2024

MCEU Project Onboarding document

D1.1 – DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR PROJECT COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

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Contents

1.   Introduction

The digital collaboration platform chosen for use in the MCEU Project is Microsoft Teams (hereafter Teams). We have chosen Teams specifically to ensure that all project partners are fully equipped to collaborate effectively and able to access the latest information.

Teams offers several useful tools and features that are particularly advantageous for the project collaboration and communication management. Teams can be accessed via web browser as well as the Teams-app for computers, tablets, and smartphones. This enables all project partners to access project information from wherever they are located.

This onboarding document will describe the use of Teams in the MCEU project, focusing on key features and cross-functional collaboration and communication.

2.   Platform overview

Teams is an integrated collaboration platform that facilitates cross-project collaboration, making it easier and more efficient. The platform aims to streamline email communication among project partners, thereby enhancing cross-functional communication effectiveness. Teams ensures that it's possible to communicate across the project via either the chat function, general posts, or Teams meetings, with or without a camera. The channel and folder functions further enable sharing and editing various types of project documents, including sharing common notebooks or brainstorming sessions.

To maintain a good management overview in the MCEU project, we will utilize various Microsoft 365 app tools, such as:

- Microsoft Planner
- Microsoft Calendar

By using Microsoft Planner integrated into the MCEU project Team, it is possible to delegate tasks and deliverables with direct links into the delegate's calendar and email inbox.

In the Microsoft Calendar function, each project participant can see the types of project meetings scheduled and when they occur.

Teams also allows for the option to record all online Teams meetings, ensuring that it is always possible to revisit a previously held MCEU meeting. This can be advantageous for strategic decision-making and discussions regarding deliverables.

In Teams, it will always be possible to access the latest project information and thus the newest version of a document. Teams allows users to see when a document was last updated and who is responsible for it.

With quality in mind the lead partner has determined that not all project participants will have editing rights for all documents. The lead partner will delegate responsibility rights according to their exact role in the project, see *6.1   Document collaboration.*

Figure 1

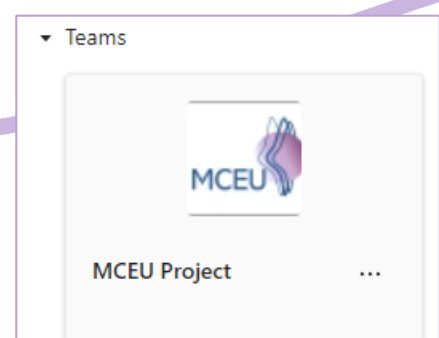The visual look of the MCEU Project team is shown in Figure 1.

3.   User Access and login

Each participant in the MCEU Project will receive their individual Teams access link by email, as depicted in Figure 2. With this link, they have the option to access the MCEU Project team via a web browser or the Teams app, provided they already have a Teams client installed. The email also includes a direct link to a page where they can download the Teams app if the participant does not already have it.

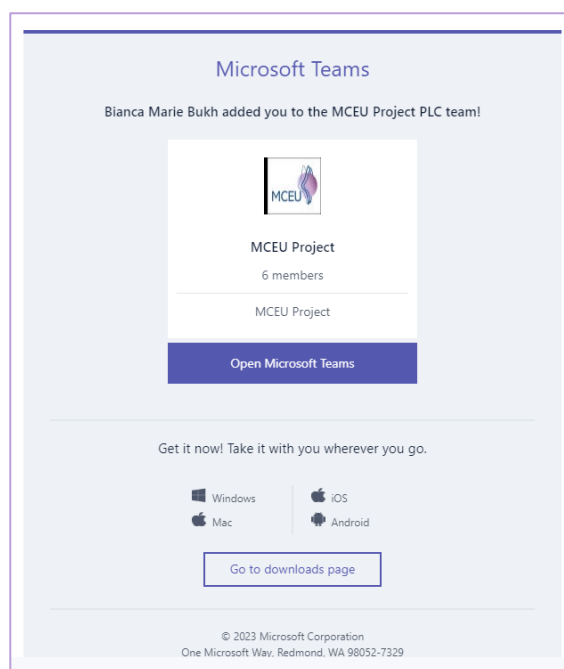The download page indicates the different platforms on which the app can be downloaded.

