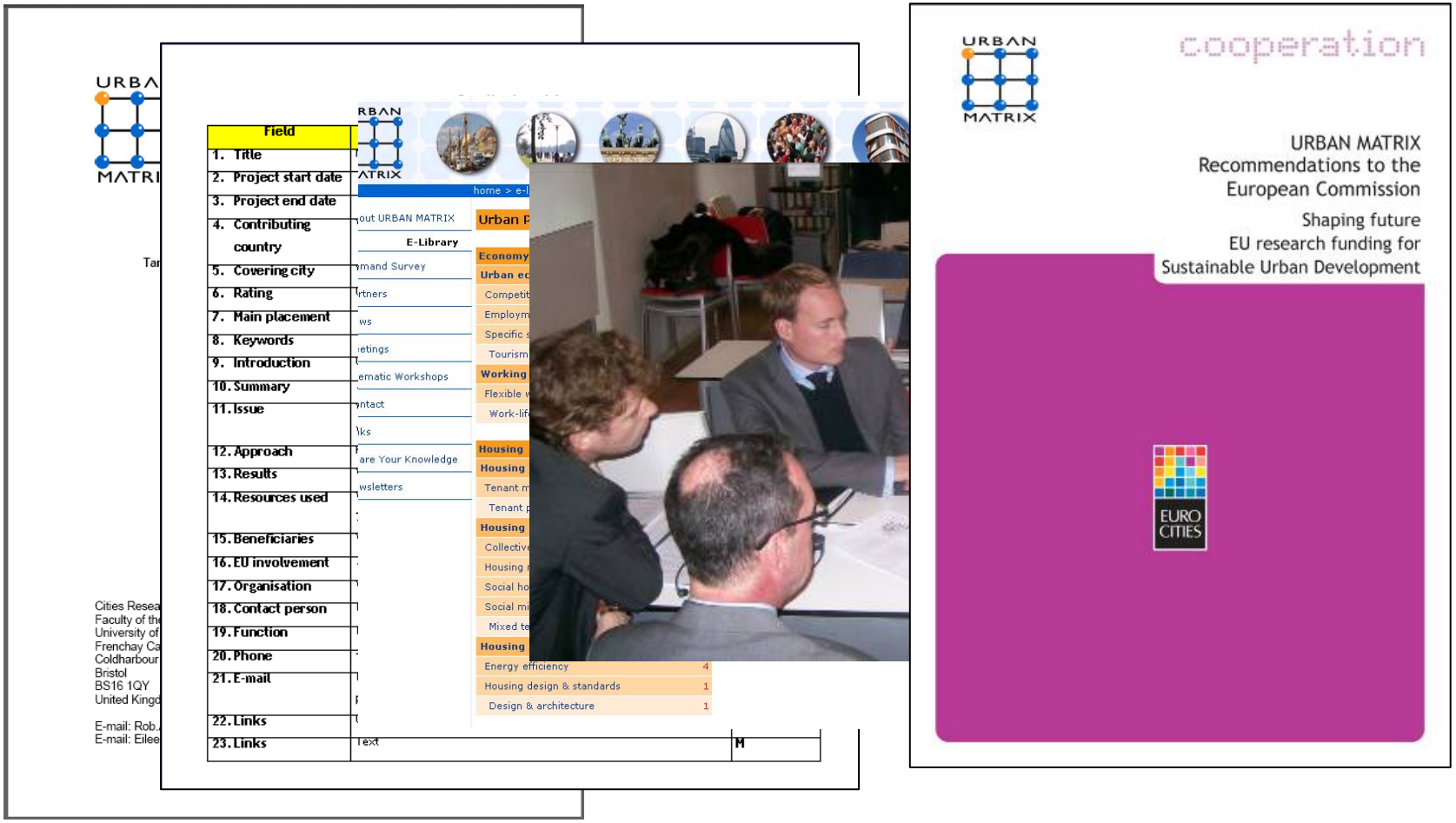
…and the others

- Exchange Mailing List of 210 officers from local authorities in Europe that expressed interest in the project
- All other cities and towns in Europe were welcome to take part in the project activities

Objectives

- Charting the demand for know-how on urban sustainability from the cities
- Organising the supply of existing information offer
- Developing a methodology to match supply with demand
- Evaluating the methodology & producing recommendations to the European Commission on effective means for exploiting and communicating the existing knowledge and expertise.

THE URBAN MATRIX PROJECT



Charting cities' demand for knowledge on urban sustainability issues

Did this through 3 annual surveys: 2006, 2007, 2008

The surveys allowed us to identify the key drivers underlying cities interest in SUD and to identify their knowledge needs and how they sought to meet those needs.

THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDS OF CITIES

In terms of the overall responses we received the following:

- 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.

Same questions across all three surveys to allow comparability over time, but also asked additional questions to investigate specific issues as they arose.

Most respondents employed by public authorities, in a variety of posts and departments.

THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDS OF CITIES

Key drivers of interest in SUD did emerge:

- *Integrated approaches to sustainable development*
- *The sustainable use of resources, energy, climate change*
- *Energy issues*
- *Transport and traffic*
- *Sustainable economic growth, urban change, the urban environment, urban regeneration*
- *Urban/city regeneration (including housing renewal)*
- *The urban environment*
- *Economic/ employment*
- *Disadvantage, migration and social cohesion*

THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDS OF CITIES

However, we could not assume that cities necessarily require knowledge on these drivers, so we sought to investigate this issue through the use of key words.

The top issues on which cities required knowledge in relation to SUD were:

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

Is there a knowledge dissemination deficit?

THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDS OF CITIES

Also wished to investigate what general types of knowledge cities required:

Table 1: Knowledge type

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

Table 2: Knowledge access preferences

	2008	2007
WEB	50	58
PERSONAL	45	47
PAPER	16	14

CITIES AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

- Our respondents were in many ways ‘self-selecting’ – likely to be active at the European level, attempting to access EU funds and participating in European Networks - they are the ‘trailblazers’, most cities do not participate in such activities.
- But ‘trailblazers’ could act as ‘hubs’ for the dissemination of knowledge in each country – Overcoming language barrier
- Moreover, the way in which common issues, such as climate change, impact on different cities and regions is likely to differ - Need for a common framework (e.g. on climate change), but flexible if it is to be relevant to cities across all regions of Europe. The same applies to knowledge dissemination.

Shaping future EU research funding for Sustainable Urban Development

1. Analysing knowledge needs from cities on Sustainable Urban Development
2. Successful tools to meet the knowledge needs of cities
3. Designing future EU funding for urban research

Analysing knowledge needs from cities on Sustainable Urban Development

- Demand identification – Need to understand the knowledge needs of cities
- Support partnership working at local level
- Closing the knowledge dissemination gap – providing long term, sustained knowledge dissemination systems on SUD

URBAN MATRIX Recommendations

Successful tools to meet the knowledge needs of cities

- Greater interaction between existing databases
- Enhancing the status of “best practices”
- Supporting European-wide face-to-face knowledge exchange

URBAN MATRIX Recommendations

Designing future EU funding for urban research

- Making research more accessible to cities
  - Liaising with cities as end-users
  - Supporting solution-focused research
  - Simplifying procedures for accessing EU funding
- Supporting exchange programmes between research institutes and city departments
- EU funding for cities to function as knowledge transfer hubs in their regions

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