Disability Inclusion Checklist for Infrastructure Projects

CHECKLIST INSTRUCTIONS

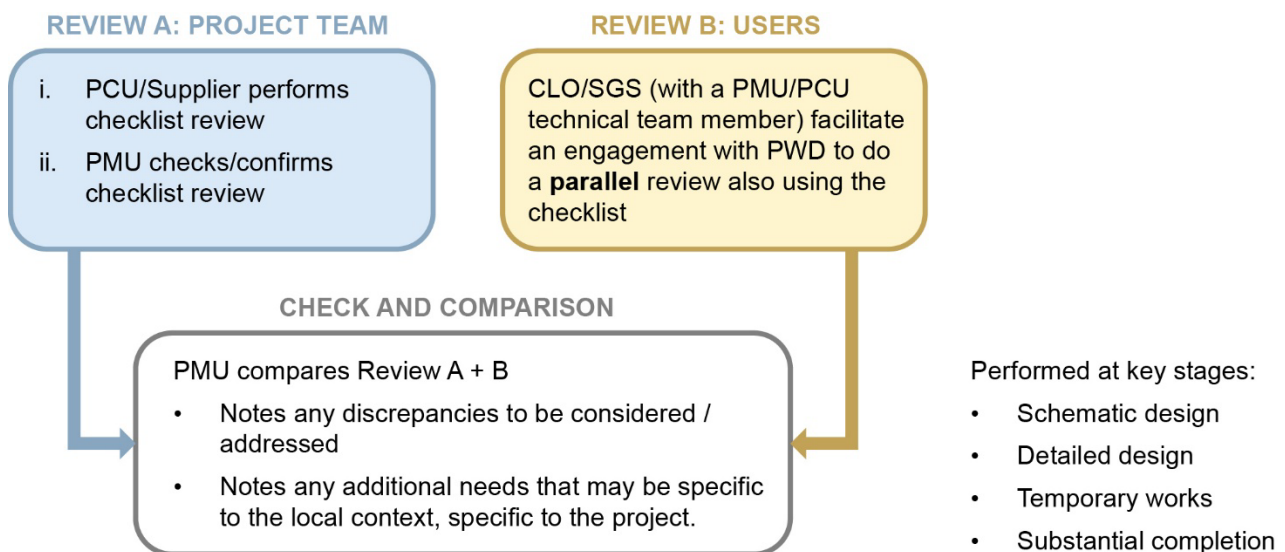Revised: August 2025

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Introduction

Purpose

The Disability Inclusion Checklist is intended as a helpful tool to highlight areas for improvement as a design is developed and constructed. It is to be used to perform two parallel reviews for infrastructure projects. Review A is a self-assessment performed by the consultants and Review B is a facilitated user-assessment workshop where the tool is used as a framework for discussion with PWD affected by the project.

The checklist form includes an abridged overview of relevant standards and guidelines related to disability inclusion under three themes: safety, access and comfort. The checklist is not comprehensive and does not replace any applicable standards including relevant building codes and sector-specific guidelines. Please refer directly to the codes, standards and guidelines applicable to a project for detailed information.

Reviews

REVIEW A: PROJECT TEAM

i. PCU/Supplier performs checklist review

ii. PMU checks/confirms checklist review

REVIEW B: USERS

CLO/SGS (with a PMU/PCU technical team member) facilitate an engagement with PWD to do a **parallel** review also using the checklist

CHECK AND COMPARISON

PMU compares Review A + B

- Notes any discrepancies to be considered / addressed
- Notes any additional needs that may be specific to the local context, specific to the project.

Performed at key stages:

- Schematic design
- Detailed design
- Temporary works
- Substantial completion

Personnel

At the beginning of the project select personnel who will be responsible for:

- Completing Review A – from the Supplier/Project Coordinating Unit (e.g. Design Consultant, Engineer Consultant, Construction Supervision Consultant). The individual should be well-versed in how to use codes and standards, with knowledge and experience implementing accessible and inclusive design preferred but not mandatory.

