

TMfS Newsletter

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Welcome to the first newsletter for the current commission of the Transport Model for Scotland (TMfS). Over the next two years of the commission, Transport Scotland, MVA and David Simmonds Consultancy (DSC) will be releasing newsletters on a quarterly basis, providing updates on the progress of model development and other useful information.

This edition will provide an update on how TMfS has progressed from the time of the last User Group Meeting on 28 March 2007 and identifies important forthcoming milestones in the project.

At the March 2007 User Group Meeting, we outlined our plans for taking TMfS forward. These have evolved considerably since then, as the requirements of the model and the availability of data have become clearer.

28 March User Group Day - A Recap

The 28 March User Group Day was essentially focused on how we plan to take TMfS forward and how, in the short-term, TMfS can be used to meet the requirements of model users. The User Group Day also covered the audit process and the launch of the new website, each of which are featured below.

Future User Group Days

The next User Group Day will be held at the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh on 2 October 2007. The event will elaborate on the events described in this newsletter, with particular emphasis on the findings of the Annual Report (described below) as well as an update on both model development and the audit. In line with your feedback at the 28 March event, the 2 October User Group Day will have a strong focus on planning issues, with presentations on the SPP17 Review, the mid-year population forecasts by the General Register Office for Scotland and a description of how planning data submitted to TMfS/TELMoS is used in model development and forecasting. The Department for Transport will also be presenting on the National Transport Model and potential synergies with TMfS. Lastly, we will have a presentation from Hyder Consulting on their use of TMfS in the assessment of the potential cross-Forth ferry service.

At the March event, we sought your views on the potential format of future User Group Days in the conference 'Exit Questionnaire'. Based on these responses, our current intention is to implement regional events, although the format is yet to be finalised.



Annual Report

MVA and Transport Scotland have committed to preparing an Annual Report at each anniversary of the award of the commission. The first Annual Report describes the performance of the TMfS commission in addressing the needs of the User Group as well the progress of model development. The report places both a qualitative and quantitative value on the TMfS commission. The results are encouraging, with the total benefits of the commission significantly outweighing the costs. The year one Annual Report will be posted on the TMfS Website.

Model Applications

TMfS has been used and is in use on a number of model applications. The scope of such applications has been diverse, ranging from ongoing support for the Strategic Transport Projects Review to the first planning based application of the model in a review of the South Lanarkshire Local Plan. A full outline of the model applications in which TMfS has been used will be provided in the forthcoming Annual Report.

It is hoped that the ongoing development of TMfS will prompt more model applications in a range of different policy fields. We would strongly encourage any organisation, that feel they could make use of TMfS on a project, to establish a dialogue with the TMfS team at the earliest possible juncture.

Model Development

A great deal has changed since the last User Group Day, with the deadline for the completion of TMfS:05a put back until Autumn 2007 in order to include new RSI data from Ayrshire and the TACTRAN area in the model. TMfS:05a will provide a number of enhancements on TMfS:05 including full national coverage, better modelling of accessibility and other selected enhancements such as 'Wider Economic Benefits' modelling. The development of TMfS:05a was driven by the needs of both the STPR and other users and has brought forward 'quick-win' enhancements from which all TMfS users can benefit.

Audit

We are pleased to report that the audit of TMfS:05 was completed in March 2007. There were no major problems, with the auditor raising only minor points. The TMfS:05 Audit Report is available in the 'Library' section of the website, http://www.tmfs.org.uk/library/download_reports/TMfS05_ModelDevelopmentAuditReportSummary_11052007.pdf

The audit of the land-use component (TELMoS, which is maintained by DSC) has also been completed and the report will be published in the near future. This is the first time that the TELMoS component has been audited, so this represents a significant milestone in the audit process.

The auditors are currently embarking on the early stages of the TMfS:05a audit and will commence a full audit upon the model's release in Autumn 2007.

TMfS Website

We provided you with a preview of the new TMfS Website at the March User Group Day and are pleased to confirm that this new facility was rolled out in April 2007. We took onboard your feedback on the quality of the website and also attempted to incorporate good practice in website design, to ensure that the website is user-friendly and easy to navigate. The results of the website refresh have been encouraging, with the number of visits to the site increasing.

The new website contains an enhanced 'User Group' section where you can download the 'TMfS Model Request Form' and 'TMfS User Satisfaction Form'. A secure section has also been created for every member of the User Group, where user specific information can be uploaded and downloaded. The website also houses a new 'Library' section where you can find a host of reports and presentations as well as the information from the November 2006 and March 2007 User Group Days. Lastly, the website contains a 'Website Satisfaction Survey' and we would appreciate it if you took a few minutes to fill this in the next time you use this facility.

Data Collection

The new version of TMfS (TMfS:07) will be underpinned by an extensive data collection programme designed to significantly enhance the quality of TMfS. To this end, Transport Scotland has recently commissioned a substantial data collection contract covering the whole of Scotland. While TMfS will be the primary benefactor of this programme, the data collected will be available for all relevant parties subject to any confidentiality agreements that may need to be entered into for the collection of data on commercial transport services (e.g. bus, train, air, ferry, etc.).

We have approached organisations who have previously informed us that they had data available for donation to TMfS in order to collect these data. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all parties who have collated and sent through their available data for TMfS.

If you do have data that may be of benefit to TMfS but think that we may not be aware of it, we would greatly appreciate it if you could inform us. While we are aware that your organisation may have gone to significant expense to collect such data, TMfS is a tool available to all and the better the data included in the model, the better its quality.

Documentation

We are currently preparing a range of documents designed to enhance the User Group's understanding of TMfS and to assist in their use of the model. These reports include:

- a *Non-Technical Guide to TMfS*, providing a simplified overview of TMfS and the principles of modelling generally - this will be published in Autumn 2007;
- a *Protocol for the Use of TMfS Report*, which will advise users on the protocols surrounding model use - this is likely to be published in Autumn 2007;
- a *TMfS User Manual*, describing all of the required processes in running the model..

Other News

MVA and Transport Scotland presented a joint paper at the World Conference on Transport Research (WCTR), which was held between 21-29 June in Berkeley, California. The paper is entitled *The Transport Model for Scotland: A National Treasure* and is available on the TMfS website http://www.tmfs.org.uk/library/TMfS07_WCTR_ConferencePaper_27092007.pdf

We are also attempting to seek out opportunities to enhance best practice in transport modelling and appraisal. For example, Transport Scotland has organised a 'Four Nations Forum' (ie the transport departments of Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland) where there can be a UK wide discussion on modelling approaches.

Next Steps

In the next three months, a number of key milestones will be reached, including:

- the release of TMfS:05a;
- data collection by Transport Scotland's Data Collection Consultants;
- the hosting of the 3rd User Group Day (2 October);
- the publication of the first Annual Report and a number of key model support documents; and
- an update of the planning data forecasts which inform the land-use component of the model – MVA/DSC will be contacting your planners shortly to organise this update.

Any Queries?

Should you have any queries relating to the above or the TMfS commission generally, please do not hesitate to e-mail them to TMfSsupport@mvaconsultancy.com.

We would also like to reiterate that we would be grateful to hear from any party who may be able to provide us with any additional data that could be used in the enhancement of the model.