



Capacity building programme for capacity builders in the EU macro-regional strategies

Module 2

**29-30 November 2021 (09:00-13:00 CET)
online**

Background

EU macro-regional strategy (MRS) is a multi-agent system inhabited by many autonomous agents – countries and regions, ministries, agencies, municipalities, national and pan-regional institutions, financing programmes, civil society organisations and groups; we call them all ‘stakeholders’. In the systems theory language, they are ‘interconnected elements or actors’, and each one somehow relates and contributes to the MRS mission. Therefore, their agendas and resources must be purposefully streamlined towards a shared purpose.

The ultimate intent of the four MRS is to serve as an instrument of cohesion in Europe. This is a given, foundational piece of MRS DNA – on which we build them as systems that gather and align resources for producing outcomes such as cohesive policies, aligned institutional agendas, more efficient use of financial resources, and broader stakeholder inclusion. However, this is easier said than done – because each stakeholder is a system per se, with its own intent (vision), politically informed environment (conditions, context), dedicated resources, formed performance models, capability to adjust and respond to change, preferred outcomes and evaluation criteria.
Stakeholders create systems in a larger system!

MRS is formed upon variety and diversity of systems. Taking into account the aim of the “Capacity building programme for capacity builders in the MRS”, in Module 2, we will be exploring a Thematic Area as the system. Thematic Area¹, in many ways, is a fractal reflection of the MRS as a system:

- it has thematic objectives (missions) of its own,
- it is in service of cohesion, i.e. aim to align national and institutional agendas of their members,
- they resource the implementation of actions in the macro-region.

The Thematic Area as a system gives enough complexity to explore it to search for better outcomes and overall health cues. Practising systems analysis will enable you to explore any other systems at play in the MRS and the MRS as such.

Welcome to the MRS systems practice!

¹ In different MRS called policy area, priority area, action or pillar.



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Day one

Monday, 29 November 2021

08.45 – 09.00

Checking in, setting up

09.00 – 10.00

Opening the meeting

What have you observed in terms of mindsets in your MRS system? How do they resonate with yours?

Warm-up exercise

How come there are so many views on what a MRS is and what it is for? What awareness is needed for gaining maximum clarity and for successful work with mission orientation in MRS?

Systems practice: introduction and process ahead

Briefly on systems and systems' behaviour
How we will work in Module 2 and module 3

The objective of the session: Introduce systems practice thinking and approach. Briefly present systems concept and systems behaviour.

10.00 – 11.00

Basic blueprint at the heart of a system:

How is a system set up to deliver its value: from Intent through to Outcomes.

- Are there 'broken systems'?
- How systems adapt?
- Why is it difficult to change a system?

Reflections from the MRS practices.

11.00 – 11.15

Coffee break

11.15 – 12.15

Designing a Thematic Area as a system

Thematic Area:

- 1) Intent (value added, thematic objectives) and DNA (foundational principles).
- 2) Delivery: how are the desired outcomes created?
 - Quality of structure and steering;
 - Quality of Action Plan, targets and indicators;
 - Quality of implementation;
 - Other factors of success (such as information, communication, leadership and speed of learning)
- 3) Feedback loops: monitoring and evaluation.

This is a practical exercise; please bring post-it notes and pencils.

12.15 – 12.45

Reflection and conclusions

Where are the power centres (levers) in the Thematic Area system?

12.45 – 13.00

Brief check-out
Plan for Day 2



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Day two

Tuesday, 30 November

09.00 – 09.30

Check-in and reflection after Day 1

09.30 – 10.45

Bringing back the Thematic Area system built on Day 1:

- SWOT analysis of the present-day system: a Systemic Problem Statement.
- What are your inquiries/questions to the system?
- Externalities: what questions does the system need to ask a wider environment?
- Whom can it ask these questions?

10.45 – 11.00

Coffee break

11.00 – 12.00

The Thematic Area system viewed from different perspectives: the narratives

- by Thematic Coordinator
- by Member of Steering Group
- by Steering Group
- by National Coordinator
- by National Coordinators Group
- by funding programme
- by external stakeholder interested to contribute.

12.00 – 12.45

What patterns have you observed?

What might they be telling you in terms of support to Thematic Areas and Thematic Coordinators?

Plan for Module 3 and homework.

12.45 – 13.00

Check-out and closure