- Facilitating the Review B user-assessment workshop including contacting the relevant organization representing persons with disabilities – Community Liaison Officer or Social Gender Specialist from the PMU or Supplier. The individual should have experience facilitating community consultations and they should understand ethical protocols including informed consent.

Knowledge and experience working with vulnerable people, and PWD in particular, is preferred but not mandatory.

- Answering project questions for Review B – PMU or PCU team member with a technical background that includes detailed knowledge of the project should attend the user-assessment workshop to listen to PWD feedback and answer questions.

- Checking Review A and comparing Review A and B – from the Project Management Unit (e.g. Project Manager, Project Coordinator, Quality Control Officer);

For all the personnel listed above, it is advised that where they do not have previous knowledge and experience with accessible and inclusive design or working with PWD that they first complete training to include Universal Design Principals and Disability Rights Awareness.

Step-by-step guide: Review A

1. Decide and record which accessible code or standard(s) the project will adhere to.

2. Review the project-specific guidance for the project type (energy, water, road, port or agriculture).

3. Assemble the applicable information (e.g. drawings, specifications, schedules as applicable) if performing a desktop review

   • Safety – site plan and details of roads and paths; information on emergency and communication systems

   • Access – plans for paths/circulation for interiors and exteriors

   • Comfort – plans, details and schedules (e.g. washroom layouts and fixtures, bus shelter and seating designs, service counters, door hardware, controls)

4. Depending on the project's scale and complexity you may want to break up the review into smaller areas (highway upgrade from road X to road Y) or components (e.g. bus stops, crosswalks).

5. Review each item on the checklist against the documents and/or in the field (for temporary works and substantial completion) site, as applicable. Consider both public use and employee use (e.g. person working at and person visiting a service counter).

6. For each item with an asterisk, use the code reference to refer to the full code standard.

7. In the second column mark each item as one of the following: Yes, No, Partial or Not applicable.

8. Include notes where needed. These may include:

   • Why an item is not applicable (e.g. a toilet is not in the project scope)

   • How an item is partially met (e.g. drop over 24" has a 42" guardrail except in one location where it is 36" high).

   • Any reasons why an item cannot be met in full or in part (e.g. existing spatial limitations, natural slopes in the area, effects on an endangered species habitat).

   • Additional considerations that are not listed as items in the checklist.

9. For each of the three review pages in the checklist (Safety, Access and Comfort), consider the theme and how the project measures against the minimum standards holistically and assign an overall subjective score using a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = acceptable, 4 = good, 5 = very good. Half marks (e.g. 3.5) are allowed. Note that the item scores are not meant to be added up, and there is no pass / fail or minimum mark to achieve. The intention of the checklist is to review if any accessibility standards have been missed so they may be addressed in the project. Also, the checklist review is a record to note any reasons why accessible standards were not able to be met.

Step-by-step guide: Review B

1. <u>Organising the User Assessment meeting:</u> The Facilitator will organise the meeting including (1) determining the budget and costs; (2) contacting the relevant local disability organisation(s) or government departments to determine an appropriate date and time and to assist with contacting potential participants; (3) booking a sign-language interpreter where needed; (4) organising participant's travel and refreshments; (5) for desktop reviews booking a meeting location that is barrier-free (step free) with an accessible washroom near the room, with no steps between and with minimal distractions and that can provide comfort to participants over the duration of the meeting. The meeting location should be able to provide the audio-visual requirements for the meeting to assist those with visual and hearing impairments fully participate; and (6) for field reviews plan the route to consider participant safety and access, including accessible washroom locations in proximity to the site, and a police escort where traffic or road safety may be a concern.

2. <u>Meeting date and time:</u> In selecting a day of the week and time, liaise with a representative of a disability organisation where possible and consider participant availability including the time they need to travel to the meeting location. Also consider how the meeting time impacts any additional services that may need to be provided (e.g. transport, child care). Many PWD have employment and other responsibilities. December 3 is the annual date for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. With enough advanced planning, it may be an appropriate time to plan an event.

