

What is CONSENSUS about?

CONSENSUS is a thirty-month FP7 project co-funded by the EC.

The objective of the CONSENSUS project is to simplify, identify and visualise the consequences of decisions in the policy making process. At the core of the project is the Consensus policy model, which decomposes policies in a number of -often conflicting- objectives. Using the model in combination to visualizations and data analysis, allows the exploration of the design and objective space. As a result, Consensus acts as a decision support tool for the policy making process, providing a visually appealing and evidence-based analysis of the trade-offs between the various alternative policies' implementations. In order to also count in the citizens' view on the policies, the project applies analytics and gamification techniques so as to first elicit their preferences and secondly incorporate them in the decision support process. A by-product of the gamification part allows also for the education of citizens in topics regarding policy making, allowing them to be able to assess the objective value of a policy decision and measure it against others, thus significantly contributing to the effort for transparency.

Results

CONSENSUS is built upon the assumption that policy making can be deduced in a multi-objective optimization problem. This policy model allows for a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of the multiple policy scenarios that evaluate the objective set.

Based on that, there are two main Consensus projects outcomes:
the **CONSENSUS MOOViz** and the **CONSENSUS Game**

CONSENSUS MOOViz

The CONSENSUS MOOViz is a tool that allows the end-user to set the assumptions that define a policy context and then explore the tradeoffs of the objective set that relates to this context. It is aimed to be used as a decision support tool by policy analysts and an arrow in the quiver of policy advocate by using analytics, rich visualizations, and interactions in order to guide the decision making process until a decision is made.

Features

- Simplify the projection of Pareto-optimal solutions.
- Enables decision makers to create policy scenarios/projects.
- Illustrates different criteria and policy alternatives for Transport and Environmental real-world use-cases in a personalized environment.
- Incorporates rich visualizations for objectives' acceptability of the public that helps the decision making process until a decision is made.
- Runs with the most common browsers.



CONSENSUS MOOViz

[http://platform.consensus-project.eu/consensus/
Account/LoginExpert](http://platform.consensus-project.eu/consensus/Account/LoginExpert)

CONSENSUS Game

The CONSENSUS Games is a web tool that aims at engaging people in order to educate them about policy making and at the same time capture the public opinions preferences on specific privacy policy alternatives. It employs the same policy model and uses a gamified approach to present the solutions and the way they are ranked.

By participating in the game the user will be given the chance to make a decision about the policy implementation in the example scenario presented. Guidance about consequences as well as insights will be provided to the citizen before they submit their decision. The best policy implementation (according to pareto frontier algorithms and in future versions of the game, public acceptability and preference) among the policies selected is awarded with more score points. Furthermore, the game will anonymously collect and synthesize the preferences of the users which will then be reported in the Analysis component.

Features:

- Gives the chance to make a decision about the policy implementation in the example scenario presented
- Intelligent scoring mechanism
- Runs with the most common browsers.



CONSENSUS Game

<http://platform.consensus-project.eu/consensus>



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This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no [611688].



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Multi-Objective Decision Making Tools through Citizen Engagement



Both tools have been tested and validated by end users around Europe (citizens, policy makers, NGOs) in two different use case scenarios: 1) Transportation Networks, 2) Biofuels & Climate Change.

Expected Impact

Consensus is expected to steer the interest of public opinion and policy makers in policy options that are the most important when it comes to decision-making. A shift of the focus of public opinion and policy makers in things that truly matter is an issue of utmost importance in a society where affected by constant diversions.

Furthermore, as Policy makers are dealing with different policy choices and objectives on a daily basis that, more often than not, are subject to inherent conflicts, Consensus is expected to affect the decision making pipeline by simplifying the work of policy analysts and providing them with clear and easy-to-understand arguments about the superiority of one solution over another.

On a relevant note, the projection of the benefits and disadvantages of certain solutions over others could strengthen the sense of responsibility on the side of policy makers since each solution could undergo a scrutiny check from the public. This can be regarded as a contributing step towards the enforcement of transparency in policy making.

Finally, by leveraging on the inclination of younger people to games Consensus attempts to introduce younger generations in policy making, politics and society affairs in general.