Figure 2

4.   Dashboard and navigation

The Teams platform is very intuitively structured. The MCEU Project will appear on the sidebar to the left of the Teams client frontpage, shown in Figure 3. The sidebar also allows access to the chat function, where you can chat with all MCEU project members, as well as access an activity function where there is an activity log for the MCEU Project. If Microsoft apps, as mentioned in *2. Platform overview*, are associated with the MCEU Project these accesses will also be found in the sidebar.
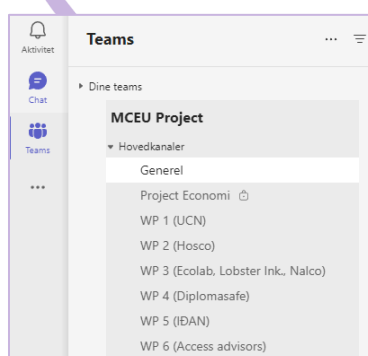

Figure 3

To access the MCEU Project landing page: Go to "My Teams" ➡ "MCEU Project" ➡ "General".

The first thing all project members of the MCEU Project team encounter when they open the "MCEU Project" team is a landing page, shown in Figure 4. On this landing page, the lead partner will continuously inform project members about general project facts, project progress, points of attention, or seek inputs. All project members can create posts on this page. The landing page is labeled as "posts" under the "General" tab.
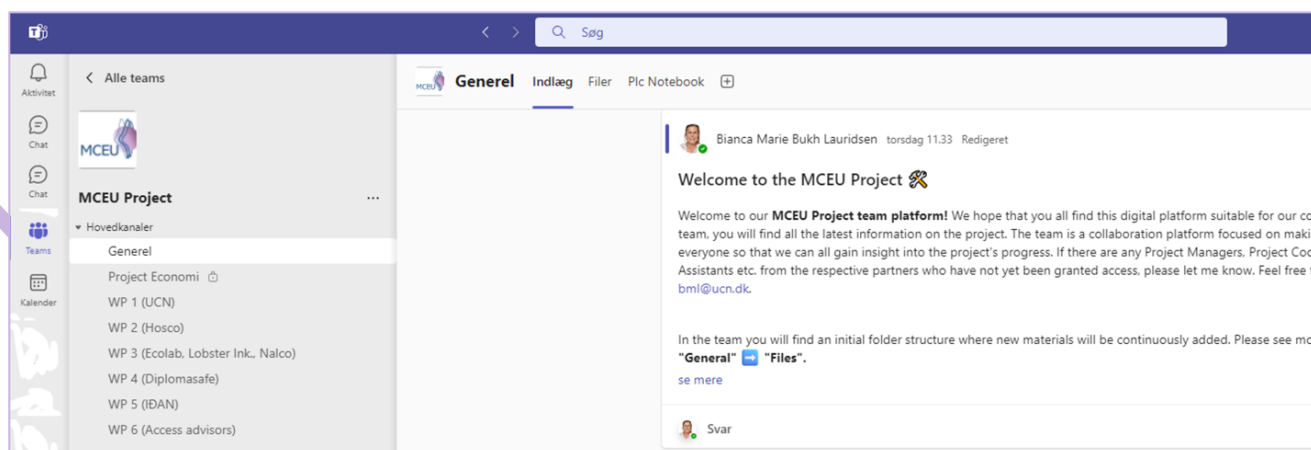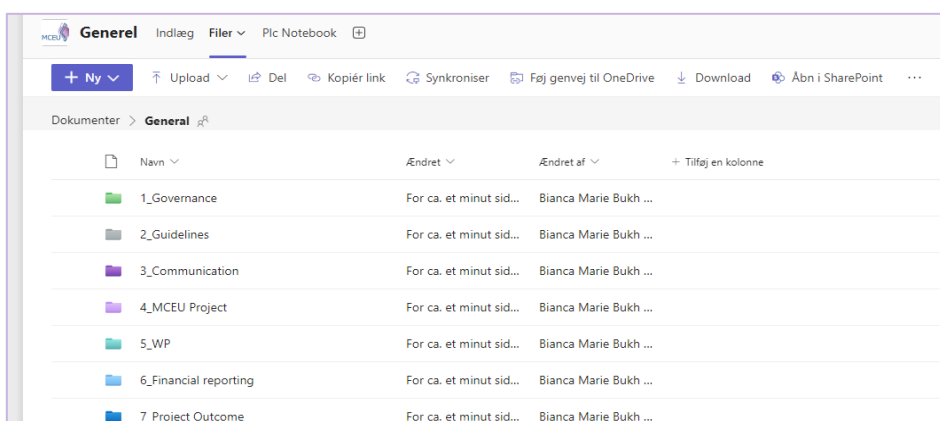

