

TRANSFORUM

Scientific forum on transport forecast validation and policy assessment



Project Information

- **TRANSFORUM**
Scientific forum on transport forecast validation and policy assessment
- **6th FP**
Priority 8
- **Contract no:**
FP6-2002-SSP-1/502002
- **Duration:**
36 months
- **Starting date:**
15/02/2004
- **Budget:**
899.657 euros
- **Co-ordinator:**
AVV Transport Research Centre
- **Partners:**
 - ▶ CDV
 - ▶ CERTH/HIT
 - ▶ CETE-L
 - ▶ INRETS
 - ▶ TNO
 - ▶ TRL Ltd
 - ▶ UPM/TRANSYT
 - ▶ VTT
- **Website:**
www.transforum-eu.net



Introduction

Towards common ground for European transport policy assessment

TRANSFORUM is a European Commission SSP (scientific support to policy) project that will agree a consistent and widely-accepted set of decision-support tools that enables stakeholders to reach consensus quickly on the ways and means to give effect to the goals of the European Union's Common Transport Policy (CTP).

Current transport indicators reflect local political aims and priorities, as well as different definitions of such terms as congestion, mobility, accessibility, and environmental impact. Stakeholders in the CTP will be more inclined to use scientific support to policy when this is based on transparent, precise, quantified, consistent and widely-accepted information, analysis and conclusions. There is a need to establish some form of consensus on decision-support tools for transport policy. A set of common tools will foster consistency in transport policy analysis and assessment throughout the EU, help policy-makers to gear their proposals to society's expectations, and bring together the goals of different administrations and organisations.

The two main activities of TRANSFORUM

Our 2 core activities are (1) assessing the fitness for purpose of transport models and related policy research tools and, (2) the facilitation of ongoing projects. These activities have become more clearly defined thanks to the 1st Forum Meeting. The first activity is about the match between the capabilities of the tool and its purpose in terms of policy: is the model (or related tool) fit to answer the questions that policy-makers are asking? The second activity is the 'critical facilitation' of ongoing FP5 and FP6 projects, i.e. providing tools and advice to these projects.

List of Deliverables to date

- D6.1 Project description
- D1.1 Inception Report
- D2 Guidebook on useful tools for Forum Sessions
- D3.1 The fitness for purpose of definitions and indicators
- D4.1 Developments in European transport modelling in relation to scientific and policy-making needs
- D5.1 The fitness for purpose of transport policy assessment

Website

The project website has been operational since November 2004. The Deliverables mentioned above can be downloaded at:

<http://www.transforum-eu.net>

Achievements to date

The core Work Packages

Before the 1st Forum Meeting, the 3 core WPs produced Discussion Papers for their respective parallel sessions, and after the Meeting, they drafted the first version of 3 deliverables (see above).

► Transport definitions and indicators (WP3)

WP3 assesses the fitness for purpose - with regard to European and national policy-making - of current definitions and indicators in methodologies used to evaluate transport policy. The current practice, requirements, obstacles and opportunities for improvements in using definitions and indicators are being discussed with policy-makers, stakeholders and researchers. Also, the use of definitions and indicators in European Framework Programmes and related projects are being analysed. Conclusions and recommendations about their fitness for purpose will be formulated.

► Transport models and scenarios (WP4)

WP4 is focusing on the assessment of the scientific and policy-making fitness for purpose of transport models and scenarios that have been developed and used in European Framework Programme projects. The results will be disseminated to various stakeholders and recommendations will be made on preferred developments in the field of European transport models.

► Transport policy assessment (WP5)

WP5 focuses on the fitness-for-purpose assessment of policy instruments and packages, impact assessment methods and policy appraisal methods developed and used in the European Framework Programmes. Assessment consists of: 1) scientific validation, 2) stakeholder input and 3) feedback to decision-making. WP5 will clarify and operationalise the concept «Sustainable European Transport System», and describe the contribution that the assessed projects have made towards this System in the EU.

