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modernAKIS Together for Systems' Innovation

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents an overview of Task 3.1 focusing on capacity building for actors to conceptualize effective and credible AKIS models. The approach taken under Task 3.1 involved a structured workflow comprising eLearning modules (D3.1), national-level workshops (D3.7), and capacity development camps (D3.5). The latter played a crucial role in preparing and supporting facilitators before, during, and after the workshops in member states and are presented in detail in this report.

The capacity development camps took on different formats at various stages of the process. Initial kick-off workshops were held to introduce facilitators to the content and establish their roles. These were followed by information sessions that provided additional guidance and updates. Finally, follow-up events allowed for reflection, feedback exchange, and the development of best practices for future implementation.

The work flow of Task 3.1 demonstrated the importance of adaptive and structured capacity-building initiatives. The varied formats of the capacity development camps ensured that facilitators received timely and relevant support throughout the process. Key lessons include:

- The necessity of early engagement to build facilitator confidence.
- The value of both formal and informal sessions in maintaining momentum.
- The importance of structured follow-up to reinforce learning and encourage collaboration.

The knowledge gained and relationships developed during Task 3.1 will serve as a foundation for Task 3.2, which will focus on more complex technical content. WP3 remains committed to refining its approach based on facilitator feedback, ensuring continuous improvement in capacity development efforts.

In summary, the success of Task 3.1 underscores the effectiveness of a multi-stage support system for facilitators, ultimately strengthening AKIS models across member states and enhancing knowledge-sharing mechanisms.

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2. Introduction

Task 3.1 Being part of the AKIS: Capacity building of actors to conceptualise valuable, relevant and credible AKIS models was designed to follow a logical workflow aimed at improving the capacity of project partners to understand the AKIS. There are three main components to the workflow for this task.

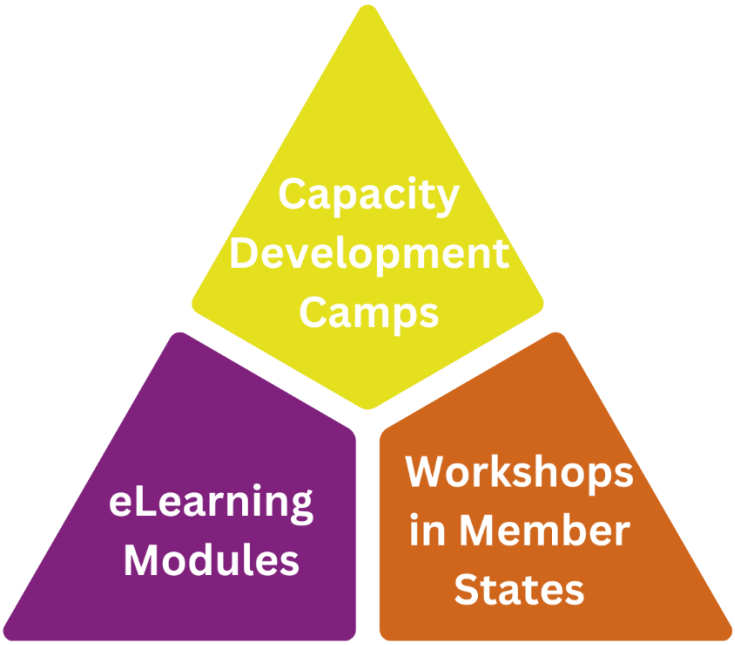

Figure 1 Components of the work flow for Task 3.1

The eLearning modules (D3.1) provided the content, the workshops in member states (D3.7) brought that content to key AKIS actors at a national level and the capacity development camps (D3.5) supported facilitators before, during and after the workshops.

Capacity development camps therefore took different formats so as to better suit the different stages of Task 3.1 activities. Prior to the workshops in each member state, capacity development camps in the form of kick-off workshops were held to introduce facilitators to one another and to the content in the eLearning modules (D3.1) developed under Task 3.1. Feedback from facilitators was also requested regarding their needs for support from WP3. In the months when the workshops in member states were scheduled to take place the capacity development camps took the format of information sessions aimed to provide support to facilitators in the planning and organisation of the workshops as well as provide feedback and answers to any questions from facilitators. After the workshops in member states, capacity development camps took the form of follow up sessions with facilitators. These follow up with facilitator events took place online to allow for higher rates of participation compared to an in person event.

This deliverable presents an overview of the different capacity development camps and the ways in which they served to support facilitators in carrying out the workshops in member states. This includes two kick off workshops, two information sessions and three follow up events with facilitators.

