AccessCoVE: European Centre of Vocational Excellence in Accessibility

Research Report 3.1 A	Needs and Priorities for the Training of Accessibility Consultants and Accessibility Certifiers

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Contacts	Professor Konstantinos Papadopoulos
Address	University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece
Phone	+30 2310891389
eMail	kpapado@uom.edu.gr
Project Website	https://accesscove.org

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About AccessCOVE

The aim of this project is to structure excellence in Vocational Education and Training in the field of Accessibility. Twenty-five partners from four different countries (Greece, Sweden, Spain, and Italy) joined their forces to establish a European multi-level innovative and constantly growing Centre of Vocational Excellence - the AccessCoVE - in the field of accessibility for individuals with disabilities (i.e. individuals with impairments and elders). Through the development of the most up-to-date, valid, and worth trusting source for accessibility issues, AccessCoVE will constitute a key contributor to policy-making regarding inclusion in society and accessible digitalization. In essence, accessibility will be approached holistically starting from researching the end-users' requirements and continuing to the research of stakeholders' needs and priorities concerning accessibility issues. The data collected will form the VET programs and curricula that will lead to the training frame and the certification of two new specialties - the Accessibility Certifier and the Accessibility Consultant. Additionally, AccessCoVE's activities target the up- skilling and reskilling of specific groups, as well as of students in secondary and tertiary education.

AccessCoVE focus thoroughly on excellence which arises from a) innovative VET programs with respective teaching and learning activities and tools, b) new specialties that will open new job opportunities while covering the needs that already put pressure on the business sector, c) constant horizontal and vertical cooperation between the VET providers, companies, chambers, federations, HEIs, and regional authorities form the very first moment of the project, d) radical dissemination activities that feed e) a robust sustainability multi-faceted system, which in combination with f) meticulously designed long-term governance and funding plans, will gradually transform AccessCoVE into a transnational platform of CoVE.

The main objectives of this proposal are:

- The establishment of a European multi-level innovative and constantly growing CoVE - the AccessCoVE - in the field of accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- The holistic approach of accessibility by propagating accessibility in every

possible aspect of social and economic life.

- The development of the most up-to-date, valid and worth trusting source for accessibility issues, which will constitute a key contributor to policy making regarding inclusion in society and accessible digitalization.
- The foundation of two (2) new professional specialties. AccessCoVE will not just re-skill and up-skill professionals who need to update and enrich their knowledge and skills.
- The elaboration of a robust network of partners that unify their expertise in VET delivery, accessibility research or entrepreneurship, combine their interests to contribute to regional development, and support the growth of the AccessCoVE after the completion of the project.

Assessment of Needs and Priorities for the Training of Accessibility Consultants and Accessibility Certifiers

1. Introduction

1.1. Project Overview

As part of Task 3.1 of the AccessCoVE European program, five focus groups were conducted: four national focus groups in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, and one cross-national focus group involving participants from all four countries. The main objective of the focus groups was to identify the skills and knowledge that VET graduates of AccessCoVE Centre, specializing as Accessibility Consultants and Accessibility Certifiers, need to acquire to meet the challenges and responsibilities of their professions effectively. National focus groups were independently organized and implemented by the respective partners in each country, while the cross-national focus group, conducted in English, was collaboratively organized by all partners in cooperation with the University of Macedonia (UOM). Following the transcription and analysis of the focus group discussions, this report outlines the key findings from each of the five focus groups individually. A summary of the main outcomes across all focus groups is also presented.

1.2. Participants

Participants recruited for the five focus groups needed to fall into the following categories and preferably be familiar with accessibility issues:

1) Chambers and Business associations

2) Companies

3) Higher Education Institutes or Research Institutes

4) VET and Lifelong Learning providers

5) National/regional development authorities

6) National/regional qualification authorities

7) Associations of persons with disabilities and Associations of older people.

Total number of participants in each focus group

1. National focus group in Italy: 18
2. National focus group in Sweden: 12
3. National focus group in Spain: 29
4. National focus group in Greece: 13
5. Cross-national focus group: 19

1.3. Discussion points

At the beginning of the discussion, there was a thorough briefing on the areas of accessibility that needed to be addressed, which include the following: physical/spatial accessibility of indoor and outdoor places, transportation, communication with public and private sectors, services of public and private sectors, web accessibility, digital banking, digital libraries and repositories, digital devices, software/apps, educational materials, assistive technology, accessible courses, distance education/online learning, workplace, and employment, accessible cultural heritage sites/environments, accessible tourism, sports and recreational facilities, accessibility in security and evacuation situations.

An extensive briefing on the professions of Accessibility Consultants and Certifiers followed this. Accessibility Consultants evaluate and address accessibility needs, fix issues, and provide support to ensure compliance. They are knowledgeable about assistive technology and stay updated on accessibility trends. These consultants can guide the creation of accessible materials and websites. They assess websites, including using alternative text for images, and are involved in planning to implement.

An Accessibility Certifier will be knowledgeable about legislation and standards, check if the accessibility indicators are applied, gather input from the results of existing

studies on accessibility to further refine the indicators, develop the quality and validity of the existing accessibility indicators, develop a systematic and consistent set of accessibility indicators, propose/develop commonly accepted standards, encourage the institutions/bodies to adopt or improve the indicators.

The main question participants were asked regarding Accessibility Consultants was: What knowledge and skills/competencies should Accessibility Consultants possess, and what should they be able to implement/develop?

A corresponding question was asked about Accessibility Certifiers: What knowledge and skills/ competencies should Accessibility Certifiers possess, and what should they be able to implement?

2. Results - Key Findings from the five focus groups

2.1. Results of the national focus group in Greece

2.1.1. Accessibility Consultant

Knowledge:

- General knowledge about disability, including disability types, characteristics, and accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
- Practical knowledge of techniques and best practices to support individuals with disabilities.
- Personal experience interacting with people with disabilities.
- Understanding of accessibility importance and expertise in the field of accessibility.
- Knowledge of web accessibility and the creation of accessible websites.
- Knowledge of spatial accessibility, including methods to make physical spaces accessible (e.g., elevators).
- General technological knowledge and familiarity with digital tools.
- In-depth knowledge of accessibility laws, including national and European policies for people with disabilities.

- Knowledge of the available assistive technologies, their capabilities, and limitations.
- Specialization in particular accessibility fields (e.g., web accessibility, spatial accessibility).

Skills and Competencies:

- Cooperation and communication skills.
- Consultation skills for engaging with people with disabilities, institutions, and governmental bodies to negotiate for accessibility improvements.
- Ability to analyze and assess accessibility conditions.
- Problem-solving skills related to accessibility challenges.
- Ability to design proposals aimed at improving accessibility.
- Proficiency in the use of assistive technologies.
- Awareness and empathy towards people with disabilities.
- Ability to serve in an advisory and supportive role.

2.1.2. Accessibility Certifier

Knowledge:

- Personal experience with disability (either through direct interaction with people with disabilities or as a person with a disability) to enhance understanding of accessibility needs and barriers.
- Knowledge of accessibility-relevant laws and policies.
- Knowledge of accessibility-relevant criteria and standards.
- Specific knowledge about accessibility and implementation practices.
- Working experience as an accessibility consultant to identify and address the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.
- Knowledge and understanding of evaluation procedures

Skills and Competencies:

- Effective communication skills for engaging with authorities and businesses.
- Competence in assessing compliance or non-compliance with accessibility standards.

- Ability to conduct evaluation and inspection procedures.
- Expertise in a specific field (e.g., IT/technology) and ability to collaborate with other experts or specialized certifiers to assess accessibility.
- Strong teamwork and cooperation skills.
- Awareness and dedication to ensuring accessibility.