The Forum Advisory Group (FAG).

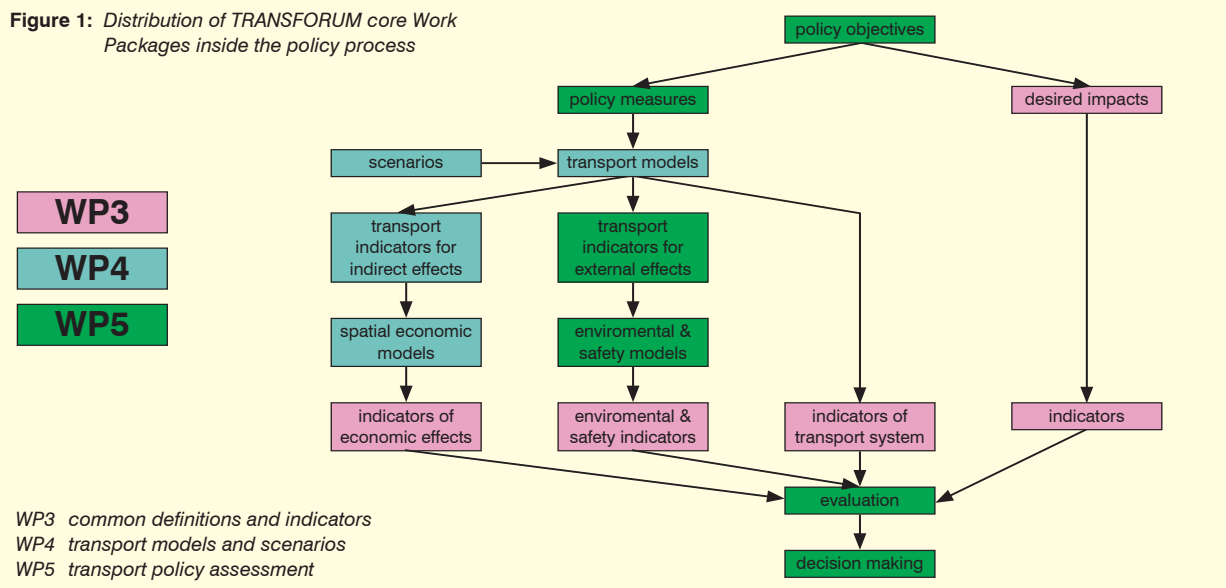
The Forum Advisory Group will periodically review the progress of the Forum process organised by TRANSFORUM and give additional input for the preparation of each Forum Meeting. Initially, it was made up of all WP leaders and several external experts: Mr Veli Himanen, Mr Marc Gaudry and Mr Tom Worsley. Unfortunately, Mr Worsley has had to resign from the FAG this month, owing to his moving to a new post at the UK Department for Transport. We are currently looking for a new member to replace him. We are very grateful for his input, which has been considerable in such a short time.

The main tasks assigned to the FAG are:

1. To act as a reference group with comments and advice concerning the Forum process.
2. During the Forum sessions, the FAG members are asked to express their views as individual experts, but do not need to formulate a common group opinion; their comments and advice can be used when drawing conclusions.
3. To advise the TRANSFORUM Broad Management Team on the selection of projects to be reviewed per Forum theme and per WP.
4. To advise the WP6 partners and the project co-ordinator on the final report.
5. To attend all Forum sessions and FAG meetings.
6. To participate actively in the virtual e-forum during the lifetime of the project.
7. To report on the outcomes of FAG activities to the TRANSFORUM co-ordinator and the Broad Management Team.

If any readers are interested in playing an active role in TRANSFORUM by joining the FAG, please get in touch with the Co-ordinator.

