

DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARDISED METHODOLOGY FOR RESOURCE FLOW ANALYSIS AND ITS APPLICATION TO SUB-NATIONAL REGIONS

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One outcome from the United Nations Johannesburg 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development was a commitment to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production (SCP). In response the UK Government has published a Framework, which includes proposals for indicators to measure progress towards SCP. These include material use, manufacturing output, energy consumption and a range of emissions. In 1998 Biffaward set up an innovative programme on Sustainable Resource Use to promote resource flow analysis (RFA) studies focusing on specific materials, sectors and geographical areas across the UK. Biffaward recognised that data was not collected systematically in sufficient detail to assess resource efficiency. The RFA studies provide information on resource flows through the economy including material use, water, emissions and waste. The aim of this progressive approach has been to provide comprehensive baseline data, highlight current data gaps and provide the basis against which improvements in resource efficiency can be measured. Steps taken by practitioners to refine and standardise the RFA methodology since the implementation of the programme are described. Data issues including reproducibility, comparability and quality are discussed. Progress to date is presented in relation to the RFA study of Scotland which was completed in early 2003. RFA results are given for Scotland on resource use, energy consumption and waste production for a base year of 2001. The paper discusses how the outcomes of the RFA studies support progress towards SCP, including the provision of data to develop SCP indicators to measure environmental impact.