2.2. Results of the national focus group in Italy

2.2.1. Accessibility Consultant & Accessibility Certifier

Professional Profiles and Skills

Competencies and Training

- Interdisciplinary Knowledge

Participants emphasized the need for consultants and certifiers to have a comprehensive understanding of both technical standards and the human aspects of accessibility. This includes familiarity with legislation, ergonomics, human physiology, and psychology.

- Practical Experience

Hands-on experience in various environments, such as hospitals, workplaces, and educational institutions, is crucial. Internships and experiential learning were suggested as essential components of training programs.

- Creating Networks

Building networks and relationships with various stakeholders, including people with disabilities, other professionals, and organizations, is essential for effective practice.

Challenges and Suggestions

- Gap Between Theory and Practice

One significant challenge identified was the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Participants suggested that experiential learning, such as internships and practical projects, should be integral to training programs.

- Customized Solutions

Accessibility solutions must be tailored to individual needs. For instance, the requirements of a deaf person who uses sign language differ significantly from those who rely on lip-reading. Personalized approaches are necessary to address diverse accessibility needs effectively.

Role of the Accessibility Consultant

- Evaluation and Implementation

The consultant must be able to assess accessibility needs, identify priorities, and recommend both technological and non-technological solutions. They should be capable of supporting organizations in creating accessible materials, spaces, and services.

- Continuous Learning

Keeping up-to-date with compensatory tools and scientific and technological developments in accessibility is vital. Consultants should be proactive in learning and applying new knowledge to their practice.

Role of the Accessibility Certifier

- Validation and Improvement

The certifier's role is less intuitive but equally important. They must ensure that accessibility measures are correctly implemented and maintained. This involves creating and reviewing accessibility indicators and supporting continuous improvement efforts.

- Standard Compliance

Certifiers must be knowledgeable about current legislation and standards. They play a crucial role in validating that the steps taken by organizations meet legal and normative requirements.

Diverse Needs and Customization

- Avoiding One-Size-Fits-All

Participants highlighted the importance of avoiding one-size-fits-all solutions. Accessibility measures should be customized to meet the specific needs of individuals, recognizing the diversity within disability experiences.

- Examples and Scenarios

Practical examples, such as designing spaces in hospitals to accommodate different types of disabilities, were discussed to illustrate the importance of personalized solutions.

Interdisciplinary Approach

- Collaboration Across Fields

An interdisciplinary approach, combining knowledge from architecture, IT, occupational therapy, and other fields, is necessary to address the multifaceted nature of accessibility. This collaborative approach helps in designing comprehensive and effective accessibility solutions.

- Continuous Professional Development

Professionals should engage in ongoing learning and stay updated with advancements in accessibility tools and technologies. This ensures that their practice remains relevant and effective.

Inclusive Mindset and Sensitivity

- Empathy and Understanding

Professionals in accessibility roles must be empathetic and sensitive to the needs of individuals with disabilities. This requires a mindset shift from viewing disability as a problem to understanding it as a variation of human experience.

- Engagement with Disabled Communities

Engaging directly with people with disabilities and learning from their experiences is crucial. This engagement helps in developing practical and effective solutions that truly meet the needs of the community.

2.3. Results of the national focus group in Spain

2.3.1. Accessibility Consultant

Accessibility Consultant	
Knowledge	**Skills**
1. Deep understanding of Accessibility Standards and Guidelines & Knowledge of inclusive design principles and best practices	1. Technical Skills: - Web development and mobile app development with a focus on accessibility. - Use of accessibility testing tools and software.
2. User Experience (UX) and Universal Design: Principles of designing for various disabilities & Inclusive design methodologies.	2. Evaluation and Testing: - Conducting manual and automated accessibility audits. - Usability testing with assistive technology users.
3. Assistive Technologies: Familiarity with different types of assistive technologies (screen readers, voice recognition, etc.).	3. Communication and Training: - Educating and training teams on accessibility. - Advocating for accessibility and communicating solutions effectively.

4. Content Accessibility: Techniques for making various forms of content accessible (text, images, video, etc.).	4. Problem-Solving: - Identifying and addressing accessibility issues.
5. Legal and Compliance Issues: awareness of local and international accessibility laws and regulations.	5. Project Management: - Managing accessibility projects and coordinating with teams.
	6. Research and Analysis: - Keeping up with the latest accessibility research and trends.

2.3.2. Accessibility Certifier

Accessibility Certifier	
Knowledge	**Skills**
1. Authoritative understanding of Accessibility Standards and Guidelines & Specific criteria for certification and compliance.	1. Evaluation and Auditing: - Expert-level proficiency in conducting thorough manual and automated accessibility audits. - Ability to identify and document compliance with accessibility standards.
2. Certification Processes and Criteria: Detailed knowledge of certification standards and processes & Familiarity with the requirements for different levels of certification.	2. Certification Processes: - Conducting certification assessments and determining compliance status. - Preparing and issuing official certification reports.

3. Legal and Compliance Issues: Comprehensive understanding of the legal implications of accessibility compliance and certification.	3. Attention to Detail: High level of meticulousness in assessing compliance and certification readiness.
	4. Technical Proficiency: - Use of advanced accessibility testing tools and methodologies. - Deep understanding of technical implementation of accessibility standards.
	5. Communication: - Communicating certification results and requirements clearly and authoritatively. - Explaining complex accessibility standards to stakeholders.

2.4. Results of the national focus group in Sweden

2.4.1. Accessibility Consultant

Based on translations of notes taken of quotes by the participants. Comments made digitally in Miro included.

- Knowledge needs to be accessed by multiple employees in multiple fields without taking too much time and without having to spend too much money. Some sort of on-demand education modules would be a lot of help.
- Consultants will need extensive knowledge within all sorts of areas. Maybe it’s more important to give tools for them to learn along the way.
- Knowledge about how to do something and how others should do something might be more important than just executing the task by yourself. That way societal change is possible with the distribution of knowledge.

- A need for consequence analyses of bad accessibility. The consultant needs to be able to calculate and be precise about consequences regarding the implementation of their work.
- A need for someone to be able to interpret laws, not only in Sweden but abroad as well. In this case the consultant might not need to know every single law, only where to find the law and which laws are interconnected.
- A consultant needs to know how different disabilities work and the how they can co-exist.
- A consultant will need a great understanding of how to meet people.
- A need for in-depth knowledge about a specific case. For example, specific demands within a company or documents regulating the work in a regional authority.
- Motivate how usefulness is the goal with accessibility.
- A consultant will need to know how to coordinate a process.
- Besides the consultant's work, there needs to progress in the standardization work so solutions can more easily be implemented widely. This will make the work of the consultant more graspable as they will find solutions in multiple fields without having in-depth knowledge about every specific matter.
- Access to- and communication with other experts. Knowledge on how to find and work with them.

Specific knowledge that Consultants will need and should be taught about, depending on field of work.

Indoor- and outdoor accessibility

- Laws, regulations, standards
- Cooperation and communication throughout a process. Tie the process together.
- Integration of accessibility in university and VET-programs
- A better understanding of how people function in different areas.

Transportation

- Laws, regulations, standards

- Education needed for multiple working groups, from bus drivers to planners to politicians making decisions regarding transport.
- A better understanding of the consequences of un-accessible transportation.
- How laws and standards can be interpreted to be able to reach utility rather than the bare minimum demand.

Communication with public and private sector

- Very legible material, Pictograms
- Sign language and the implementation as a language.
- Creativity but with a readable standard

Web accessibility

- WCAG and the Accessibility Directive (EAA)

Digital banking business

- To find other ways than digital solutions for the customers.
- Legislation
- UX-Design from apps to websites to any written information.

