



IEA Technology Collaboration Programme

International Energy Agency

Technology Collaboration Programme on

Energy Storage (ES TCP)

**Storage for renewables and flexibility
through standardized use of building mass**

Questionnaire: SIMULATION

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Contact:

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Dear madam or sir,

thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire! In order to provide a good overview of available **simulation tools** / simulation **models** dealing with **thermally activated building components**, we require your knowledge and expertise. Please use this opportunity to make your work known or provide useful information for other interested parties about tools or models you use or have experience with.

If you give us your personal information, we can keep in touch and maybe consider you as a co-author in possible publications or reports.

Personal Information (optional)	
Name: (Family name, given name):	Maccarini Alessandro
E-Mail:	amac@build.aau.dk
Contact	☒ I am available for follow-up questions

Company / Institution	
Name:	Aalborg University – Department of the Built Environment
Country:	Denmark
Type:	☒ University / Education ☐ Research Institution ☐ Company using simulation software ☐ Company developing simulation software

Please give feedback on categories of simulation software you are developing and / or using.

We distinguish between two different categories of mathematical models, depending on their intended usage: **Detailed simulation models** should reproduce measurements as precisely as possible and are intended for planning, e.g., in construction. **Prediction models** have reduced complexity and can be used for very fast simulations or even within optimization problems, e.g., in control tasks, to predict how changes in the operation influence the temperature and comfort of residents.

Please provide information on one or both of the simulation types, depending on your professional experience.

Note that your responses will be made available to the task participants and may be used in the preparation of official reports that will be made publicly available.

Please send the questionnaire to daniel.muschick@best-research.eu once you have filled it out.
Thank you!

Detailed Simulation Models

Detailed simulation models are used to calculate the behaviour of systems in reality (temperature propagation, heat bridges, constructive stability, humidity, dew points, ...) as precisely as possible. They may also be used to test control strategies, which may depend on simplified prediction models, before implementing them. The parametrization of the models is done by specifying physical and geometric properties, i.e., It is not necessary to have real measurement data to setup a simulation.

The focus is on simulation algorithms and tools either with a special focus on activated building components or which at least can handle them well.

Detailed simulation models are typically part of a software package (TRNSYS, Modelica) or are a dedicated software tool themselves (IDA ICE, ...). If your input is more about the method than the tool, please feel free to add information in the “Additional information” field.

If you have experience / information on multiple tools, please feel free to copy the table.

Detailed Simulation Tool / Model		
Name:	Modelica Buildings Library	
Homepage:	https://simulationresearch.lbl.gov/modelica/	
Relationship to you:	☐ I / my company are developing this software ☒ I / my company are using this software on a daily basis ☐ I / my company are using this software sporadically ☒ Other: I / my company are developing component models within the library	
License:	☐ Not publicly available; developed in-house, e.g., in research projects ☐ Commercial license ☐ Free software ☒ Open source ☐ Other:	
Type:	☐ Stand-alone software ☒ Library / Plugin for: ☐ Other:	
Co-Simulation Interfaces:	☐ None ☒ FMI / FMU ☐ Custom (e.g., call to DLL) ☐ Other:	
Consideration of TABS:	☒ Ceiling ☒ Floor ☒ Wall ☐ Other:	☒ Concrete ☒ Brick ☒ Wood ☐ Other materials:

Method to consider TABS¹:	☐ Ordinary differential equations (ODE) ☐ Partial differential equations (PDE) ☐ Finite Element Method (FEM) ☒ Other: Finite Volume Method (FVM)
Scope:	☒ Component ☒ Room ☒ Building ☐ City (quarter) ☐ Other:
Main application:	<i>Development of mathematical models representing thermal zones, HVAC systems and controls</i>
Integration of control:	☐ None (e.g., steady state calculations only) ☐ Controllers defined in model ☒ External control possible with co-simulation interface ☒ Other: Customized controls can be developed within the system model
USP: (unique selling point)	• <i>Support for rapid prototyping: Users can rapidly add new component and system models by modifying existing models or extending basic ones.</i> • <i>Modeling of arbitrary HVAC system topologies: Users can model HVAC systems with non-conventional piping or ducting layout, and user-defined control algorithms.</i>
Alternatives:	-
Publications on method:	<i>I've personally never worked with TABS. I have experience with active chilled beams, thermal storage and district heating.</i>
Publications on applications:	Application case studies about TABS can be found here: https://www.iea-annex60.org/finalReport/activity_2_1.html#case-studies Section 9.2.2 and 9.2.4 illustrate cases with TABS
Additional Information:	<i>Note that to use Modelica libraries, a simulation environment is required. Among the available options are Dymola (commercial) and OpenModelica (free).</i>

Open Challenges for Detailed Simulation Models

I've never worked with TABS, so it is difficult to say which are the open challenges.