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3. Initial Kick-off Workshops

Project partners in each MS identified a contact person that would be responsible for organising and reporting on the member state workshops. In some cases, one person took on the responsibility for more than one member state. Below is a list of the member states and the facilitator identified to be responsible as well as their organisation.

Table 1 List of facilitators identified for each member state

Country	Organisation	Facilitator
Austria	LFI	Elena-Teodora Miron
Belgium	BBP	Marleen Gysen
Bulgaria	ELGO-DIMITRA	Athanasios Ragkos
Croatia	MoA	Ozren Hrsto
Cyprus (Greek)	ELGO-DIMITRA	Athanasios Ragkos
Czech republic	IAEI	Marta Mrnuštík Konečná
Denmark	SEGES Innovation PS	Kirsten Klitgaard
Estonia	METK	Hanna Tamsalu
Finnland	METK	Hanna Tamsalu
France	CDA	Myriam Gaspard
Greece	ELGO-DIMITRA	Athanasios Ragkos
Germany	LFI	Elena-Teodora Miron
Hungary	AKI	Lívia Kránitz
Ireland (English)	Teagasc	Avion Phillips
Italy	CREA	Simona Cristiano
Latvia	LRATC	Marija Fjodorova
Lithuania	LSMU	Gintare Kucinskiene
Luxembourg	MAVDR	Martine Claus
Malta		Simona Cristiano
Netherlands	NSU	Jeroen Nagel

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Poland	CDR	Aleksander Bomberski Leszek Zukowski
Portugal	CONSULAI	Ana Maria Ribes
Romania	LFI	Elena-Teodora Miron
Spain	FEUGA	Rebeca Díez
Slovakia		Marta Mrnuštík Konečná
Slovenia	MAFF	Jožji Cvelbar
Sweden	SRDN	Jennie Cederholm Björklund
Ukraine		Ukraine Team

Two kick off workshops were held in summer 2024, these were facilitated by WP3 staff from UHOH and Teagasc. The first in July 2024, was the first time facilitators were introduced to each other and the activities of Task 3.1. A second kick-off workshop was held in August 2024 which aimed to respond to some of the needs expressed in the first workshop held in July 2024.

These workshops were recorded and all materials generated, including Miro board results, were made available to attendees via the modernAKIS SharePoint. These meetings not only introduced trainers to the activities they had to undertake but also informed them of their mandate as trainers / facilitators.

Collaborative exercises were conducted using Miro Boards to engage with trainers and get input and feedback from them on different supports that they required and to understand their technical questions on the task activities.

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- **First Kick-off Workshop**

During this workshop the content of the modules was presented to facilitators for the first time. This allowed them to get familiar with the content that they would be including in the workshops in the member states. Building relationships and understanding their mandate as trainers / facilitators was one of the main aims of this initial workshop. The engagement exercise at this kick-off workshop focused on collecting questions on the technical aspects of their roles and feedback on the necessary support they required and used a Miro Board to do so.



Figure 2 Agenda of the first kick off workshop

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- **Second Kick-off Workshop**

The second kick off workshop took place roughly one month later and was again facilitated by WP3 staff. By the end of the event participants were equipped with a range of examples of capacity development linked to the first eLearning modules, were able to adapt these capacity development examples to their target audiences and were more comfortable with the tools and methods that could be used to conduct the workshops in the member states.

The content at this event was based on the feedback and needs expressed by the attendees at the first workshop and the interactive session was developed to specifically address the technical requests made at the first workshop. It focused on various tools, procedures and instruments that could be used to assist in the delivery of the workshops in the member states.



Figure 3 Agenda of the second kick-off workshop

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4. Information Sessions

Two information sessions were held by WP3, a formal online event in November 2024 and an informal face to face event in December 2024 during the modernAKIS project meeting in Leuven. The aim of these sessions was to provide continued support to facilitators in each member state so that they were better equipped to deliver the capacity development workshops under Task 3.1 (reported on in Deliverable 3.7).

The details of the online information session are as follows:

Date: Monday 4th November 2024

Time: 10:30 -12:00 CET

Agenda

- Overview of the In-Country Capacity Development Workshops
  - Aim of the workshop
  - Target Audience of the workshop
  - Content & Delivery of the workshop
  - Available toolkit to support carrying out the workshop
- Feedback from partners that have already held events
- Questions & Answer

Figure 4 Agenda of the information session

This event provided a chance for WP3 staff to remind facilitators of the requirements for the workshops and to remind them of the supports available to them, with special reference to the Toolkit developed by WP 3 (Deliverable 3.3). This toolkit not only provided template agendas and suggested formats for the events but also a range of activities and explanations of how they could be used to communicate the content of the workshops relating to the AKIS and systems thinking. It summarised the procedures and methods presented at the second kick-off meeting and included information on the presentation that covered the types of events and example agendas.