Digital libraries and archives

- Often open source or public material. Needs to be easier to search for democratic reasons.
- Hybrid libraries with physical copies should be accessed easier depending on what the recipient needs to be able to retrieve the information regardless of disability.
- A consultant should have knowledge in searching in these types of forums, as it creates a greater understanding and can be helpful for a customer.

Software and apps

- EAA among others, needs to be ahead with digital accessibility and integrate it well into different operator systems such as IOS and Android.

Education materials

- Very legible materials and pictograms
- Personally adapted reading materials

Accessible courses

- Adaptations
- New technology and flexibility in the use of them

Distance and online education

- The right tools for the student to structure their work: routines, digital programs and communication.

Employment and workplaces

- Broaden the perspective of who is employable and in what context, some might be a great asset but needs help.

Accessible environments and cultural heritage

- Needs changes in the law, more specifically about cognitive disabilities.
- Important with information (Legibility, pictograms etc)
- A consultant will need to make places also accessible to get to, not only on site accessibility.

Accessible tourism, sports and recreational activities

- Calculate economic winnings, accessibility attracts tourist.
- Should use accessibility as a way of constructing tourist and recreational activity spots.
- Information in other languages, needs to understand for example how people from other countries read. There might not be a universal solution for all types of written information.

Accessibility in safety and evacuation-situations

- More focus on cognitive accessibility
- Cooperation between multiple actors

2.4.2. Accessibility Certifier

Based on translations of notes taken of quotes by the participants. Comments made digitally in Miro included.

The role as certifier was discussed more than worked with, we believe there needs to be separate discussion or more discussion concerning this role for discussions to deliver practical needs and solutions. Therefore, the discussion is summarized and only a few needs/solutions are listed below.

- Certifiers gets confused with other types of certifications.
- Is it possible to certify in every field. It's not possible to know everything. A certifier needs to be specific to be on target.
- The focus might be needed to shift towards areas rather than sectors of society. I.E – certify laws, language, coordinating etc. Not to certify a consultant in one specific area.
- A certifier needs insight in what is useful and not. Have the consultant followed the law or have they also fulfilled needs concerning usefulness.
- The certifier needs to validate what is good and what is not.
- The consultant on the other hand needs to make sure that the process is right.
- Will need the assistance of an AI or similar, it could cause a huge advantage.
- Viktigt att kartlägga I flera steg, hur samordnar olika sektorer?
- Important for a certifier to map multiple steps of a process and their respective work orders.
- "Knowledge about what it's about."
- Generative AI – Large language model
- The question of effectivity – it will be hindering or impossible due to costs to find experts and certifiers for all different sectors.
- Needs to build awareness through communication tools.
- Needs to know physiognomics.
- Needs to know the difference between adaptions/aids and universal design.

- Should have the same knowledge as a consultant but would need to have a system for documenting accessibility. One case can be the praxis in other cases where accessibility needs to be assessed.
- Needs to be in close contact with people with lived experiences, they could even be the certifier in some cases.

2.5. Results of the cross-national focus group

2.5.1. Accessibility Consultant

Knowledge:

- To know national and international legislation and accessibility regulations and guidelines in all areas and sub-areas.
- To have in-depth knowledge of state-of-the-art assistive technologies and tools for people with disabilities.
- To have the knowledge and the ability to interpret technical and legal standards about accessibility.
- To have a psychological and pedagogical background to tailor educational programs to the specific needs of students with disabilities.
- In-depth knowledge of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- In-depth knowledge of best practices and universal and inclusive design principles.
- In-depth knowledge of requirements and standards of digital accessibility (e.g., websites, mobile phones, etc.).
- Understanding the wide range of disabilities (physical, sensory, cognitive, etc.) and how they affect individuals differently.
- Knowledge of common aids and accommodations used to support students with various disabilities, both digital and non-digital.
- Familiarity with remote and in-person learning environments and how different settings impact students with disabilities.
- Practical experience gained through years of practice after the educational part.
- Practical experience with people with disabilities or personal experience as individuals with disabilities.

- Specialization in disabilities or areas of accessibility (e.g., education).
- To have the perspective of the social model of disability, considering disability as a result of the interaction between a person and the environment.

Skills and competencies:

- To have analysis skills
- To be able to identify accessibility barriers, evaluate and perform comprehensive and detailed accessibility audits
- Ability to consider diverse perspectives
- To listen to the people with disabilities and take into account their needs
- Capability of networking with the association of disabilities
- Ability to work in teams and collaborate in a multidisciplinary environment
- Project management skills
- Ability to get information and collect resources
- Problem-solving skills
- To be able to give consultation to all relevant stakeholders (e.g., organizations, enterprises) and design practical and cost-effective solutions tailored to various situations, including disability type (e.g., cognitive disabilities) and accessibility fields (e.g., educational settings, museums)
- Ability to negotiate accessibility proposals with competent authorities based on the existing needs.
- Ability to take a coordinator role.
- Ability to evaluate the accessibility of websites and applications.
- Ability to design or advise on educational tools and materials that are accessible and effective for diverse learners.
- Expertise in recommending and implementing the most feasible devices and assistive technologies for various disabilities.
- Empathy
- Understanding and sensitivity to the needs of people with disabilities
- Effective communication skills
- Resilience
- Patience
- Flexibility
- A mindset of lifelong learning and professional development

- To be proactive
- To know how to treat people with different disabilities
- Strategic thinking
- Critical reflection

2.5.2. Accessibility Certifier

Knowledge:

- To know national and international legislation and accessibility regulations and guidelines in all areas and sub-areas.
- To have in-depth knowledge of web accessibility, state-of-the-art assistive technologies, and tools for people with disabilities with the view of a controller
- Expertise and being up to date with emerging technologies.
- To have psychological and pedagogical knowledge.
- Knowledge of educational and technological tools.
- Understanding the wide range of disabilities (physical, sensory, cognitive, etc.) and how they affect individuals differently.
- Knowledge of inclusive design, universal design principles, and accessible products and environments.
- Same knowledge with Accessibility Consultant to assess the delivered projects.
- Knowledge of existing information resources and ability to find and gather relevant data.
- To have the perspective of the social model of disability, considering disability as a result of the interaction between a person and the environment.

Skills and competencies:

- Conduct assessments and audits for hotels, restaurants, and other attractions.
- Excellent communication skills to provide technical and cost-effective solutions to the stakeholders (e.g., companies).
- The ability to work in teams and collaborate in a multidisciplinary environment.
- Ability to interpret the legislation, review the environment, and propose a comprehensive, tailor-made set of parameters to the stakeholders (e.g., companies, private or public structures).

- Ability to conduct thorough assessments of existing facilities to determine their current level of accessibility.
- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to listen to the people who use applications and solve every problem.
- The capability of networking with the association of disabilities.
- Experience as an Accessibility Consultant and operating at a secondary level, assessing accessibility rates in various sectors to identify areas where efforts must be intensified to achieve better results.
- To verify whether the established standards about accessibility have been implemented.
- Constant dialogue with people with disabilities is needed to verify that accessibility is provided.
- To be able to certify that the educational material and educational programs are in line with the specific needs of the students.
- Project management skills.
- Ability to verify if accessibility consultants' proposals and interventions are coherent with the accessibility standards.
- Capability to understand, analyze, and interpret accessibility issues, considering the needs of people with disabilities.
- Empathy and commitment to inclusion
- Patience
- Resilience
- Critical reflection
- A mindset of continuous learning and professional development
- Strategic thinking
- Adaptability
- To be proactive