¹ How are thermally activated building components represented in the simulation? If, for example, the entire slab is considered as one block (1D model), this would correspond to an ODE. If piping space can be considered, it could be either PDE or FEM

Prediction Models

Prediction models are simplified models that focus on the input/output relationship of thermal zones or buildings, i.e., how different operating strategies will affect the temperature and comfort experienced by the residents. They are directly used as models in optimization problems or for quick evaluations of scenarios. They are often resistor/capacitor (RC) equivalent models of a certain order, (linear) state-space models or data-driven models based on Machine Learning / Artificial Intelligence.

Here, the focus is less on the tool / software, and more on the **method**.

Specifically, the problem of **parametrization** (based on measurements or derived from more detailed models), and the **mathematical complexity** (linear, mixed integer, non-linear) – and thus the ease of integration into optimization problems – are of interest here.

Prediction Model	
Name:	<i>5R1C thermal zone model (included in Modelica Buildings Library)</i>
Homepage:	Link
Relationship to you:	☒ I / my company are developing this model ☐ I / my company are using this model on a daily basis ☐ I / my company are using this model sporadically ☐ Other:
License:	☐ Not publicly available; developed in-house, e.g., in research projects ☐ Commercial license ☐ Free software ☒ Open source
Type:	☒ Mathematical model only ☐ Stand-alone software ☐ Library / Plugin for: ☐ Other:
Method / Complexity:	☐ State space / Ordinary Differential Equation (nonlinear) ☒ State space / Ordinary Differential Equation (linear), e.g., RC model ☐ Neural network ☐ Other:
Scope:	☒ Individual room temperature ☐ Multiple rooms / entire building ☐ Multiple buildings ☐ Other:
Main application:	<i>Simplified approach to describe the thermal behaviour of thermal zones.</i>

Usage²:	☐ Simulation studies ☐ Real-world implementation and control ☐ Other: it is often used in urban energy analyses
Consideration of comfort³:	☒ Indoor air temperature ☒ Surface temperatures ☐ Air draft ☐ Humidity ☐ Other:
USP: (unique selling point)	<i>Good trade-off between accuracy and computational time.</i>
Alternatives:	-
Thermally activated components:	☐ Implicitly considered (depending on parametrization) ☐ Explicitly considered ☒ Other: This simplified 5R1C thermal zones can be connected to the TABS Modelica component
Phenomena considered:	☒ Ambient temperature ☒ Solar irradiation ☒ Internal gains (preconfigured) ☐ Internal gains (automatically detected) ☒ Shading ☒ Air ventilation ☐ Interaction (heat / air exchange) between the rooms ☐ Interaction with the energy hub (heat flows, feed temperature, ...) ☐ Other:

² How has the model/the method been used / what is it intended for?

Simulation studies can give an indication, e.g., on the benefits of using TABS or intelligent controllers. The models they use for control/optimization, however, need not represent a real building, but perhaps only a simplified version of a more detailed model used for validation of the controller. The parametrization and estimation of internal gains etc. are, therefore, possibly simpler.

Real-world implementation and control, on the other hand, requires either a robust control algorithm or a very good match between the model parameters and reality.

³ Good control algorithms should not only consider temperature, but also other comfort parameters.

Parametrization⁴:	☒ Manual ☐ Derived from detailed simulation model: <i>please indicate possible sources / file formats</i> ☐ Derived from archetypes ☐ Automatic via historic measurements (controlled operation) ☐ Automatic via historic measurements (specific experiments) ☐ Automatic parameter update (online)
Publications on method:	Own publicaiton
Publications on applications:	-
Additional Information:	-

Open Challenges for Prediction Models
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Thank you for completing the questionnaire! Kindly send back the filled-out form to daniel.muschick@best-research.eu.

⁴ Every model depends on its parameters. Please indicate how they are determined in this model/method.
Manual: The user has to choose the parameters by hand, e.g. by running multiple simulations and adjusting the parameters.

Derived from detailed simulation model: A detailed (building) simulation model is used to parametrize a more simplified model. Example: BRCM Toolbox of ETH Zurich.

Derived from archetypes: The parameters are chosen from a set of pre-defined parameters. This is more suitable for performing simulation studies, but probably not enough for the control of an actual building.

Automatic via historic measurements: The parameters are estimated from historic measurements, e.g., using a least-squares based algorithm or any data-driven method. “*Controlled operation*” means that the algorithm can cope with measurements taken in an already controlled environment, meaning that the room temperatures stay close to the setpoints and little information on the effect of heating/cooling is available. “*Specific experiments*” means that special heat-up / cooldown experiments need to be performed in order to obtain trustworthy parameter estimates.

Automatic parameter update: The parameters are not only estimated once, but continuously adapted based on new measurements. This requires methods ensuring that the parameters do not take on meaningless values.