

THE ISSUE Project

On 18 and 19 January 2012, a new European Commission Regions of Knowledge project was launched in Leicester at the National Space Centre. The project is called THE ISSUE, which stands for Transport, Health and Environment; Intelligent Solutions Sustaining Urban Economies.



Transport technology and policy lies at the heart of achieving sustainable urban economies. THE ISSUE sets out to integrate, co-ordinate and exploit existing Research and Technology Development (RTD) programmes across five regions in Europe via a consortium comprising research clusters in the East Midlands Region in the UK, the Midi-Pyrenees and Aquitaine Regions in France, the Molise Region in Italy and the Mazovia Region in Poland.

Each cluster is a “Triple Helix” partnership between business, academia and local/regional authorities who look towards innovation in their regional transport policies for intelligent traffic management and for considerations of traffic-related impacts of citizens’ health and the local environment. Each region brings specialist expertise in space and information technologies, including satellite remote sensing and navigation to transport related sectors.

Launch Event

The official launch of THE ISSUE project was marked with an international conference and exhibition dealing with the impacts for urban development of using space and information technology for traffic and transport applications. Among the 80 delegates were university researchers, business executives and industry experts from the private sector, and local and regional authority representatives, all with interests in future developments in the transport sector.

Councillor Rory Palmer, Deputy City Mayor of Leicester, whose special responsibilities includes transport and climate change, welcomed the delegates and reflected on the relevance of THE ISSUE to Leicester.

"Making Leicester a low carbon city is one of our main priorities and this kind of research will be essential to helping tackle issues around congestion and air quality in the future. I am proud that the city council can help make this work possible."(Rory Palmer, BBC)



Councillor Rory Palmer, with THE ISSUE team leaders from UK, France, Italy & Poland

Conference Participants

Professor Alan Wells, from the University of Leicester, introduced THE ISSUE and emphasised the importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange through research between the international partners and between universities and industry.

Mrs Pia Laurila, Project Officer from the European Commission, which is funding the project, spoke of the importance for urban development of harnessing the new technologies that THE ISSUE international team are already working on.



Pia Laurila from the European Commission

Presentations then followed from participants from each of the four partner countries emphasising developments in their regions where local and regional authority users are involved with the research and industry base.

The accompanying exhibition, located in the National Space Centre's rocket tower, was supported by sector leaders including Astrium Geo-Information, BlueSky International, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, and the East Midlands Transport Innovation Network together with participating regional universities-Leicester, De Montfort and Nottingham.



Professor Alan Wells with exhibitor Donna Cresswell

Among the 80 delegates, the project team was represented by 28 participants, including 15 international partners, and 52 delegates from the wider regional and national communities, with a roughly equal division between the industry, academic and public sectors.

Stakeholder Dinner

The conference was drawn to a close with a Stakeholder Dinner in the main gallery of the National Space Centre. The dinner was attended by senior figures from the Leicestershire Business Community and the Universities together with THE ISSUE delegates.



Andrew Bacon Chairman of LLEP, addressing the stakeholder dinner

Mr Andrew Bacon, Chairman of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership,

spoke about the importance of innovation and advanced technology to encourage economic growth and job creation in the regional economies, in the UK and across Europe.

Summary

Extensive press and media coverage of the event, via BBC, Leicester City Council, DMU and University of Leicester Press Offices, has helped to raise the profile of this whole field (See links below). Early feedback is suggesting that the launch conference has been successful both in raising awareness of the current level of research into transport matters already underway in THE ISSUE partnership and in highlighting key concerns and how these might be addressed by the use of emerging technologies in the future.

[BBC](#)

[University of Leicester](#)

[Leicester City Council](#)



An FP7 Region of Knowledge Project



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THE ISSUE Website [Click Here](#)

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