Figure 1: Distribution of TRANSFORUM core Work Packages inside the policy process



Report on 1st Forum Meeting

The Forum Meeting of 10-11 February 2005 was the first such event organised by TRANSFORUM. There will be 3 other Forum Meetings during the project lifetime in 2005-2006. The aim of Forum 1 was to bring together the forum members, inform them about the TRANSFORUM approach, ask them to vindicate the project's approach and point out relevant issues. Also, this first Forum was to begin the 'critical facilitation' of some earlier and ongoing projects and search for relevant national research projects.

'Validation' is the key activity in TRANSFORUM and was therefore extensively discussed at the Forum Meeting. For instance, we must make a clear distinction between scientific and policy 'validation'. For the EC, scientific validation is not the issue, and TRANSFORUM is not to carry out technical analyses! What's more, validation is strongly related to calibration in a technical, modelling-related sense. But the project is actually about the match between the capabilities of a given tool and its purpose in terms of policy, about how to translate modelling tools into policy, user acceptance, how much (technical) validation has been carried out in a given project, and explaining what the scope and limits of a model are. In other words, TRANSFORUM is asking the following questions: what is the policy relevance of a given transport model (or other tool)? Is it fit for the purpose it's serving?

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, it was therefore decided to replace 'validation' with a non-technical term or phrase, such as 'fitness-for-purpose assessment' or 'review of the fitness for purpose'. By focusing on the 'fitness' of a model (rather than on validating it), we will respect both the autonomy of the model and the variety of the questions we may wish to 'ask' it.

As regards the issue of the dissemination of knowl-

edge generated by EU Framework Programme projects, it was argued that the dissemination of raw research findings is not particularly useful

for the end user (policy-makers). Information over the fitness for purpose of the findings is much more relevant, and this is where TRANSFORUM can help.

It was also pointed out that scientific and political timescales – as well as issues – are different. At the moment, we are focusing on transport scientists' indicators, and not on politicians' indicators. Given our focus on end-users' needs, we need to think laterally about indicators. For example, the political question 'Who benefits from the policy measure?' will have to be addressed.

Ultimately, the project aims to deliver a far better understanding of the potential of the models (and related tools) developed with EU funding and hence to encourage the implementation of evidence-based policies in the EU.

Evaluation of 1st Forum

A questionnaire was distributed to all participants at the end of the 1st Forum Meeting. Analysis of the results showed that over 2/3 of the respondents had a scientific (rather than policy-making) background, that the Forum has been useful for most of the participants and provided a good overview of the current state of the art. The Forum logistics and organization scored very highly. A number of criticisms and recommendations were made, that will be taken onboard in the preparation of the next Forum Meeting. In particular, TRANSFORUM needs to attract more policy-makers.

For further information and the full text of the Forum Proceedings, please visit our website.



Dissemination activities

Prior to the 1st Forum Meeting, TRANSFORUM was presented by the Project Officer, Mrs M. Le Louarn (DG TREN B1, see picture) at two events in Brussels in September 2004.

(a) TREN-3 Info Day Brussels

In the presentation on the SSP4 call (mid-October 2004), "Tools and indicators for assessing sustainable transport and energy systems performance", three FP6 policy-support projects were presented: HEATCO, TRANSTOOLS and TRANSFORUM, along with relevant projects from FP4 and FP5. Detailed information was provided on the various SSP-4 area 3.2 tasks: tasks 1 (Quality of transport services and infrastructure in the framework of the common transport policy), 2 (Sustainability indicators and policy targets for transport), 3 (European best practice regarding national and region-



al transport modelling) and 4 (Decision-aid methods and tools for policy-makers).

(b) Sectoral economics, TREN B1/MLL/Sept. 04

The presentation on "State-of-the-art and developments in EU strategic transport research (data, modelling, policy assessment) from FP4 to FP6" sketched the policy context for present EU strategic transport research and the objectives of DG TREN transport policy related research, before zooming in on results in transport modelling and policy assessment.