   Indicate if water and snacks will be provided. This is important for people who may have dietary concerns including diabetes and IBS. Similarly, an indication should be given as to whether transport to and from the meeting will be covered, as well as child care, or any other relevant services.

3. <u>Desktop remote or in-person meeting:</u> Some meetings may involve reviewing maps and drawings and can take place either remotely (online) or at a convenient location. Ensure that presentation material is prepared to be accessible to people with visual and hearing impairments, for people with low literacy levels and for those who may have a cognitive impairment. If you have slides or print-outs you can describe the content or have them available for a screen reader. If you are speaking, have slides or print-outs that contain the information you are reviewing.

4. <u>Field Review meetings:</u> The Facilitator should share the proposed meeting point and time with participants to everyone in advance. Select a safe area for pick-up and drop-offs, close to public transit if it is available. Meetings should be at a location with an accessible washroom, or directions should be provided for accessing the nearest one. For projects where the scope of work is across multiple locations, select no more than three sites that demonstrate a range of conditions. Where the scale of a project site is large, like a port project, you may want to break up the area into different 'stops' for walking or driving. When selecting stops, priority may be given to areas that are more heavily used or sensitive, for example adjacent to a shopping centre or a school. Consider safe pick-up and drop-offs at each stop. Describe what transport will be provided, if any. While performing the Field Review, if you find stops are taking longer than expected, check in with users and consider either removing a stop or finding another way to shorten the session.

5. <u>Safety during a field review:</u> Identify a person who will act as the Safety Officer. The safety officer will be responsible for the distribution of high vis safety wear, and ensuring it is properly worn throughout the field review, in order to improve the group's visibility. It may be appropriate to have

a police escort or a traffic warden attend, particularly for stops along a road. Active construction sites will require a thorough safety review in advance. If it is not safe or accessible, consider an alternative format such as a desktop review including photos, or a video connection.

6. <u>Participant briefing:</u> The Facilitator can brief the participants on the User-Assessment purpose and process either ahead of time or at the meeting point. Select a safe and quiet space with minimal distractions for the briefing. User-Assessment purpose: The purpose may change depending on the project stage: Pre-design/Schematic Design, the User-Assessment can be used to identify problems on the proposed site or with the project type from the participants' perspectives; Detailed Design, with an appropriate presentation (e.g. 3-D renders, product samples, "walking" through the accessible routes on the plan), the engagement can be utilised to assess and provide feedback on the design; Construction, a plan for temporary works can be assessed; Substantial Completion, the project implementation can be reviewed in the field.

7. <u>Informed consent:</u> The Facilitator shall both read and provide a printed copy of a consent form that will use simple and clear language to inform participants about the engagement and how their input and statistical data will be used and how the participants will be compensated (suggested payment is at least $30USD per person plus refreshments and any transportation or other costs for a maximum of four hours). The form may also include a photo release, if photos will be taken during the engagement session.

8. <u>Facilitating PWD input:</u> Engage a small group of approximately six to ten PWD and their caregivers, with participants representing a range of demographics which may include: disabilities, genders, ages and income levels is recommended. If you have a larger group, you may want to separate into smaller groupings, with each reviewing one of the three themes: safety, access and comfort. Rather than following the checklist line by line, the following questions may be used as prompts to focus the discussion to cover the material:

   a. As a person with a disability, can you identify any potential barriers to your use of the [infrastructure project]?

   b. As a person with a disability can you identify any potential physical barriers in the project to employment for persons with disabilities at the [infrastructure project]?

   For both questions:

   - Safety issues may include: pedestrian route; crossings (locations and frequency); visibility/lighting; ground surface; good drainage; unprotected drops; parking and drop-offs.

   - Access issues may include: pedestrian path width; slopes/steps; gaps; tactile warnings; kerb ramps; clear floor space; audible and visual communications (signals, alarms, announcements); signs (pictograms, colour, raised letters or braille).

