OCOPOMO

Open COllaboration for POlicy MOdelling

Project co-funded by the European Commission

URL: http://www.ocopomo.eu/

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

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OCOPOMO in a nutshell

OCOPOMO provides an innovative "off the mainstream" bottom-up approach to policy development, combined with advanced ICT tools and techniques supporting open collaboration. The project will develop an ICT-based environment integrating lessons and practical techniques from complexity science, agent based social simulation, foresight scenario analysis and stakeholder participation in order to formulate and monitor social policies to be adopted at several levels of government. The project is co-funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Program, Theme 7.3 (ICT for Governance and Policy Modelling).

New Trends: Open Government and Collaborative Policy Development

Open government is a current trend in public sector modernization, which brings together past evolutions of electronic government, electronic governance and electronic participation. It calls for more transparency, participation, openness, trust, accountability, effectiveness and coherence in government activities (cf. the good governance principles [1]). Apart from more openness, participation and transparency in government service provision, ICT support in policy development has become a key enabler for good governance and participation of stakeholders.

According to the US government domain task force, open government can be achieved through direct participation in government via internet-based social platforms. Hence, internet technologies can enable the transformation of government to embrace these open principles [2].

The OECD argues in a study of 2009 that *"open and inclusive policy making offers one way to improve policy performance and meet citizens rising expectations. Public engagement in the design and delivery of public policy and services can help governments better understand people's needs, leverage a wider pool of information and resources, improve compliance, constrain costs and reduce the risk of conflict and delays downstream"* [3].

[1] Repnik, H.P., Mohs, R.M.: Good Governance, Democracy and Development Paradigms. Intereconomics 27(1), 28–33 (1992)
[2] US government domain task force, 2011, http://gov.omg.org/gov-wg-opengov.htm
[3] "Focus on Citizens: Public Engagement for Better Policy and Services" OECD Studies on Public Engagement, OECD Publishing, 2009

How does OCOPOMO contribute to open government and collaborative policy development?

OCOPOMO has put forward an integrated methodology of collaborative policy development, which is supported by an integrated ICT toolbox. The approach combines existing e-participation tools, collaborative scenario generation and formal policy modelling to evaluate and explore public policies. The interactive platform allows stakeholders in a policy area to contribute with their views by developing text-based scenarios.

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| Newsletter | Number 2 in 2011 |

This newsletter aims at staying in touch with relevant stakeholders and at providing updates about the project developments. In addition, interesting and relevant news and articles in the context of policy modeling supported by innovative ICT tools can be posted here as well. Interested parties shall contact the dissemination manager Claudio Delrio (c.delrio@re-lab.it), if you wish to publish such relevant information through our newsletter!
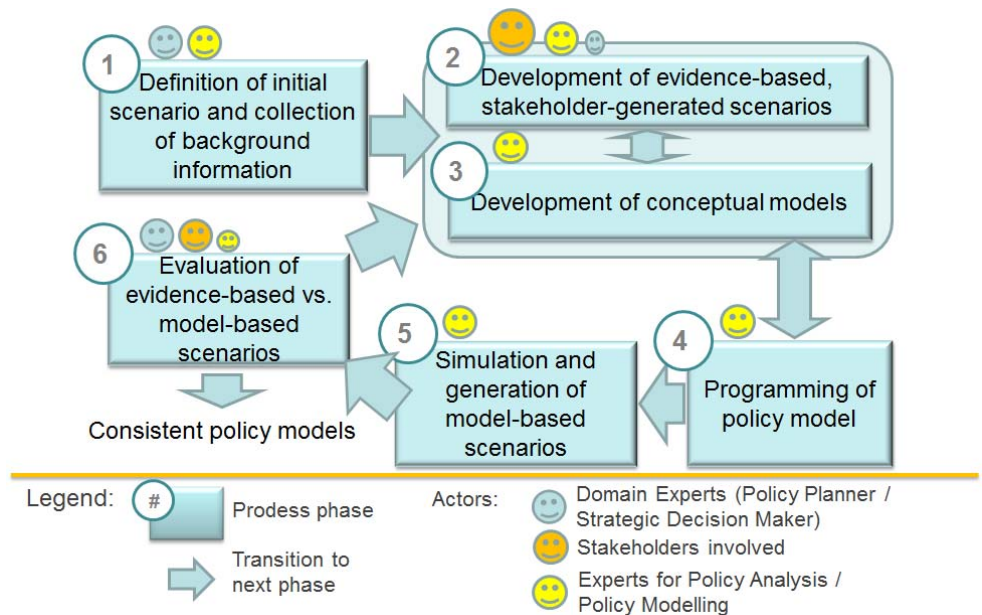
Best regards,

The OCOPOMO consortium

A consistent conceptual model bridges text-based evidence documents of the stakeholders to achieve formal and precise policy models to run simulations, which in turn enable exploration of interdependencies and new insights. The simulation outcomes are model-based scenarios (text) which can be evaluated by the stakeholders against their views expressed in their scenarios. The integrated methodology enables absorbing the cumulative knowledge of stakeholders in order to better ground and qualify public decisions. The results will support decision-makers in elaborating strategies addressing policy issues. They will also support stakeholders in engaging in policy development with instruments they are familiar with, i.e. collaboratively developed scenarios. The engagement in the scenario-development supports transparency, openness and trust. Hence, OCOPOMO contributes with its methodology and ICT toolbox to achieve open government in collaborative policy development.