2.6. Summary of the five focus group outcomes

2.6.1. Accessibility Consultant

Accessibility Consultant	
Knowledge	**Skills and Competencies**
1. Content Accessibility - Techniques for making various forms of content accessible (text, images, video, etc.).	**1. Analysis and evaluation** - Identify accessibility barriers - Conduct comprehensive and detailed audits (manual and automated)
2. Accessibility legislation, regulations, and Guidelines/ National and European policies for all accessibility areas, **e.g.:** - Indoor- and outdoor accessibility - Transportation - Digital banking	**2. Evaluation and implementation** -Assess accessibility needs -Identify priorities -Recommend technological and non-technological solutions -Evaluation of websites and applications
3. Best practices and universal and inclusive design principles - User Experience (UX) - Universal design for various disabilities & Inclusive design methodologies	**3. Interpretation of national and international Accessibility Laws and Standards for practical application**

4. State-of-the-art assistive technology - Assistive technology products (screen readers, voice recognition, etc.). - Capabilities and limitations of the available assistive technology products	**4. Soft skills** - Resilience, Patience, Flexibility, Adaptability - Problem-solving skills - Strategic thinking - Critical reflection - Be proactive - Creativity
5. Digital accessibility standards and requirements (e.g., websites, mobile phones, etc.) - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) - Accessibility Directive (EAA)	**5. Project management skills**
6. Spatial accessibility - Methods to make physical spaces accessible (e.g., elevators). - Understanding of how people function in different areas (Indoor- and outdoor accessibility)	**6. Research, analysis, and collection of information and resources**

7. Educational accessibility - Common aids and accommodations used to support students with various disabilities (digital and non-digital) - Familiarity with remote and in-person learning environments and how different settings impact students with disabilities.	**7. Continuous learning and professional development** - Keep up with compensatory tools and scientific and technological developments in accessibility
8. Practical experience including: - Interaction with people with disabilities - Experiential learning, such as internships and practical projects - Experience in the field of accessibility after education - Experience in various environments, such as hospitals, workplaces, and educational institutions	**8. Effective consultation and tailored accessibility solutions** - Provision of personalized, practical, and cost-effective solutions to relevant stakeholders (organizations, enterprises, governmental bodies, etc.). - Negotiation of accessibility improvements - Addressing diverse needs
9. Interdisciplinary knowledge including: - technical knowledge and legislation - ergonomics and human physiology - psychological/educational background - knowledge of all accessibility areas	**9. Designing and negotiating accessibility proposals with relevant authorities**

10. In-depth understanding of disability - Social model of disability and interaction between people and environment - Disability types (physical, sensory, cognitive, etc.), characteristics and needs	**10. Coordination of accessibility processes** -Coordinator role -Ensure that processes are correctly managed and executed
11. In-depth understanding of accessibility importance, expertise, and specialization in accessibility fields (e.g., web accessibility, spatial accessibility) - Understanding of accessibility issues, specific cases, and inaccessibility consequences (e.g., inaccessible transportation)	**11. Design of accessible educational tools and materials** - Design or advise on accessible educational tools and digital programs - Provision of lifelong and distance learning
	12. Expertise in assistive technologies and accessible digital solutions - Technical skills: web and mobile app development - Recommend and implement the most feasible devices and assistive technologies for various disabilities - Flexible with new technologies

	13. Creating networks and collaborating for adequate accessibility **-** Networking with the association of disabilities, organizations, other experts, and relevant stakeholders - Communication skills - Work in teams and collaborate in a multidisciplinary environment
	14. Empathy and awareness towards people with disability - How to treat people with different disabilities - Understanding and sensitivity to the needs of people with disability
	15. Prioritizing usability in accessibility solutions - Find other ways than digital solutions for the customers (digital banking business) - Focus on making physical environments accessible - Use accessibility as a way of constructing tourist and recreational activity sports

2.6.2. Accessibility Certifier

Accessibility Certifier	
Knowledge	**Skills and Competencies**
1. Knowledge of national and international accessibility-relevant legislation and policies - Regulations and guidelines in all areas and sub-areas - Accessibility-relevant criteria and standards - Comprehensive understanding of the legal implications of accessibility compliance and certification	**1. Evaluation and auditing for various accessibility areas** (e.g., hotels, restaurants, and other attractions): - conducting manual and automated audits - checking compliance and non-compliance with accessibility standards, legal and normative requirements - creating and reviewing accessibility indicators - using advanced accessibility testing tools and methodologies - ability to interpret legislation - attention to detail: high level of meticulousness in assessing compliance and certification readiness.

2. Certification processes and criteria: - Detailed knowledge of certification standards and processes - Familiarity with the requirements for different levels of certification	**2. Accessibility certification and level of accessibility determination** - Preparing and issuing official certification reports - Conducting certification assessments (e.g., for educational programs) - Validating accessibility measures are implemented and maintained
3. Expertise in universal design and practical accessibility solutions - Understanding the difference between adaptive aids and universal design - Inclusive design principles - Practical examples (e.g., designing hospital spaces to accommodate different types of disabilities) - Accessible products and environment - Specific knowledge about accessibility and implementation practices	**3. Cooperation skills and collaboration in a multidisciplinary environment** - Cooperation with experts from different fields, such as Architecture, IT, Occupational therapy - Cooperation with specialized certifiers
4. In-depth knowledge of web accessibility, state-of-the-art assistive technologies, and tools for people with disabilities with the view of a controller	**4. Expertise in an accessibility field** (e.g., IT/technology)

5. Psychological and pedagogical knowledge	**5. Problem solving skills** - Ability to solve the existing accessibility problems - Foresight to identify upcoming accessibility barriers
6. Educational and technological tools - Being up to date with emerging technologies and tools	**6. Strategic thinking – Project management skills** - Mapping the steps of a process
7. Comprehensive understanding of disabilities and accessibility needs **-** Deep understanding of various disabilities (physical, sensory, cognitive, etc.) and how they affect individuals differently - Personal experience with disability (either through direct interaction with people with disabilities or as a person with a disability) - Perspective of the social model of disability (disability as a result of the interaction between person and environment)	**7. Communication skills for:** - engaging with authorities and businesses - proposing a comprehensive, tailor-made set of parameters to the stakeholders (e.g., companies, private or public structures). - explaining complex accessibility standards to stakeholders. - communicating certification results and accessibility requirements - networking with people with disabilities and associations to take into account their experiences, understand their needs and verify accessibility is provided

8. Practical experience in assessing accessibility projects - Same foundational knowledge as consultants to evaluate completed projects. - Practical experience as an accessibility consultant first - Knowledge and understanding of evaluation procedures	**8. Ability to verify if accessibility consultants' proposals and interventions are coherent with the accessibility standards and ensure usability**
9. Knowledge of existing information resources and ability to find and gather relevant data.	**9. Empathy and commitment to inclusion and accessibility provision**
10. Targeted Certification in Specific Areas of Expertise - It is not possible to be specialized/certified in every field - Specialize to ensure precision and effectiveness	**10. Mindset of continuous learning and professional development (e.g., accessibility tools and technology)**
	11. Adaptability and customization of accessible solutions regarding the individual needs of people with disabilities
	12. Patience, resilience, and critical reflection

3. Conclusions for the five focus groups

The results derived from the five focus groups provide diverse perspectives yet demonstrate a general consensus on the core knowledge and skills required for the Accessibility Consultant and Accessibility Certifier professions. The findings emphasize the necessity for theoretical and technical expertise, particularly in understanding disability, the individual needs of people with disabilities, and the barriers they face, alongside methodologies to effectively address those barriers. Key knowledge areas include creating accessible materials, understanding Accessibility and Universal Design principles and guidelines, accessibility relevant legislation, and assistive technology.

Accessibility Consultants and Certifiers are expected to possess specialized knowledge in specific accessibility fields, such as digital, spatial, and educational accessibility. They should be able to recognize existing barriers, possess strong project management skills, and demonstrate advanced capabilities in problem-solving, accessibility assessment, and formulating solutions tailored to the individual needs of people with disabilities. Critical competencies identified include information gathering, legislative interpretation, effective stakeholder communication, and negotiation skills to facilitate the implementation of practical solutions.

