Forms Advisor

FORMS ADVISOR

User guide

Step by step from your Oracle Forms export to the result, and what the figures mean.

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1 Before you start

Forms Advisor makes an inventory of an Oracle Forms application. You upload an XML export of your forms and get, per form, a complexity class and score with the key figures behind them: blocks, items, triggers, PL/SQL lines, database tables and hardcoded values. The tool distils structure; the business rules behind it remain your expertise.

You need:

- the source files of your forms (`.fmb`) and, if your forms use them, the object libraries (`.olb`);
- an Oracle Forms installation with the conversion tool `frmf2xml` (part of Forms Builder);
- an e-mail address of your organization and a current web browser.

2 Create your account

The first person of an organization registers it and becomes its administrator. Colleagues join through an invitation from that administrator.

1. Open Forms Advisor. Under the sign-in form, click **Start free** next to “No account yet?”.
2. Fill in **Organization**, **Email**, **First name** and **Last name**. The **VAT number** is optional.
3. Agree to the terms of use and the privacy policy and click **Create account**.
4. You get a mail “Activate your Forms Advisor account”. Click the link in it. The link is valid for a limited number of hours.
5. On **Choose your password**, enter your password twice and click **Save password**.

> **Tip** Does Forms Advisor say “You already have an account”? Then sign in with that account. Is the VAT number already known for another organization? Ask its administrator to invite you.

3 Sign in

1. Choose your language at the top of the sign-in form: **EN**, **NL** or **FR**.
2. Enter your **Email** and **Password**. Tick **Remember me** on a computer of your own.
3. Click **Sign in**. You land on the analyses overview of your organization.

Forgot your password? Click **Forgot your password?**, enter your e-mail address and click **Send link**. The mail holds a link to choose a new password.

4 Export your forms to XML

Forms Advisor reads the XML version of your forms, not the binary `.fmb` files. Oracle Forms converts them with `frmf2xml`. For a form `ORDERS.fmb` it writes `ORDERS_fmb.xml` next to it.

1. Open a command prompt on the machine with Forms Builder, in the folder with your `.fmb` files. Set `FORMS_PATH` as you do for Forms Builder, so the object libraries your forms refer to are found.
2. Convert every form, and every object library your forms use.

   WINDOWS

   ```
   for %f in (*.fmb *.olb) do frmf2xml OVERWRITE=YES "%f"
   ```

   LINUX OR UNIX

   ```
   for f in *.fmb *.olb; do frmf2xml.sh OVERWRITE=YES "$f"; done
   ```

3. Put all `*_fmb.xml` files, and the `*_olb.xml` files, in one zip file. Subfolders in the zip are fine.

> **Tip** Put the whole application in one zip. Forms that are called but not in the zip are listed as missing, and calls between forms can only be mapped when both forms are there.

Object libraries are optional but make the result more complete: items and triggers that a form inherits from an object library are only counted when the library is in the zip. Libraries (`.pll`) and menus (`.mmb`) are not analysed.

5 Start an analysis

1. On the overview, click **New analysis**. The very first time, the button is called **Start your first analysis**.
2. Under **Project**, give the analysis a name you recognize, for example the name of the application and a date.
3. Under **Forms export (zip)**, choose your zip file. Only `.zip` is accepted.
4. Click **Start**. The analysis appears in the overview and runs in the background.

6 Follow the status

The analysis service handles one analysis at a time, in order of start time. Every analysis shows its status in the overview:

Queued	Waiting for a free analysis slot. You see its position in the queue.
Running	The analysis is running; the time counts on. There is no percentage, because the engine reports no intermediate progress.
Done	The result is ready. The overview shows the duration and the number of forms per complexity class.
Failed	There is no result. Open the analysis to read the error message.

You do not have to wait: you can close the window or start more analyses. The overview updates itself while an analysis is queued or running.

7 Read the result

Click an analysis in the overview to open it.

1. **Details and files.** Who started the analysis, when it started and finished, and how long it took. Under **Files** you download the zip you uploaded (**Input**) and, with Premium, the result (**Result**).
2. **Complexity distribution.** The number of analysed forms and how many fall in each class:
   - Simple: score below 100
   - Medium: below 300
   - Complex: below 600
   - Very Complex: 600 or more

   Click a class to show only the forms in it.
3. **Analysed forms.** A table of all forms, the highest score first, with **Title**, **Class**, **Score**, **Blocks**, **Items**, **Triggers**, **PL/SQL lines**, **DB tables** and **Hardcoded values**. Search by form or title, filter by class, and click **Show all** for the full list.
4. **Missing forms.** When your forms call forms that are not in the zip, a notice lists them with the form that calls them. Add them to the zip and start a new analysis.

> The score ranks the forms within one analysis. The classes follow fixed thresholds of the engine and are not an estimate of the migration effort. **PL/SQL lines** counts your own code, without empty lines, comments and the code Forms generates itself. **Hardcoded values** are texts and numbers in the code that need a place of their own in a migration, such as a parameter or a code list.

8 The full report with Premium

With the free plan you see the complexity of every form in the app. Premium adds the full report as a download: every trigger and program unit with its code, the hardcoded values and where they are, the database tables and missing packages, the calls between forms and clusters of duplicate code.

1. Under a finished analysis, **In the full report of …** shows what the engine found. Click **Unlock the report**. You can also click **Full report · Premium** under **Files**, or **Freemium** at the top of the screen.

2. Choose what suits you: **One-time analysis** (one full report), **Pro** (unlimited analyses, each with a full report) or **Enterprise** (everything in Pro, plus integration in your CI/CD pipeline). Click **Next**.
3. Check **Company**, **Name** and **Email**, add a phone number or a remark if you like, and click **Request a quote**.
4. iAdvise replies within one working day. Once your licence is active, the **Result** button downloads the report, also of analyses you already ran.

Unzip the result and open `comparison.html` in your browser. It is the start page of the report and links to a report per form, the code similarity report and the map of the calls between forms. The report works offline, so you can share it with your team.

9 Manage your analyses

- **Shared within your organization.** Everyone in your organization sees its analyses, with who started each one.
- **Search.** Type part of a project name in **Search project** on the overview.
- **A new version.** Changed your forms? Start a new analysis with the new zip. It is kept next to the previous one, so you can compare them.
- **Delete.** Open a finished or failed analysis and click **Delete**. This removes the analysis and its zip files for good. A queued or running analysis cannot be deleted.

10 Account and settings

At the top right of the screen:

- **Appearance** (sun icon): **Light**, **Dark** or **System**, which follows the setting of your computer.
- **Language**: English, Nederlands or Français.
- **Your name** opens your menu, with this **User guide**, **Change password**, **Two-factor authentication** when your organization uses it, **iAdvise Products** to manage your organization or open other iAdvise apps, and **Sign out**.

11 Questions and problems

My analysis failed.

Open it and read the error message. Check that the zip holds `*_fmb.xml` files and not the binary `.fmb` files, then start a new analysis.

My analysis stays queued.

Analyses run one at a time. Your position in the queue goes down as the analyses before yours finish.

Forms are listed as missing.

Your forms call forms that are not in the zip. Convert them as well, add them to the zip and start a new analysis.

I cannot download the result.

Downloading the full report requires Premium. See The full report with Premium.

I did not get a mail.

Check your spam folder. Has the link expired? Click **Request a new link** on the page that says so, or use **Forgot your password?** on the sign-in page.

I have another question.

Mail info@iadvise.eu, or use **Feedback** in your menu when it is there.