At the time of this information session, both Spain and Portugal had already held their capacity development workshops and dedicated time was set aside during the information session so that facilitators from these countries could share their experiences. This segment of the information session was especially useful as many attendees had questions about planning for their own events that the facilitators from Spain and Portugal were able to answer and share their learnings on. It also acted as a follow up session opportunity for these facilitators to share with others their experiences.

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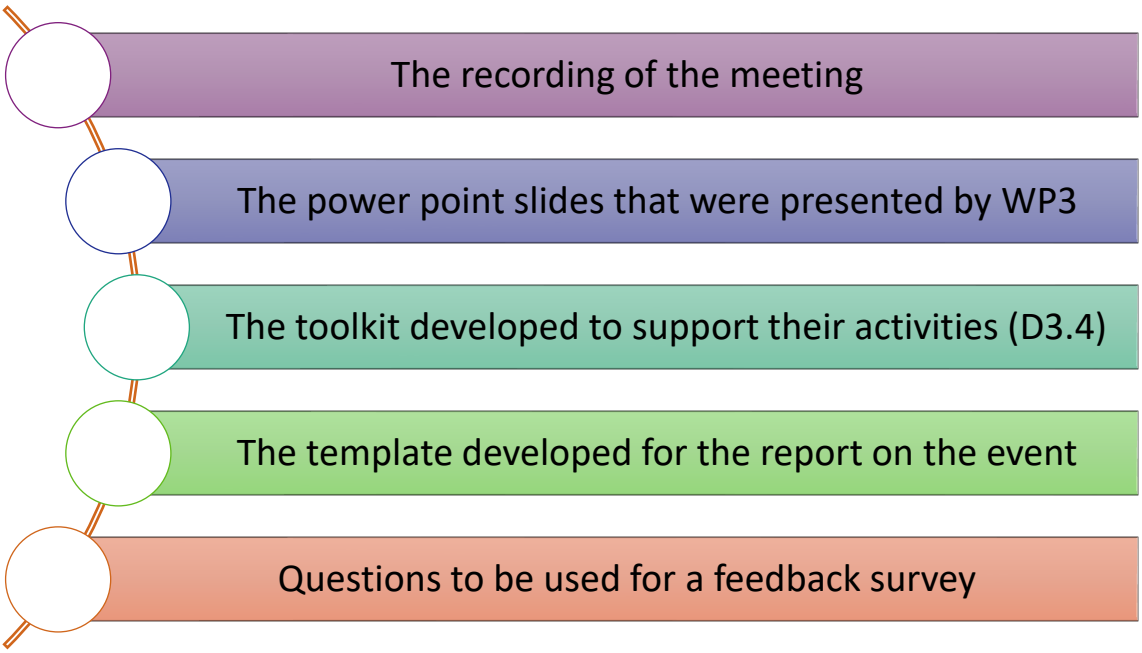
A dedicated time was also built into the information session for a question and answer activity so that attendees had the opportunity to clarify any points and ask any questions not only to WP 3 staff about logistics but also to other attendees about their plans.

After the information session took place a follow up email was sent to all persons in the mailing list of facilitators responsible for organising workshops across the various member states. This email included links to the modernAKIS SharePoint for the following materials.



This email was also followed by further periodic email communications to check in with facilitators and provide support where needed.

During the modernAKIS project meeting in Leuven, Belgium on the 10th December 2024 WP3 also presented an update on the in country capacity development workshops. Many of the project partners present at the meeting were also the facilitators established for the in country capacity development workshops and so during the WP3 session time was allotted to answer questions about the planning and facilitation of these workshops and share some of the feedback from workshops that had already taken place.

After the session, several informal one on one conversations took place between WP3 leaders and facilitators from different member states who had specific questions and requests relating to the planning, facilitation and resources available to them for these workshops. These interactions were crucial for facilitators to build working relationships with WP3 leaders and to enhance the future collaboration between WP3 and these facilitators.

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5. Follow up events with Facilitators

In February 2025, multiple events were scheduled to follow up with facilitators regarding the capacity development workshops held in the various member states. These events were aimed at not only the individual facilitators but also any colleagues of theirs that would benefit from the lessons being shared so that they could potentially go on to facilitate workshops themselves in the future. Three dates for these follow up were initially proposed and attendees were requested to attend only one of the three options that best suited them.

First event: Thursday 13th February 2025, 15:00 – 17:00 CET

Second Event: Friday 7th March 2025, 10:00 – 12:00 CET

Subsequent events to be added if needed.