Accessibility Consultants should fulfill a supportive and advisory role, utilizing their expertise to guide stakeholders in addressing accessibility challenges. Accessibility Certifier skills focus on assessing compliance with accessibility standards, legislation, and normative requirements. This professional specialty necessitates competencies, including the application of accessibility testing tools and methodologies, the preparation and issuance of official certification reports, and the execution of certification assessments. Accessibility Certifiers should also be competent in validating the coherence of consultants' proposals with established accessibility standards and ensuring the usability of implemented solutions.

4. Consultation

4.1. Objectives

The primary objective of the 3-day consultation was for project partners' personnel to thoroughly discuss the findings of the focus groups conducted under Task 3.1 on the knowledge and skills that Accessibility Consultants and Accessibility Certifiers should possess, connecting them to the learning outcomes and skills that need to be developed through the curricula. The consultation also aimed to draw initial recommendations for incorporating these insights into the curricula.

4.2. Participants

A total of 32 participants engaged in the 3-day consultation for Task 3.1. Specifically, 26 project partners' personnel participated on the first day of the consultations, 24 on the second day, and 23 on the third day. The representative bodies and countries represented by the participants are presented separately for each day in the table below.

Consultation day 1 (26 participants)	Consultation day 2 (24 participants)	Consultation day 3 (23 participants)
1 participant from Politecnico di Torino (POLITO)- Italy	1 participant from Centro Superior de Formación Europa Sur SA (Cesur)- Spain	1 participant from KTH Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)- Sweden
2 participants from Centro Superior de Formación Europa Sur SA (Cesur)- Spain	1 participant from Confederación Española de Personas Con Discapacidad Física y Orgánica (COCEMFE)- Spain	1 participant from Centro Superior de Formación Europa Sur SA (Cesur)- Spain

2 participants from UCERT Monoprosopi IKE (UCERT)- Greece	1 participant from Città Sotto Scacco (CSS)- Italy	1 participant from Confederación Española de Personas Con Discapacidad Física y Orgánica (COCEMFE)- Spain
1 patricipant from Association of Inf. Technology Companies of N. Greece (SEPVE)- Greece	1 participant from Futuregames- Sweden	1 participant from Città Sotto Scacco (CSS)- Italy
1 participant from Smarteching Education IKE (SmT)- Greece	1 participant from Begripsam AB (Begr) - Sweden	1 participant from Futuregames- Sweden
1 participant from Confederación Española de Personas Con Discapacidad Física y Orgánica (COCEMFE)- Spain	2 participants from Parque Tecnologico de Andalucia SA (PTA - Málaga TechPark)- Spain	1 participant from Begripsam AB (Begr) - Sweden
1 participant from Città Sotto Scacco (CSS)- Italy	4 participants from University of Macedonia, Greece (UoM)	2 participants from Parque Tecnologico de Andalucia SA (PTA - Málaga TechPark)- Spain
1 participant from Futuregames- Sweden	1 participant from Gnomon Pliroforikis AE (Gnomon)- Greece	4 participants from the University of Macedonia- Greece (UoM)

1 participant from Begripsam AB (Begr)- Sweden	1 participant from HABI diseño accesible SL (HABI)- Spain	1 participant from Gnomon Pliroforikis AE (Gnomon)- Greece
2 participants from Parque Tecnologico de Andalucia SA (PTA - Málaga TechPark)- Spain	1 participant from UCERT Monoprosopi IKE (UCERT)- Greece	1 participant from HABI diseño accesible SL (HABI)- Spain
4 participants from University of Macedonia, Greece (UoM)	1 participant as Web accessibility consultant- Spain	1 participant from UCERT Monoprosopi IKE (UCERT)- Greece
1 participant from Gnomon Pliroforikis AE (Gnomon)- Greece	1 participant from Hellenic Hoteliers Federation (POX) - Greece	1 participant as Web accessibility consultant- Spain
1 participant from HABI diseño accesible SL(HABI)- Spain	2 participants from REMOOVE Srl (REM)- Italy	1 participant from Hellenic Hoteliers Federation (POX) - Greece
1 participant as Web accessibility consultant- Spain	1 participant from Cámara Oficial de Comercio e Industria de Granada (COCIG) -Spain	2 participants from REMOOVE Srl (REM)- Italy
1 participant from Hellenic Hoteliers Federation (POX) - Greece	1 participant from Ente di Ricerca e Formazione (ERIFO)- Italy	1 participants from Cámara Oficial de Comercio e Industria de Granada (COCIG) -Spain

1 participant from REMOOVE Srl (REM)- Italy	1 participant from KTH Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)- Sweden	1 participant from Ente di Ricerca e Formazione (ERIFO)- Italy
1 participant from Cámara Oficial de Comercio e Industria de Granada (COCIG) -Spain	1 patricipant from Politecnico di Torino (POLITO)- Italy	1 patricipant from Politecnico di Torino (POLITO)- Italy
1 participant from Ente di Ricerca e Formazione (ERIFO)- Italy	1 participant from Region of Central Macedonia (RCM)-Greece	1 participant from the Association of Inf. Technology Companies of N. Greece (SEPVE) - Greece
1 participant from KTH Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)- Sweden	1 participant from the Association of Inf. Technology Companies of N. Greece (SEPVE) - Greece	
1 participant from Region of Central Macedonia (RCM)		

4.3. Procedure and discussion points

The project partners' personnel engaged in a three-day consultation, with each session lasting approximately three hours. The consultation was conducted via the Zoom web-conferencing platform, coordinated by Doxa Papakonstantinou, Associate Professor at the University of Macedonia. Before commencing, participants were informed that the sessions would be recorded and requested to provide consent for their participation.

The first day of consultation started with the coordinator summarizing the work already completed for Task 3.1 of the project. This included carrying out five focus groups—four national and one cross-national—whose objectives and total report had been previously shared with all participants. The coordinator also reminded the aim of the consultation:
"The findings of the focus groups will be discussed extensively and in-depth in the consultation in order to be linked to the learning outcomes and skills that need to be developed through the implementation of the curricula. The consultation will play a decisive role in shaping the proposed courses that will be included in the curricula."

The consultation deliverable was also mentioned:
"The deliverable of the consultation will be a report related to the consultation conclusions that will be accompanied by recommendations made by the project team in order to be applied in the curricula."

Over the course of the consultation, seven different curricula were to be discussed, each focusing on an accessibility field. The first two days were dedicated to discussions on the professional profile of the accessibility consultant, while the third day focused on the accessibility certifier. At the beginning of each consultation and throughout the meetings the coordinator mentioned the seven accessibility areas of discussion (i.e., Core Accessibility, Digital Accessible Transformation, Educational Accessibility, Employment Accessibility, Cultural Heritage Accessibility, Tourism (including recreation and sports) Accessibility, and Accessibility in Security and Evacuation Situations), as well as examples of accessibility issues included in the mentioned areas. This information was also available in the chat of the Zoom meeting during the sessions.

Although participants had already received the final report of the focus group findings, the coordinator also provided a brief overview of the key points and encouraged participants, as experts in accessibility issues, to share their insights and further comment on the results based on their knowledge and experience. They were asked to link the findings to the learning outcomes and skills required for the curricula and to propose courses or modules that could be integrated into the curricula.

Throughout the consultation, participants were asked to state their names and affiliations when taking the floor to facilitate the transcription. They were encouraged not only to present their perspectives but also to engage in discussions with each other. The coordinator consistently reiterated the main objectives of the consultation, encouraging participants to relate the findings to the application in specific lessons or modules for the curricula. The same procedure was followed in all three days of the consultation.