OCOPOMO's Integrated Methodology for Collaborative Policy Development

With its integrated and ICT-supported method for collaborative policy development, OCOPOMO contributes to more trustworthiness and active participation of stakeholders in the policy development process. The following figure illustrates the integrated approach. The smiley icons indicate, which actors are involved in each of the six steps. The size of each smiley indicates, how intensely an actor is meant to be involved.

1 Definition of initial scenario and collection of background information

2 Development of evidence-based, stakeholder-generated scenarios

3 Development of conceptual models

4 Programming of policy model

5 Simulation and generation of model-based scenarios

6 Evaluation of evidence-based vs. model-based scenarios

Consistent policy models

Legend: # Prodess phase → Transition to next phase

Actors:
- Domain Experts (Policy Planner / Strategic Decision Maker)
- Stakeholders involved
- Experts for Policy Analysis / Policy Modelling

Interest from stakeholders

A representative of a regional authority based in Cyprus wrote to us:

"Thank you for sending the OCOPOMO project. I find this project particularly interesting as I do work in regional government and in addition deal with European Programs. I look forward to seeing more of the pilot policy modelling and scenario generation. I have browsed through the website. I think there are some very good ideas in there especially on the side of forecasting best case scenarios in strategic planning as a means of ensuring policy impact. Some examples on the practical side on spatial planning are greatly anticipated!"

Policy formulation through scenario generation (encompassing phases 1 and 2): Scenario generation is a key element in the OCOPOMO approach. Starting point is either an existing policy or a new policy needed. A policy can be brought in either by a government agency (i.e. domain expert) or even by an interest group (i.e. a particular stakeholder group). Based on this policy, one initial scenario is generated in phase 1. Then, stakeholders generate further scenarios of different kinds in phase 2.

Scenario analysis and conceptual modelling (phase 3): To trace the transformation of information from narrative text scenarios to formal policy and simulation models, the OCOPOMO process foresees the use of consistent conceptual descriptions (CCD) to inform the formal policy models. The models in the CCD are used to transform unstructured information from scenarios and background documents into structured representations. They help to create the subsequent simulation model.

Formal policy model generation (phase 4): Based on the CCD model, policy modelling experts derive the agent-based formal policy model, on which the simulation runs. In OCOPOMO, declarative multi-agent modelling is used. Hence, formal policy models have to cover actor descriptions, their social relationships, individual behaviour, beliefs and actions as well as rules and conditional dependencies among actions of actors. The CCD is of particular importance for the development of the formal policy model, as it presents relevant information in regards to interdependencies of actors. The policy models accommodate in sum the relationships between the individual actions on the micro-level and the collective effects on the macro level to help understand interrelation and interdependencies and thereby making the system manageable.

Simulation and visualization (phase 5): Formal policy models are the starting point for running simulations of the policy case. In this step, experts of policy modelling instantiate simulation models with particular variables and run the simulations. The results received from such simulations are visualised in a text format (i.e. a model-based scenario) and supportive charts. Visualisation is needed to demonstrate how a strongly connected operation works, and which results are generated and derivable from current scenario descriptions. Visualisation is essential to provide simulation results to users and analysts as well as to receive feedback and support interaction with those stakeholders.

Evaluation and validation (phase 6): Phase 6 of the overall policy development process serves to expose the model-based scenarios (i.e. the simulation results) to different actor groups (domain experts and stakeholders). The purpose is that the actor groups assess, evaluate and validate the results of the simulation and therewith compare them with the evidence-based scenarios they have generated. Through this

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OCOPOMO in social networks:

Register to our LinkedIN group:

http://linkd.in/9yG3qv

Stay tuned for more updates!

evaluation steps, stakeholders can reflect their positions expressed in scenarios. They may enrich their scenarios (feeding information into phase 2 above) or may also better understand opposite positions of other stakeholders and negotiate the result of common agreement. A key benefit of social simulation is that aspects most probably not evident to the stakeholders through textual descriptions become visible.

Do not hesitate to contact us for further information…

OCOPOMO recently presented at…

… the 5th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2011), Tallinn, Estonia (26 - 28 September). The conference brings together experts and high level politicians from all around the world, with a high participation of representatives from emerging economies. This year, more than 500 participants attended. OCOPOMO was presented by Maria Wimmer as example for collaborative policy development at the tutorial on "Electronic Governance for Sustainable Development (EGOV4SD)".

… the 10th international EGOV conference, Delft, The Netherlands (29th August – 2nd September). IFIP's EGOV and ePart conferences are a platform of exchange and innovative networking among researchers of various fields. Maria Wimmer presented a paper on OCOPOMO's scenario building co-authored by Melanie Bicking and herself. OCOPOMO was also presented in the workshop of current FP 7 projects. In their presentation, Sabrina Scherer and Maria Wimmer introduced the concept for the consistent conceptual modeling (CCD) to bridge text-based scenario-building and agent-based modeling.

On the agenda: upcoming meetings

The 5th project meeting will take place in Brookcliff, 23-25 November 2011.The main objectives are to discuss, progress and plan work in the running work packages. The meeting will conclude the first round developments of the policy models, scenarios and ICT toolbox. It will focus on the first round of pilot evaluations in the project.

Project Partners

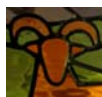|		
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Link to the project website: www.ocopomo.eu

Contact point (coordinator):
Prof. Dr. Maria A. Wimmer
University of Koblenz-Landau
Institute for IS Research
Universitätsstr. 1
56070 Koblenz, Germany
E-Mail: wimmer@uni-koblenz.de