The agenda was the same for all three events and can be seen found in Section 7 Annex. These follow up sessions were designed and planned to allow for open knowledge exchange between facilitators. They were able to share common experiences, tools and skills that were useful to them. This will improve their capacity to deliver such workshops in the future as well as foster collaborative cross country relationships. During these events WP3 also took the opportunity to introduce the content of the eLearning modules under Task 3.2 which will form the basis for the next round of workshops in late 2025 and ask facilitators for feedback on the supports provided by WP3 and how they could be improved in the future. All of these events were recorded and made available on the modernAKIS SharePoint and short reports were generated and shared with project partners.

Two tentative events are scheduled for March 2025 as there are a few countries where workshops will not take place until early March due to scheduling conflicts among the members of the coordination bodies in these countries. This will ensure that these facilitators are also accommodated by Task 3.1 activities.

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5.1. Summary of the follow up events

- **First Follow up Event – 13th February 2025**

Member states in attendance

- Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Netherlads

Key Lessons Learnt

Detailed descriptions of lessons learnt and the findings and outcomes of each workshop are included in each member state report in D3.7 Report by local capacity building team following each member state level workshop for Task 3.1. What are summarised here are the key lessons or take-always that were discussed in a given follow up session.

- Actors that are new to the topic appreciate the structure of the modules and the richness of the content.
- Actors that are more familiar with the concept of AKIS and systems thinking tend to require more practical answers and examples relating to the system in their country.
- Tools like Mural were very helpful for online engagement more than MentiMeter or Slido as Mural can be left open to attendees and information collected over time.
- Having the option for online meetings is essential in larger countries, where relationships among actors are already established because it improves participation and efficacy.

Requests for future support

- Training sessions focused on providing the context for Modules 4-6, that facilitators need to be able to explain how the content relates to national circumstances in their member state.

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- **Subsequent follow-up events**

The next event is scheduled for Friday 7th March 2025, as many countries held their workshops in late February and early March. Subsequent dates will be added if necessary to ensure the opportunity for all facilitators to participate and exchange information.

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6. Conclusion

Capacity development is a task that requires a high degree of adaptability since no one method suits all actors and situations. WP3 has strived to enable capacity development among the facilitators and trainers in such a way as to meet their needs, different though they may be.

Great effort was taken by WP3 staff to ensure that support was available and accessible through these capacity development camps, in their various forms. Changing the format and style of these camps to suit the different stages of the process was highly beneficial to encouraging capacity development among the facilitators. This adaptability allowed different events to focus on distinct essential supports that were needed at different times.

Early events focused on helping facilitators to become more familiar with the material they would be working with and to understand their role in Task 3.1. These early events also allowed WP3 to receive feedback on their needs both logistically and with respect to the soft skills necessary to facilitate the workshops in the member states.

Formal and informal information sessions during the process heled to keep facilitators motivated and on track and served to enlighten them on the supporting materials WP3 had developed in response to the needs expressed.

Follow up sessions after the workshops enabled an exchange of information between facilitators and allowed for the identification of practices and activities that worked or gaps that could be filled in future events. The feedback from these follow up sessions will go a long way towards building on the foundation established in Task 3.1 as future activities develop under Task 3.2 which focuses on more technically complex content.

A total of seven capacity development camps took place under Task 3.1 in the various formats reported on here. This diversity and quantity of events enabled greater accessibility to the supporting information and allowed for specific feedback to be collected at key points during the activities in the work plan for this task. WP3 will build on this going forward and use the knowledge exchanged and relationships developed in future activities in Task 3.2.

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7. Annex

Facilitator Follow Ups – WP3 Capacity Development Workshops

Audience

Key actors well placed in country to promote AKIS and increase capacity for other actors to become involved in the AKIS.

Main Objective

Exchange of experiences regarding using the toolkit, mastering modules, organising the sessions, co-facilitating

Agenda

Duration	Item
10”	Welcome & Intro to project and capacity development activities
40” **5” per country**	Mural Board Tour Pre-prepared flyer to summarise their event, images uploaded to a Mural Board • Country • Organisational Set Up – In person ? Online? Length, Added to another meeting? • How did you make use of the toolkit? • How did you make use of the modules? • How was facilitation carried out? • Any lessons learned?
25”	Brainstorm together on general lessons
20”	Break
5”	Inform about the next steps, Modules 4 – 6 and next content
20”	How can we support you to work on the next modules, events? Support options – Series of online meetings? One on one coaching? Face to Face Facilitation training?
	Closing of Workshop

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