5. Results on crucial discussion topics

5.1. Participants' perspectives on accessibility consultants

On the first and second days of the consultations, participants engaged in extensive discussions about the knowledge and skills an Accessibility Consultant should possess across all sectors. Initially, they identified general competencies, followed by specific competencies relevant to each sector. Participants agreed that core accessibility could be an introductory unit for the other six courses rather than a separate area. Their feedback also led to recommendations on the structure and content of the curricula that the Accessibility Consultant should attend. The outcomes of these discussions are summarized in the tables below. Key participant statements are presented in quotes and italicized for emphasis.

General skills and courses for all accessibility areas	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**
1. Knowledge about disability as a prerequisite to entering the courses	- Establish entrance requirements for accessibility programs, such as exams or interviews, to assess applicants' existing knowledge and genuine interest in the field. This ensures that participants have a solid understanding of accessibility and are motivated to

	engage deeply with the course content from the start.
2. Empathy and understanding	-Create awareness in curricula about working with people with disabilities. - Answer a questionnaire before and after the course to measure the engagement of the trainees to the accessibility subject about empathy towards the people who are experiencing everyday boundaries.
3. Designing according to universal design principles.	Specific lessons about universal design in all areas.
4. To promote accessibility methodology (e.g., for teachers)	Introductory lesson on general accessibility and related needs throughout all the curricula.
5. Knowledge about the different types of disabilities, their characteristics, and a big overview of their needs.	A lesson on general knowledge of disability, the types of disability, the characteristics, and the needs, which apply to all the seven curricula.
6. Knowledge about national and EU legislation about accessibility, guidelines, and the rights of people with disabilities	-Lessons should give them some indication of what they can do or where to search to acquire more knowledge in a specific area. -Provide trainees with key information about regulations.
7. Knowledge about how the human body functions—its basic motor and cognitive processes—in order to be	

easier to apply this knowledge across various fields, including accessibility.	
8. Knowledge of local support associations and specialized staff and the ability to communicate with these associations in order to take expert guidance on specific disabilities, ensuring that he/she can offer accurate and tailored solutions.	A lesson that will prepare them to communicate and negotiate with companies about changes concerning accessibility.
9. To know where to refer to (e.g., administrations) for specific answers or complaints about a public or a non-public place that is not accessible	
10. To know information about grants in order to inform relevant stakeholders about which kind of grant they can ask to make a space accessible.	
11. To have critical thinking and be able to create flexible solutions	
12. Knowledge about accessibility and disability terminology.	Establish clear, common rules for discussing accessibility among course participants and ensuring everyone understands the appropriate language and terms related to disability and accessibility. Include a lesson dedicated to defining and aligning these terms with European accessibility directives, ensuring

	consistency and clarity throughout the program.
13. Knowledge about AI communication and tools	A lesson on how to communicate with AI and how to use useful AI tools to enhance the learning process and job outcome (it should be included in all the lessons)
14. Ability to test the effectiveness of their decisions and solutions - Set their own KPIs	- Guidelines and directions to help trainees develop their own plans - Providing checklists to monitor the whole procedure and see where there is room for improvement - Practical experience in a laboratory, practical guidance for them on how to make physical spaces accessible.
15. To build a culture of inclusion and acceptance of diversity	A general theoretical framework for inclusion and exclusion.
16. Basic knowledge of pedagogy, sociology, psychology, and culture.	Reference to information for individual reading.
17. Problem-solving and practical experience	-Lectures followed by workshops. -Scenarios/case studies and practical exercises. -Feedback from people who have worked on these scenarios (e.g., people with disabilities, other experts) - To teach based on the extreme user perspective *("So, if you have two*

	extreme users, you have the one that never faces an issue with anything and the one who experiences big issues with a product or anything else.") to help trainees find accessible solutions and information sources.
A general proposal on curricula was to incorporate a methodology of connectivist pedagogy, as diversity of opinions, networking and looking for non-human sources supporting a more networked, collaborative, and dynamic learning experience.	

Digital accessible transformation	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**
1. - To know how to test accessibility in mobile apps and digital documents. - To understand how assistive technology means work on a computer or mobile phones (e.g. screen readers such as VoiceOver and Talkback)	- How to navigate (e.g., in websites) using assistive technologies through a mobile phone. - Introduction to the tools commonly used by blind or visually impaired people. - Theoretical knowledge (e.g., WCAG) and practical/hands-on experience with assistive technologies to learn how they work.
2. Knowledge of the European Accessibility Act 2025 about digital accessibility (e.g., ATMs, digital services, digital devices,	

digital libraries, etc.) *(also applying to other curricula)*	
	Suggested lessons to be provided by curricula in five stages: *"1. Regulations, guidelines, existing laws but also recommendations for further service provision* *2. Existing tools and software* *3. Implementation in a laboratory setting* *4. How and where to search for additional sources if they need more information on how to implement something* *5. Evaluation of the outcome's effectiveness and functionality."*
	Practical experience with people with disabilities in navigation through the web. *"Give them a chance to talk with people with disabilities and try to understand how they navigate through the web and what they consider as accessible and comfortable navigation."*

Educational accessibility	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**

1. Knowledge of the available assistive technology, educational, and accessibility aids.	
2. Knowledge about physical accessibility in educational units and classrooms.	Interactive simulation lessons that foster empathy (e.g. with the use of wheelchairs or walking blindfolded and talking about the obstacles they faced).
3. - Knowledge about students with invisible disabilities and how to handle them. - Take into account the effect of culture and multiculturalism	Lessons incorporating information about invisible disabilities and culture. *(They could also be included in a general course about disability)*
4. Communication and interpersonal skills - To contact the responsible person in the educational unit (special needs office at the university, school directors, etc.) and be informed about the kind of disabilities of the students - Contact a person individually to meet his or her educational needs. - Collaboration with the teachers (e.g.,to explain	To be taught to present information or proposals in an understandable way

what are the best strategies to teach the given users.) - Communication with other parties to come to the desired accessibility results. - To have the ability to collaborate with teachers, administrative staff, and municipal authorities, ensuring they know how to find, implement, and assess accessibility solutions.	
5. - Knowledge and skill in writing a text or giving out information in an understandable way. - Knowledge about inclusive principles and different methodologies that can be used in the classroom.	
6. Along with the accessible material and everything else provided to the students, a consultant should deal with evaluation, grading, and biases and consult teachers about equal treatment and discrimination policies.	A consultant must be taught about guidelines and certain themes that are important to pass on to others about how they should treat students with disabilities.

7. Ability to negotiate with relevant government bodies and stakeholders to secure the necessary support for individuals with disabilities.	
8. To have the knowledge to demonstrate what a student with disability needs and what's actually available that can support the student.	

Employment accessibility	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**
1. Communication skills and ability to consult and coordinate with associations, employers, and people with disabilities. - Communicate the problems and the solutions with the employer and the rest of the workplace - Work as a facilitator to help people with disabilities find the information/information sources they need and contact with associations that can help him.	

