

## Session 8: Synthesis, Action Planning & Close (15:30–16:30)

### Objective

Consolidate the two-day training insights and guide participants in translating them into action in their own work. Participants will review key takeaways, share their personal facilitation action plans, and address any remaining questions or concerns. The session ends with evaluation of the training and a celebratory closure, reinforcing participants' confidence as facilitation champions.

### Review Key Learnings

Begin off the final hour with a quick recap game or presentation by participants. One engaging method: *"Facilitation Bingo"* – prepare bingo cards with key terms (active listening, Tuckman, ground rules, conflict resolution, stakeholder mapping, etc.). Draw definitions or examples from a hat and read them; participants mark the corresponding concept. It can be a fun refresher of jargon and ideas from across sessions. Alternatively, do a collaborative mind map: start with *"Effective Facilitation"* in the centre and ask participants to call out what branches/topics we covered (projecting it if possible). Ensure the main topics (role of facilitator, principles, group dynamics, inclusion techniques, planning tools, conflict management, multi-stakeholder, networks) all surface and are briefly discussed one last time. This solidifies the framework in their minds.

### Personal Action Plans

Ask a few volunteers to share the action step they wrote in Session 7. Provide feedback or suggestions if applicable. Encourage everyone to refine their plan: *"Take 2 minutes to add one more detail – perhaps a timeline or whom you need to involve to make it happen."* For example, one might say *"I will facilitate a meeting of our local agroforestry working group next month using a round-robin discussion and establishing ground rules at the start."* Another might plan *"I'll set up a WhatsApp group for my farmers by the end of this week to share agroforestry tips."*

Encourage realistic, short-term actions as well as longer-term goals (*"Over the next year, form or grow a regional network"*). If a certification of completion or follow-up is part of the, mention any criteria needed (like attending all sessions, demonstrating skills in exercises – presumably all have done that). Perhaps present the certificates at this point or mention they will be emailed, etc.

### Address Outstanding Questions

Open the floor for any final questions or scenarios participants want to discuss. Sometimes people have *"what if"* queries that did not fit earlier: *"What if I'm asked to facilitate but I'm also a stakeholder with opinions – how to balance that?"* or *"How can I convince my institution to let me spend time on facilitation?"* Provide your insights or let peers answer if they have ideas (often someone else may have faced similar issues). This reinforces the peer network. If time is short, you can collect questions on cards earlier and address a few common ones now.

### Evaluation

It is important to gather feedback on the training itself. Distribute a quick evaluation form or do a rapid feedback exercise. One quick method: a flipchart with two columns – *"What went well"* and *"Even better if."* Participants sticky note or verbally give one of each. Make the feedback experience fun: each person in a circle says one word



or phrase about the training (e.g., “Practical”, “Energetic”, “Too fast in parts”, “Inspiring”). This gives a pulse. If formal evaluation is needed, collect forms quietly while moving on to closing.

## Toolkit and Resources Reminder

Before closing, draw attention to the toolkit and reference materials provided. Quickly list them (perhaps they can be printed or in a digital packet). Emphasize useful ones like: *facilitation checklists, sample ground rules, conflict resolution flowchart, stakeholder analysis template, etc.*, that they can refer to. Mention any further reading or community links, for example the AF4EU website, to encourage continuing learning. Other examples include: “*We’ve included a link to Teagasc’s Facilitation Skills Manual which focuses on group facilitation techniques in adult learning and extension settings– it contains a wealth of participatory methods to supplement what we practiced.*” Encourage them to explore all of these resources and share with colleagues.



## Closing Activity

End on an uplifting note. One idea: “*Facilitator’s Pledge.*” As a group, create a short pledge or motto about how they will facilitate moving forward. You can seed it: “*We, the facilitators, will [ensure every voice is heard], [turn trees into thriving communities]...*” something symbolic. Or do a round where each completes the sentence “*As a facilitator, I commit to ...*” with one commitment (like listening more, being patient, etc.). Applaud each other for the commitments. Alternatively, a more low-key commitment could be a simple group photo with everyone holding a sign of their key word from the training (like “Inclusivity” or “Collaboration”) as a nice closing ritual (and a memory to share in the network).

Finally, it is important to thank everyone genuinely for their participation, insights, and energy. Acknowledge how much was covered in two days – it was intense – and that their engagement made it successful. Encourage them to keep supporting each other and to reach out if they need help implementing these ideas (*the trainer’s contact can be offered if appropriate*). End with a motivational thought: “*Great facilitators don’t just conduct meetings – they cultivate communities. I’m excited to see how you will help grow agroforestry communities that thrive. Together, you have the tools to turn stakeholder groups into true innovation networks, driving positive change for farms and forests.*”

Perhaps close with a relevant quote, e.g., “*If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*” – and note that their role is to help people go together, further. My personal favourite is “*a society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit.*”