New Project Officer

Mrs Le Louarn is moving to another post within the European Commission and a new project officer is to be assigned shortly. May we take this opportunity to thank her for her valuable support and constructive criticism during the preparation and first year of the project.

◉ Forthcoming TRANSFORUM activities

Next Forum Meeting: *"Policy impact assessment: looking at current practice in the EU"*

The next Forum Meeting is to take place in Strasbourg on Wednesday 5th - Thursday 6th October 2005. This is the second Forum Meeting organised by the TRANSFORUM project. The 3 parallel streams of activities will be discussed during the Parallel Sessions. In addition, various aspects of the facilitation and fitness-for-purpose assessment tasks of TRANSFORUM will be on the agenda of the Plenary Sessions. Further details will be provided at a later date on our website.

Please note that this Forum Meeting has been planned to coincide with the end of the AET's annual European Transport Conference in Strasbourg:

(<http://www.aetransport.co.uk>).

A formal invitation has been sent to those already on our Mailing List. If you are not on our Mailing List and would like to be invited, please e-mail Ms Rocio Cascajo: rcascajo@caminos.upm.es

ACTIONS PLANNED BY WPs

WP3 2nd Forum Sessions: *Are indicators used fit for their stated purpose? A first overview of obstacles and opportunities.*

After identifying criteria, method and projects to assess the fitness for purpose of definitions and indicators in the 1st Forum Meeting, the 2nd Forum Meeting will present first findings about the indicators used in projects to evaluate EU transport policy. This will provide a concrete basis for the assessment of fitness for purpose of definitions and indicators. This will be presented and discussed in the 2nd Forum Meeting with participants from policy and research expertise.

WP4 2nd Forum Sessions: *Expected and recommended developments in modelling – drawing a roadmap.*

The second Forum Meeting aims to provide a better understanding of the developments required to improve transport, (socio-)economic and environmental models and the preferred interaction between these. This can help the European Commission to draw conclusions about necessary changes in European transport modelling and to define possible research items for the 7th Framework Programme. Several experts will present their views on the current fitness for purpose of transport modelling and expected and recommended developments in modeling. This, together with group discussions, will help draw a roadmap for desirable developments in European transport modelling.

WP5 2nd Forum Sessions: *Stakeholder input - how can a balance be found between various opinions within the transport policy assessment process?*

The 1st Forum Meeting helped to define the process for the fitness-for-purpose assessment of transport policy appraisal. The 2nd Forum Meeting will focus on the significance of stakeholder input into European research projects and also into the transport policy assessment process in general. Examples of the themes to be discussed include: identification of the actual end users of transport policy assessment methods, and also their priorities, needs and expertise; finding a balance between various needs and opinions; facilitation of ongoing and new projects, on the basis of stakeholder opinions; and encouraging interactive processes of communication and learning between research and policy-making.

◉ TRANSFORUM research area & related projects

TRANSFORUM operates in a wider research field, in which it plays a dual role: disseminating the results of completed (FP4 and FP5) projects to various stakeholders; facilitating ongoing (FP5 and FP6) projects. Until now TRANSFORUM has had contacts with some 12 related FP projects, which are listed below:

FP4: SCENES, MAESTRO, SAMI;

FP5: ETIS, ROSEBUD, SPECTRUM, SPOTLIGHTS, SUMMA, THINK-UP, TIPP, TRANS-TALK;

FP6: TRANSTOOLS;

Call for contributions

We'd be grateful to readers who are involved in projects closely related to the TRANSFORUM research area if they could send us announcements of publications (of deliverables, articles, books) for our «New publications» section; or of conferences/workshops for our section on «Forthcoming events».

◉ Next edition

The 2nd issue of this newsletter is planned for after the 2nd Forum Meeting. Please send in your text, preferably by e-mail, to the Editor:

Roxanne Powell, e.r.powell@avv.rws.minvenw.nl.

Copy deadline: 15 October 2005.

◉ Contact us

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