2. Ability to create the work profile of a person with disability - taking into account their right to adaptations (e.g., taking breaks, teleworking, assistive technology) - helping the employee with a disability to get to work and be able to work effectively. - taking into account all the possible difficulties and specialized needs (e.g., physical accessibility in the workplace, how to get to work, financial aids needed for transportation, etc.).	To include in the curriculum task analysis, a detailed analysis of the tasks that the person with a specific disability has to do when he works in a specific workplace (e.g. transportation to get to work, entering a building, work on a computer, reading printed or digital documents). *"We make a list of everything, like a sequence of his tasks. And then, we analyze the person. What can he already do without any kind of equipment or facility? He can do this and this like all the other people. What is, what are his weaknesses and what are his strengths? And then we try to figure out what are the problems that we have to solve."*
3. Empathy and human-centered thinking - develop a culture of inclusivity - not focusing on the disability, but on the skills, of the person with disability	- Theoretical lessons on inclusive principles at the workplace. "*We need to foster a workplace culture, not just policies. A consultant must raise awareness about inclusive workplaces, and the curricula could include a list of places as an example of how we can develop that culture."* *- "A consultant has to help the employer with their responsibilities according to the EU legislation, the*

	practical responsibilities of the employer, and actually how do you make an inclusive workspace and people with disabilities integrate into that workplace."
4. To understand and care for accessibility issues in the whole lifecycle of employment from searching for a job, hiring process, being in the workplace, upskilling and career advancement. - Inform people with disabilities how to manage each stage	A lesson about how we function at the workplace, what needs people with disabilities have at the workplace, and how we can assist them.
5. Knowledge about assistive technology in the workplace	
6. Reminding employers of their obligations, as well as the advantages of hiring people with disabilities (e.g., morality, advantages for brand quality, customers, and financial benefits)	
7. - Critical thinking - Ability to see from different points	

8. An accessibility consultant should be aware of the state incentives. "*legislation on disabilities, on incentives for hiring people with disabilities."*	

Cultural Heritage accessibility	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**
1. Knowledge of accessibility and heritage legislation	
2. Knowledge of assistive technologies that apply to places of cultural heritage	Training on apps that collect information about the environment. *"Apps that help you collect all the information about the environment, so the consultant can help governments or museums find the best application or suggested application and which kind of information we need to collect. And he can tell which is the physical information that will help them to be more accessible in terms of physical barriers."*
3. To know and be able to suggest affordable, realizable, and implementable solutions (e.g., VR, AR, XR, and MR	

extensions) in museums and places of cultural heritage.	
4. To have the ability to create solutions that are sufficient for multiple establishments and fields.	
5. To be able to create a service or an experience for people with disabilities in places that are not accessible in terms of physical accessibility. *“Physical accessibility to cultural heritage places is not always possible due to historical buildings that don't easily change -those places that don't allow to do any change, may be what a consultant can offer to the place is a service or experience.”*	

Accessibility in Tourism	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**
1. Strong communication skills and the ability to provide services to all parties (e.g., to individuals, to groups, and to the hoteliers)	
2. To have the ability to coordinate with different partners in different fields	
3. Knowledge and ability to use interpreter technologies in order	

to be able to communicate with people that speak different languages (e.g., AI tools- real-time translation)	
4. To have the ability to collect and provide information about tourist attractions that are already accessible and their surrounding place and routes leading to them.	
5. To know important details (e.g., accessible entrance, seats) about transportation means in order to organize groups	
6. Knowledge of legislation and best practices that hotels have to implement in order to be friendly to customers with disability.	Teach the consultant to persuade relevant stakeholders that accessibility is a good investment (e.g., calculate profits, suggest grants) “ *at least gain some basic knowledge in how to account for this and to make it known that this is actually good for you and your business or for your city or for whatever it might be within the sector.*”
7. A consultant has to motivate and educate the staff and the manager on how to appropriately treat people with disabilities, focusing on empathy, problem-solving, and clear communication.	- Create lessons that will provide the accessibility consultant with all the requirements to meet the inspiration and give motives to the people that they are about to train in the future (e.g., the stuff from a hotel)

	- Basic sociological, psychological, and pedagogical lessons. *"In these lessons, we need basic knowledge about sociology, psychology, education, or pedagogy. To know how to resolve problems, conflicts, and maybe some behavior that we didn't understand. Or how people can behave themselves."*
8. To be able to train and consult the hotels and operators to provide about their environment, detailed and accessible information.	
9. They should have the knowledge to support the hoteliers in building a tourist offer, including marketing, communication, and service delivery for accessible tourism.	Navigation of successful models like "Wheel the World," which specializes in accessible tourism
10. The consultant should ensure a smooth tourism experience for individuals with disabilities by focusing on accessible infrastructure and experiences (e.g., creating accessible routes to the point of interest, providing a map of accessible toilets in the city, etc.).	

11. To be able to give general instructions but also individualized consultation in case of need to a person or a group of people traveling in a specific area.	

Accessibility in security and evacuation situations	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**
1. A consultant has to identify important information (what to do) about emergency situations and then inform the various other bodies who work within a particular institution or group.	-A lesson about guidelines and checklists -Provide him/her with standard practices for different types of evacuation from different emergencies and different spaces, so they can address that in different settings.
2. Extensive knowledge of the legislation regarding the evacuation and the emergency plans that their state has.	A lesson about legalization, standards, and evaluation plans that include people with different disabilities.
3. Know what kind of signs there are and how they are used in case of evacuation	
4. A consultant has to know which person is responsible for the safety in an environment, in order to collaborate with him/her to change or to add something	

to make the safety more inclusive and accessible.	
5. A consultant has to identify important information about emergency situations and then inform the various other bodies who work within a particular institution or group.	
6. To know the needs of people with disabilities and to be able to inform others (e.g., in a workplace) about those needs and how they can assist in case of emergency.	Phone applications can be used, and people who participate can add feedback about their experience. Visual aids and video materials can also be used.
7. Knowledge about personal security rights and regulations (e.g., GDPR)	
8. - To have the ability to understand when they need to look for additional help for certain things rather than try to rely on their own knowledge - A consultant must know what are the limits of his/her work and responsibilities	
9. To know which are the support systems and who he/she can address to when he/she needs help.	

10. Knowledge about how to inform, how to approach people according to their disability and make accessible all the information required about emergency situations.	

5.1.1. Summary of the results compared to focus group findings

The results of the five focus groups align with the discussion in the consultations regarding the knowledge and skills that an Accessibility Consultant should possess. The consultation discussions did not result in any disagreement with the results of the focus groups. Still, they enriched and highlighted some basic knowledge and skills that an Accessibility Consultant should have. Key areas included understanding different types of disabilities, national and EU legislation, universal design, and critical thinking for flexible solutions. Participants stressed the importance of practical experience, including working with assistive technologies, communicating with various stakeholders, and creating inclusive environments across sectors such as education, employment, tourism, cultural heritage, and security.

The recommendations for curricula focused on comprehensive introductory lessons, practical labs, use of applications, and communication skills. The need for clearly defined rules and terminology and knowledge of AI tools was also emphasized. Additionally, participants suggested teaching consultants how to promote accessibility as a beneficial investment for businesses and cities. Overall, the discussions underscored the necessity of a holistic approach to training Accessibility Consultants, combining theory, practical application, and a strong focus on inclusion.

5.2. Participants' perspectives on accessibility certifiers

An in-depth examination of the seven accessibility areas was conducted to propose specific applications for practical integration into the seven curricula. While participants mainly discussed the curricula and the required knowledge and skills of certifiers in broad terms, specific examples from various accessibility areas were provided to

illustrate key points. A significant consensus emerged between the focus group findings and the consultation discussions on the essential knowledge, skills, and competencies required for accessibility certifiers. The following table provides an overview of the units discussed in both settings, supplemented by the views, commentary, and additions from expert partners in accessibility, including their suggestions for curriculum application.