Figure 4

4.1 Folder structure

The main Channel "General" in The MCEU project team are created based on a simple folder structure, as shown in Figure 5, to make it easy for each project member to find the project materials they are searching for. Overall, the main folder structure consists of the following folders, each of which has a subfolder structure:

1. Governance
2. Guidelines
3. Communication
4. MCEU Project
5. WP (work packages)
6. Financial reporting
7. Project Outcome

Figure 5
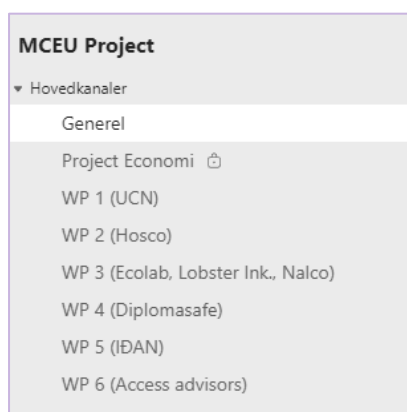
4.2 Project channels

Besides the main channel **"General"** the MCEU project team also has 7 other channels for project collaboration. These 7 channels are displayed in a channel list beneath the main channel, as depicted in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Each Work Package (WP) has its own channel, where the Task Force (TF) can collaborate, discuss, and develop tasks within the WP. Each WP leader is responsible for their respective WP channel, deciding on the use of folder structures, the utilization of Planner for planning WP tasks or main deliverables, and the use of a collaboration Microsoft notebook.

The WPs has its own timetables with dates for each deliverable. All project members can access these timetables.

Planner will be used for planning of the overall deliverables at each WP level. This enables every WP leader to see when the deliverable is due for final submission to the Commission, as well as when the deliverable is scheduled to be delivered to UCN for quality oversight.

Each WP leader will receive an email when a specific WP deliverable approaches its deadline. This will occur through Planner, see *5.2.2   Assignment of tasks/deliverables.*

All project members have access to the 6 WP channels, but the intention is that if one is not part of the designated TF in a particular WP, they should not edit the documents that are prepared and stored in the WP channels. If this creates issues later in the project, the lead partner has the option to close the WP channels so that only the TF and the lead partner have access, see *6.1 Document collaboration.*

Should the need arise for the use of additional channels, the lead partner always has the option to create and manage them.

The "Project Economic" channel is only visible to the project members responsible for regularly reporting financial metrics related to the project's progress. The padlock icon in the channel name indicates that the channel is private. The lead partner needs to grant access to the content of the channel.

5. Project Management & Communication

The lead partner has the responsibility to stay on track with the progress of the MCEU project and thereby to be observant of the quality of the project outcomes, as well as to monitor the risks that may affect the project. Fortunately, Teams has a range of features that, combined with regular project management expertise, can help ensure successful management of the MCEU project.

The management involves a systemic process to ensure high quality project outcome. This requires close communication across partners and ongoing follow-up.

