6 Dissemination and Exploitation

6.1 The Clusters

Effective dissemination and exploitation will be crucial to the success of this programme, given our vision of a step change in the way in which strategies are developed and delivered. One key element in our dissemination strategy is our Clusters, in which local authorities can learn from one another and from our research. We will use these actively to ensure that our research is focused on emerging needs and that local authorities can apply our results as they arise. Our super sites and laboratory case studies will provide active demonstrations of the application of our research ideas, while our comparator case studies will enable us to test their wider applicability.

Two of the Cluster Groups map directly onto the two broad areas of research:
- Analytical support tools and
- Decision making processes and techniques

The other two apply that research to two main areas of policy in which the local authorities have particular interest:
- Development projects and
- Sustainable transport modes.

At their suggestion, local authorities will be responsible for the management of the Clusters, which will meet as needed by the participants, but typically at least twice a year. There is an open invitation to the Department for Transport, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association to participate in these Clusters, and we will discuss with them on a regular basis ways in which our results can be implemented and facilitated. It will be for the local authority coordinator of each Cluster to decide whether to extend membership to other local authorities; the possibility will also exist of inviting other European cities under the aegis of appropriate European programmes.

Members of the research team will attend to present research results and to discuss the potential for pursuing identified additional research needs. Those local authority partners which employ service consultants will be welcome to invite them to join them at the Cluster meetings, provided that any such consultants also sign the programme's confidentiality agreement (see Section 7). Cluster Management is described in Section 7.7.

6.2 The Workshops

In addition to the Clusters, we intend to hold five Research Workshops, as shown in the GANTT chart in Section 4. The first of these, in November 2004 will present the results of the initial round of surveys from Project A, and will discuss the implications for the detailed research in each of the other technical projects. The second, in June 2005 will focus particularly on the selection of indicators to be employed in Projects B, F and G. We hope to involve members of the other programmes in the SUE Transport Cluster in this workshop. The third, provisionally in March 2006, will review the results of the second survey of local authorities in Project A, and of the early tasks in the other projects, and will confirm the plans for these projects' subsequent tasks. It will also provide an input to the mid term review of the DISTILLATE programme. The fourth, provisionally in March 2007, will review progress in the testing and application of research results. The final workshop in January 2008 will consider the results from the programme as a whole,

including the final set of surveys in Project A. It is timed to allow the conclusions from the workshop to be reflected in the programme's final report. All workshops will be open to local authority members and their representatives, and we will also invite other local authorities and members of a Reference Group.

6.3 The Reference Group

The Reference Group is designed to reflect the interests of a wider range of stakeholders, including the Department for Transport, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Local Government Association, national and local government departments responsible for related policy sectors, national agencies responsible for transport modes, transport operators and providers, transport consultants, transport users and interest groups. Their role in the workshops will be to comment on any constraints to the wider application of our research results, and on ways in which these can be overcome. Membership of the Reference Group will be finalised in advance of the first Workshop. Reference Group management is described in Section 7.7.

6.4 Links to international research

While these arrangements should secure effective dissemination and exploitation within the UK, the results should be relevant internationally, and we will ensure that the project keeps abreast of research developments and practice elsewhere. The research team offer a number of ways in which this can be achieved.

The partners are actively involved in a wide range of European research projects, one of which, PLUME, is providing Europe-wide dissemination of research into sustainable urban land use and transport. Through all of these the investigators will ensure that the project keeps abreast of research developments and emerging research themes, and that findings are disseminated widely. In addition to these activities we will maintain an active project website within the Virtual Knowledge Park (see Section 7) and publish regularly in conferences for practitioners, such as ETC, TPS-SAM and TRB, and in academic journals.

6.5 Commercial and other beneficiaries

The programme is not designed primarily to secure commercial benefits; instead it is aimed at local authorities, and through them improving quality of life for the public at large. Our aim is that local authorities will be able, as a result of our research, to develop more sustainable long term transport and land use strategies and schemes and to involve their other stakeholders more effectively in doing so. This should both reduce significantly the resources and elapsed time involved in implementing strategies and achieve major reductions in congestion, pollution and accidents. The Good Practice Guidelines which will be produced in several tasks will be of value to UK local authorities, and will have the potential to be marketed internationally.

In addition, the enhanced decision-support tools which we develop will be of commercial value, and we will ensure that they are appropriately exploited, through our own initiatives or in collaboration with selected consultants. To this end, we will ensure that all the foreground intellectual property developed in the programme is appropriately protected. We have considerable experience of such exploitation, having generated income in excess of £5M from such products from past research.