Skills and courses for all accessibility areas	
Knowledge and skills	**Applications for curricula**
1. Knowledge of the procedures and stages needed for an accessibility certifier to follow and to test accessibility during the procedures and not only after the creation of material/services/infrastructure - This will also give the opportunity for universal design principles to be implemented and tested and avoid errors and low quality.	Include in the curricula a checklist or a set of guidelines: → For what certifiers have to deal with at these various stages. → To ensure something is fully accessible through the whole person's experience at present and for the future e.g., "*for **digital accessible transformation** all the information related to this topic should be included, as well as a checklist to look upon and verify that the certifier has completed all the tasks, and all the views or all the uses that he should look at*"

2. Knowledge of the available tools to test accessibility and the ability to search for the information needed	Guidelines on where information are available (e.g. websites, videos from people with disabilities) or a checklist for the same purpose (e.g., "*have I contacted the national or even international bodies that can help support what I need to know for a certain thing?*")
3. Knowledge of the available tools people with disabilities use	
4. Knowledge of assessment tools and ability to interpret the effectiveness of the evaluation, e.g., using certain measurements *"I think there's an understanding of the metrics that you're going to use to assess the various things that you're doing and whether those are using those tools… I think that compliance is the driving force that will make sure that the institutions hold themselves to a certain standard. So, that becomes the driving force. But then the second level is to actually have some kind of metrics that you're using to assess what you've done and the improvements you have to continuously make."*	→ Practically use evaluation tools in laboratory/practical lessons → Make measurements setting KPIs for what we try to achieve. → Teaching of methodologies of how to check the metrics

5. Expertise in an accessibility field: *"Of course, the certifier must have a general knowledge, but I think that it's normal, as I have said, that one takes the decision to put all his efforts maybe in one concrete field than in others."*	
6. Communication skills with: - People with disabilities to know how to treat them and take into account their needs - Accessibility consultants to mention inaccessibility issues and discuss solutions - Stakeholders and institutions (e.g., educational) to encourage them to adopt specific indicators	Lesson (readings or seminars) on interpersonal skills for communication with people with disabilities as part of core lessons for all accessibility areas. ("*How do we talk, which terms do we use and why? What does that mean and for whom?"*) *Example of a topic for lessons about emergency and evacuation situations:* To know how to communicate to people with disability the evacuation plan for different buildings or maybe to inform different companies or businesses about communication with people with disabilities in evacuation situations.
7. Practical experience in certification	Laboratory course with case studies: - To evaluate the actual projects and point out the exact things that should be changed (e.g., core accessibility: evaluate accessibility for a building and pinpoint what could be changed)

	**Note: The course can also take place outside the laboratory depending on the accessibility area*
8. Knowledge of national and international accessibility-relevant legislation and policies and certification processes and criteria. But also emphasis on usefulness taking into account people with disabilities in evaluation.	A core course dedicated to the legislation upon each of the seven accessibility areas, e.g. educational legislation, vocational legislation, etc. Training (as a core course) on a set of skills to conduct user-centered evaluation and assess usefulness with the participation of people with disabilities in the curricula as interested parties. *e.g. "If you're assessing the accessibility of a website, you have WCAG and the standards to look at, but then there might be things still from the usefulness of it from the first person perspective."* → Use of "***barrier walkthrough***" as a method: "*where you go through different probable obstacles that you might interfere with. You often do this together with people with lived experiences. It could be anywhere from* ***looking at a website*** *together and just mapping out the different things that are both good and bad and who should not be there, who should be there, stuff like that. But it could also be* ***walking***

	***through**. We've done this in **open spaces** in cities, so it's squares and stuff like that."* Barrier walkthrough in **public transport** can also be used.
9. Empathy, patience and understanding	A theoretical background to create empathy and understanding, also with a participatory design in learning, e.g. with the use of case studies of people with disabilities facing inappropriate treatment due to lack of empathy or videos with this content.
10. - Understanding of different disabilities and accessibility needs: looking at the whole range of cases and not focusing on one kind of disability - Understanding the differences in needs between cognitive, physical, and sensory and what accessibility means for each of them	
11. Knowledge of acceptable and unacceptable terms about disability and different disability models	→ Disability terms used in the European Union → Presentation of the acceptable and unacceptable ways to refer to people with disabilities and explanation.

	→ Presentation of different models and approaches of disability (e.g., social model and its importance, medical model of disability, functional disability, etc.)
12. Practical experience as an accessibility consultant *“I think it's good that it's a senior position to say. I mean, you get all this knowledge from being a consultant and then you kind of translate it into being some sort of authority because a certifier, you could say, is some sort of authority. And to be that, you need to really be in line with what you're doing... And that's why I think it's great that they've been a consultant before, because then they know all of these knowledge criterias. Then they will know all of this and they will also have some creativity.”*	
13. Project management skills: - How do you actually assess, make reports - How do you actually deliver this information to the various stakeholders so they all can feel that	

they're getting the relevant and useful information they can act on	
14. Employment accessibility (also applying to all accessibility areas): - Ability to assess social obstacles	Include techniques for social obstacles assessment in the curricula
15. Cultural heritage and tourism accessibility (also applying to all accessibility areas): - Ability to give a very objective description of the state of accessibility taking into account the type of disability of the person. - Assure that the accessibility level stated by businesses, hotels, etc. is real.	Lessons including giving a detailed description of the accessibility level, e.g. for accessibility in hotels (lighting, room size, elevator etc.), in restaurants (silent places), signs for navigation in indoor spaces. Checking that information on websites about accessibility level is real. Barrier walkthroughs can also be useful here.

16. Security and evacuation situations Mentioned as the most important area after core accessibility with many existing accessibility obstacles.	
- Knowledge of the signs used universally for security and evacuation situations.	Teaching all the signs about security and evacuation situations (e.g., green signs, flickering lights, etc.).
- Ability to evaluate if the staff (e.g., in businesses) is trained for security and evacuation situations to help people with disabilities and provide them information and guidance.	Practical session called simulation of evacuation in different ways for different disabilities (important especially for cognitive disabilities).

5.2.1. Summary of the results compared to focus group findings

Compared to the focus group discussions, the third-day consultation placed additional emphasis on practical experience, particularly involving direct interaction with people with disabilities, which was emphasized as critical. Participants stressed the need for detailed descriptions in accessibility evaluations, the importance of testing utility, and the systematic assessment of evaluation processes. Interpersonal skills were also identified as essential for effective practice. Newly introduced topics included the evaluation of social barriers (e.g., within the workplace) as part of evaluating accessibility, education on disability-related terminology and models, and specialized knowledge concerning evacuation procedures and emergency signage.

The proposed skills and curricula for accessibility consultants and certifiers were largely aligned, with significant overlap in core knowledge and skills. Additionally,

participants suggested that Core Accessibility could be included as an introductory module to serve as a foundational element for all other areas of accessibility within the curriculum.

6. Conclusions of the Consultation

Both rounds of discussions between the participants underlined the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the training of Accessibility Consultants and Accessibility Certifiers, highlighting the need for both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Some participants suggested the establishment of entrance requirements for accessibility programs, such as exams or interviews, to assess applicants' existing knowledge and genuine interest in the field. Key focus areas include a deep understanding of various disabilities, national and EU legislation on accessibility, and universal design principles. Critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to develop flexible solutions tailored to the needs of people with disabilities are highlighted as essential competencies. Both discussions also agree on the importance of practical experience, particularly working with assistive technologies and engaging directly with stakeholders across sectors such as education, employment, tourism, and cultural heritage. Effective communication and collaboration with relevant parties are seen as vital for implementing inclusive solutions.

The consultations added depth to the focus group discussions by stressing the importance of direct interaction with people with disabilities and evaluating social barriers, in all the areas. They also introduced specialized knowledge on evacuation procedures and emergency signage. In terms of curricula, both groups advocate for a well-structured program that includes introductory lessons on accessibility, hands-on practical laboratories, and communication skills. Additionally, there was an emphasis on teaching consultants to promote accessibility as a valuable investment for businesses and residential areas, ensuring that the training equips them to create inclusive environments effectively. Overall, both discussions call for a holistic training approach that blends theoretical foundations with practical applications, ensuring Accessibility Consultants and Accessibility Certifiers can address various accessibility challenges.