To facilitate this process, the following series of meetings have been planned within the project:

- 6 Steering Committee meetings (every six months) throughout the project period.
- 36 Project Management Team (PMT) meetings (every month) except during the summer break.
- 50 Task Forces (TF) meetings.

If necessary, this series of meetings can always be extended.

5.1 Communication within the project

Communication between project partners (SC, AB, PMT, WP leaders, and TF) will primarily occur through Team calls, Team meetings, chat messages (individual or group/TF), and project posts, see options in Figure 7. The lead partner aims to utilize all the communication capabilities within Teams to ensure effective, secure, and documented communication. With overall quality in mind, Planner has a very useful function where it is possible to comment on ongoing tasks, which is particularly beneficial for internal TF quality reviews.

If necessary, it will also be possible to interact with the project partners via emails and telephone calls. The lead partner will introduce the various communication options available in Teams to reduce the number of emails and phone calls within the project.

All type of meetings within the project will be conducted as Team meetings. Team meetings have the advantage that participants can join regardless of their location in the world. Furthermore, it is also possible to record those Team meetings, so that all project partners can view or review the meetings that have already taken place.
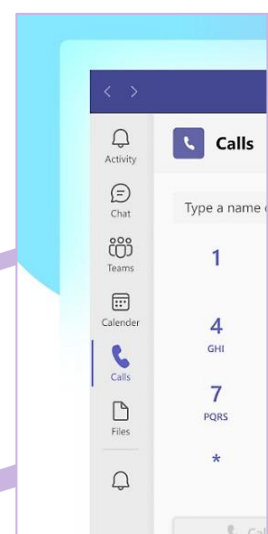

Figure 7

Every project partner can find their planned meetings in their MCEU Project team calendar, the meetings will also appear in their regular Outlook calendar.

5.2 Use of Planner

Utilizing Planner facilitates the assignment of tasks and deliverables, including setting finish dates, milestone dates, and quality review checklists. It also allows for assigning various responsibilities to a single task. The comprehensive functions of Planner streamline the management of the MCEU project. It provides the capability to track each task individually as needed. Additionally, using Planner as a visual Kanban board, as seen in the WP1 example in Figure 8, ensures collective ownership of the project's progress among project partners and TFs.
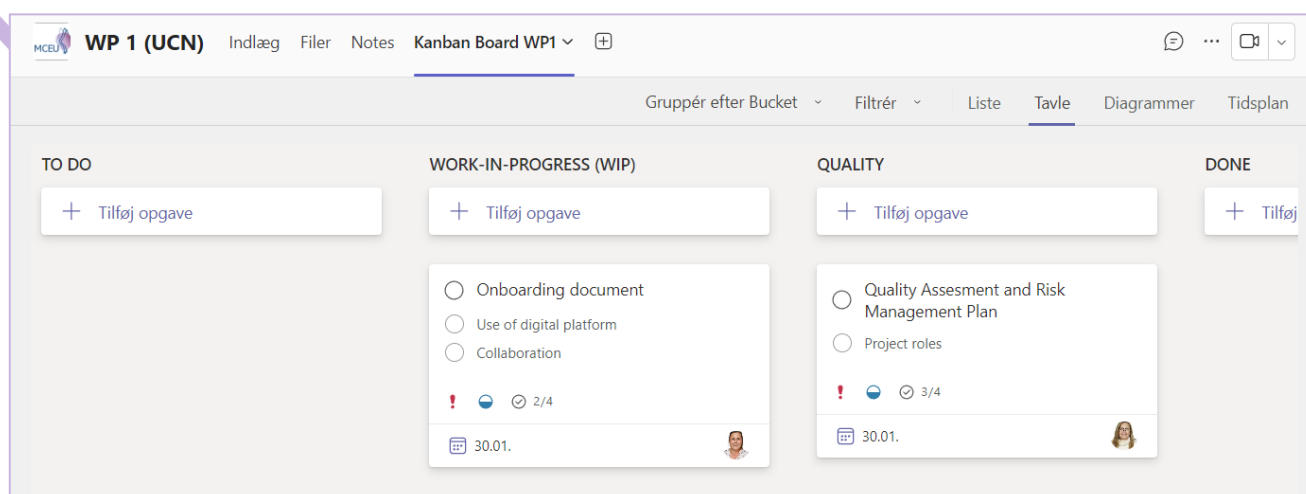

