



Stakeholders' Engagement Workshops



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Towards a common evaluation and certification framework for accessibility and inclusiveness

In the framework of the AccesS Project, Work Package 3 (Towards a common evaluation and certification framework for accessibility and inclusiveness) plays a crucial role in developing a comprehensive certification framework for accessibility and inclusiveness in the built environment. By engaging with key stakeholders from Cyprus, Greece, Romania, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy, we aim to identify best practices, address challenges, and align our methodology with existing standards and EU directives.

Through stakeholder events and workshops, we gather valuable insights to refine our assessment scheme, ensuring it integrates social inclusivity, accessible environment for disabled people, smart technologies, energy-efficient solutions, and the unique needs of different demonstrators.

Stakeholder Engagement Workshops

As part of WP3 in the AccesS Project, Stakeholder Engagement events were successfully held across Cyprus, Greece, Romania, The Netherlands, Spain, and Italy. Specifically, Stakeholder workshops brought together policymakers, architects, disability advocacy groups, and technology providers to shape the Accessibility Certification Framework.

Key discussions focused on redefining accessibility, emphasizing not only physical access but also sensory and cognitive inclusion. Stakeholders highlighted major barriers, such as high retrofitting costs, lack of regulatory clarity, and limited awareness among building owners. Innovative smart solutions were proposed, including digital navigation tools, virtual building tours, and automated doors. Additionally, micromobility challenges like inaccessible bicycle lanes and poor curb management were addressed. The workshops also stressed the importance of inclusive workplaces and emergency evacuation plans for people with disabilities. A key outcome was the need for an integrated accessibility evaluation framework, like energy performance certification, incorporating both digital and thermal comfort aspects.

With valuable input from diverse stakeholders, the AccesS Project is leading the way for a more inclusive and accessible built environment!

Key Outcomes from the Stakeholder Engagement Workshops

The Stakeholder Engagement Workshops were held, allowing us to gather valuable insights and feedback for developing an effective Accessibility Certification Framework. Here are the key outcomes from each country:

Cyprus

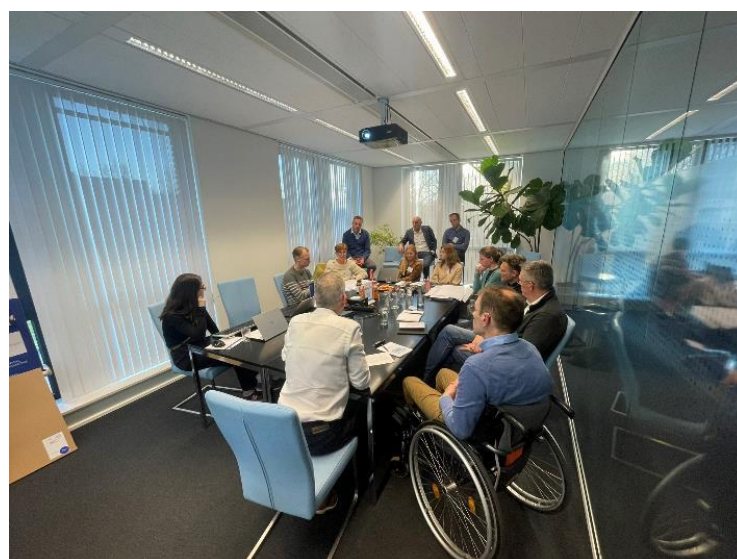
- Agreement on the need for a structured accessibility assessment methodology.
- Recognition that accessibility should encompass physical, digital, and sensory aspects.
- Identification of key barriers in urban infrastructure that hinder accessibility for disabled individuals.
- Consensus on the importance of integrating accessibility into policy frameworks.

Spain

- Accessibility should be self-sufficient and inclusive of all disabilities (physical, sensory, cognitive).
- New regulations should treat accessibility as a fundamental requirement, similar to fire safety.
- Emergency procedures must include accessibility measures, ensuring safe evacuation routes for people with disabilities.
- Improved acoustics in public spaces is essential, especially for people with hearing impairments and cognitive disabilities.
- Smart building solutions such as real-time navigation apps, tactile maps, and induction loops should be prioritized.

Netherlands

- Common challenges include difficult-to-open doors, unclear entrances, poorly placed buttons, narrow elevators, exclusionary digital tools, lack of coordination among development parties, and insufficient signage and parking information.
- Technology improves accessibility through automatic doors and navigation apps, but it must be reliable, simple, and complement human assistance.
- Virtual User Models (VUMs) allow designers to assess accessibility early in the design process and simulate user navigation.
- Ensuring equal accessibility with technology involves providing multiple options (digital, physical, or human) and ensuring apps are not the only means of accessing information.
- Barriers faced by people with disabilities or older adults include unclear accessibility information, poor placement of facilities, and fragmented public transport information with inconsistent station designs.
- Enhancing user experience requires easy-to-use, reliable apps and accessible signage in both visual and auditory formats.
- Helpful solutions for comfort, safety, and navigation include simple building access, consistent public transport layouts, human support, and alternatives to digital tools to avoid dependence on technology.
- Social and cultural accessibility can be achieved through education and training, interaction between groups, and an inclusive design approach that considers language, culture, and digital literacy.



Romania

- Main Challenges: High costs, lack of awareness, outdated infrastructure, and inadequate guidance systems hinder accessibility.
- Technology's Role: Smart tech-like voice-controlled features and sensors can enhance accessibility but should complement physical solutions without creating new barriers.
- Virtual User Models: BIM tools help identify accessibility issues early, ensuring inclusive designs when properly integrated.
- Physical Barriers: Poorly designed ramps, narrow doors, and inaccessible bathrooms remain significant challenges.
- Improvement Suggestions: Standardize signage, implement accessibility grants, and create legal frameworks with penalties for non-compliance.



Together, we're building a more accessible future for everyone!

Enhancing Accessibility and Sustainability in Smart Cities and Smart Buildings: The Universal Accessibility Suite Initiative



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