

Press Release

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Multi-Objective Decision Making Tools through Citizens Engagement

Every real-world planning problem, especially in governance and policy-making, possesses several objectives that are typically subject to inherent conflicts with underlying tradeoffs to be discovered. Policy makers are in need of proper tools that will employ an overall analytical process, i.e., assist in modelling the real-world planning process, automatically obtain the best attainable trade-offs, and facilitate an efficient analysis that will ultimately lead to a final decision on which policy to implement.

Now a team of experts from the fields of operational research, decision science, social technologies (gamification, crowdsourcing and social analytics), applied system analysis and visual analytics are working on tackling the aforementioned challenges.

CONSENSUS is a research project co-funded by the European Commission, under the 7th Framework Programme in the domain of ICT for Governance and Policy Modelling. It will model multiple objectives of real policies under various constraints and identify optimal solutions given their trade-offs. Such a service can become a powerful tool in the hands of policy makers allowing them to test various policy scenarios and get a hint about how successful their policies can be in achieving their stated goals. In parallel, the second goal of **CONSENSUS** is to employ this tool in order to educate but also gather valuable feedback from citizens, thus involving them in the decision-making process and, thus, contributing to the transparency of policymaking.

The results and developments of the project will be validated through the operation of two important real world use cases: one investigating the trade-offs of policies regarding Biofuels and Climate Change (EU Renewable Energy Directive) and the other dealing with road infrastructure (Trans-European Transport Networks).

The project brings together two renowned universities ([ICCS/NTUA](#)-Greece and [UKON](#)-Germany), the world's largest IT research organization ([IBM ISRAEL](#)-Israel) along with one multi-national research institute ([IIASA](#)-Austria) as well as one specialized SME ([ATC](#)-Greece) and three non-profit associations ([WWF](#)-Switzerland, [OXFAM ITALIA](#)-Italy and [ERF](#)-Belgium).

If the proposed solution works, it will make significant impact in EU policymaking by improving the validation of the potential impacts of policies through evidence. By incorporating all the parameters that comprise the policy context, the policy maker will be able to witness the balance between them in view of existing constraints. Furthermore, by allowing the citizens to visualise the impact of various policy implementations and gathering their feedback, **CONSENSUS** will help promote a greater social acceptability of future policies and thus, increasing the chance of these policies' success. Last but not least, by introducing gaming concepts in real everyday considerations, **CONSENSUS** hopes to increase the participation of younger citizens in policy making. All these, make **CONSENSUS** an attractive tool, ensuring take up for policy makers!

Detailed information on **CONSENSUS** is available at: <http://www.consensus-project.eu>

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