Figure 8

It is the responsibility of the WP leaders to maintain their own WP Planner, hereby also adding new tasks, utilizing quality checklists, tracking the progress of the WP, and involving the lead partner when necessary. If it is deemed that the PMT should be involved in decision-making regarding the project outcome, discussions, uncertainties, or challenges that may hinder meeting the time of submission to the Commission, then they should be included.

5.2.2 Assignment of tasks/deliverables

The lead partner is responsible for the creation of a Planner template in each WP and for assigning deliverables to the WP leader, as well as introducing them to the quality checklist for each WP deliverable. All WP deliverables will be displayed in the MCEU Project calendar and will be visible to all project members. The WP leaders are responsible for assigning tasks to their TF.

All tasks and deliverables created in a WP Planner will regularly send reminder emails to the assigned TF/PMT member. These emails serve as reminders for upcoming tasks or deliverables due for submission. If a task or deliverable exceeds its scheduled date in Planner, they will be marked in red on the Kanban board and indicated as overdue in the subject of the email.

6. Document Management

Good document management and implementation of an effective document management system will make it possible to increase productivity in the MCEU Project by reducing the likelihood of documents being overwritten, lost, or difficult to retrieve due to poor file naming or guidelines for document storage.

Teams allows for sharing and collaboration on documents. All project partners can create, edit, and share files. All files saved in MCEU Project teams or underlying channels are accessed under "Files" and are also stored in an associated UNC-SharePoint document library. The SharePoint setup contributes to ensuring good document management, see Figure 9 below.
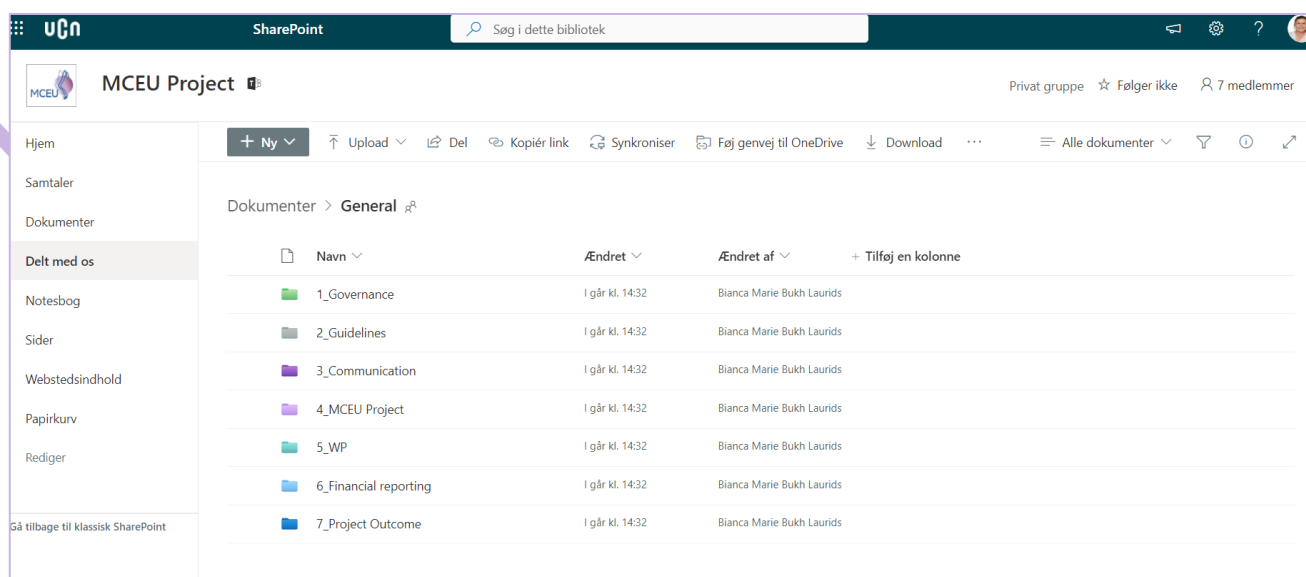

Figure 9

The MCEU Project guide describes how files are consistently named and where they should be placed according to the created folder structure, described in *4.1 Folder structure*. It will also describe how and when new main folders and subfolders will be created. As a rule, only the lead partner creates main folders and subfolders within the "General" channel.

6.1 Document collaboration

Teams makes it possible to collaborate on documents in real-time directly within the MCEU Project team. This is solely due to Teams' integration with the associated SharePoint document library. Collaboration on documents occurs using Office Online or the desktop versions of the Office programs. This enhances collaboration and fosters a sense of shared ownership for the project and its progress. Collaboration can take place in the following Office apps: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote

Access control is also a central element in good document management. As mentioned earlier, the lead partner is responsible for assigning permissions to each user (project partner). There will be differences in the permissions (seeing, editing, and sharing documents) granted to different project roles. This is determined in accordance with the quality assurance of the project's outcome. The documents that can be edited depend on their location in the folder structure. However, non-editable documents can always be downloaded from the MCEU Project team. If problems with file overwriting occur, the lead partner

can always change the permissions for the relevant file. It will also always be possible to restore deleted or previous versions of files saved in the MCEU Project team. The lead partner has full editing access to all files in the MCEU Project team.

6.2   Versions and backup

The associated SharePoint document library allows for locating all document changes, restoring deleted files, and creating multiple versions of a document. However, in the MCEU Project team, only the latest version will always be available. Version control can be particularly advantageous in relation to project changes or previously developed workflows. SharePoint also allows for the possibility of creating tags/links between different documents stored in the MCEU Project team. This promotes project understanding and collaboration among the various WPs.

The lead partner is the only one with full access to the MCEU Project SharePoint and will continuously ensure that the project's files are properly stored, thus ensuring all project material is securely stored and organized.

7.   Security and GDPR

Teams is developed and designed to handle good data protection, including managing sensitive information and communication. Teams complies with the highest international standards for data confidentiality and protection and is certified under ISO 27001, HIPAA, and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Microsoft has integrated security measures, including features in Teams aimed at ensuring compliance with applicable GDPR rules. These are as follows:

- Encryption: All communication in Teams is encrypted to protect sensitive data from unauthorized access.
- Access control: the lead partner controls who is granted access to the MCEU Project team, as well as who has access to which channels and documents.
- User rights: the lead partner manages which users (project partners) have which rights, including the right to share and edit documents, and share external links. This is part of the quality assurance of the project's work and in accordance with data security. The lead partner pays close attention to whether project partners have stricter policies or guidelines for the use of Teams; if so, these are considered in the development of the MCEU Project guideline.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the lead partner has recently started developing the MCEU Data Management Plan, including IPR management. This will be further described in deliverable *D.1.3 - Data Management Plan and IPR Management,* which will be submitted on March 31, 2024.

8.   Support

The lead partner is currently working on developing various guidelines for the use of Teams and pre-selected Microsoft. These guidelines, along with the MCEU Project guide, will assist project partners throughout the collaboration. UCN will regularly check in with project partners to address any questions or challenges they may have regarding the use of the MCEU Project Teams as a collaboration platform. Should any project partner have suggestions for the use of other Microsoft apps or different tools in the project, UCN is very receptive to these development suggestions, provided they can effectively benefit project collaboration.

All project partners likewise have access to assistance for basic usage of Teams via the Microsoft Teams Help & Learning site: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/teams