   - Comfort issues may include: road surfaces; door widths and swings; lighting levels; places to rest and/or waiting areas with seating and space for a wheelchair; door handles and controls; service counters; accessible toilet available (review location and availability of grab bars, toilet backrest/lid, transfer area, turning area, fixture heights).

9. <u>Completing the checklist form:</u> The Facilitator will use the checklist form to record the participant discussions on the items under three themes: safety, access and comfort. Copies of the checklist can be made available to participants. Some participants may want to fill in the checklist themselves, or they may want to follow along as the Facilitator records the information.

a) For items with an asterisk, you can look up the code reference for further detail of what is required.

b) Mark each item as one of the following: Yes, No, Partial or Not applicable.

c) Include notes where needed. Notes may include:

    a. Why an item is not applicable.

    b. How an item is partially met.

    c. Any local factors to consider.

    d. Additional considerations that are not listed as items in the checklist.

d) In considering each of the three review pages in the checklist (Safety, Access and Comfort), consider the theme and how the project measures against the minimum standards holistically and assign an overall subjective score using a scale from 1 to 5. 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = acceptable, 4 = good, 5 = very good. Half marks (e.g. 3.5) are allowed. Note that the item scores are not meant to be added up, and there is no pass / fail or minimum mark to achieve. The intention of the checklist is to review if any accessibility standards have been missed so they may be addressed in the project.

Materials required

Desktop review

1. User Assessment instructions

2. Checklist Form (available as a Word document)

3. Consent Form and Participant Stipends

4. Up to date project documentation assembled into an accessible presentation (may include slides, photos, printed drawings, product samples and information, 3D drawings, verbal descriptions) to share with the participants so that they can be "walked" through the project in non-technical terms, to inform their review.

- Safety – site plan and details of roads and paths; information on emergency and communication systems

- Access – plans for paths/circulation for interiors and exteriors

- Comfort – plans, details and product details (e.g. washroom layouts and fixtures, bus shelter and seating designs, service counters, door hardware, controls

5. Print-out of the accessibility section of the applicable code or standard for the project (OECS Building Code Appendix F can be used – it is 12 pages long)

6. Water and refreshments

Field review

Items 1 to 6 listed under Desktop and:

7. High visibility and safety gear, as appropriate and/or as required on site

8. Measuring tape

9. Inclinometer or level (to read slopes, if available)

10. Clipboards, printouts and pens or tablet for recording information

Frequently asked questions

1. What if items in the checklist do not apply to my project's scope?

For any item on the checklist that is not applicable to your project's scope (for example, there is no toilet facility as the project is an energy upgrade), record "N/A" or "not applicable" in the second column. It is not recommended to remove the checklist item from the form because the PMU check may find that the item is indeed relevant, the project scope may change, or the form may be copied for use by another project in the future where that item does apply.

2. What if meeting the standard for an item on the checklist is not feasible?

If you cannot design or build to meet the minimum standards outlined in one of the checklist items (for example, due to existing road widths, steep natural slopes, or endangered species habitat protection), then meet the standard as much as you can. During the checklist review, record the reasons why an item may only be partially met, or not met at all.

3. Why is the overall score for each page subjective and not a tabulated score?

A tabulated score adding up the results of all the items on the page may not reflect the full picture of how well a project is achieving meaningful inclusion. For example, a project may exceed the standards for 14 out of 15 checklist items under safety but there is a 3m drop with no railing at a busy intersection. Using a tabulated score the mark would be 14/15 (very good), but using a subjective score the safety rating would be "very low" since the fall could be life-threatening. The suggestion of weighting each item (saying that the standard for an unprotected drop over 600mm should be worth more than other items on the checklist) does not work. If the unprotected drop was 700m it will still be a safety concern but a fall may not result in as serious an injury, therefore the overall subjective safety scoring may be assessed as "neutral" or even "good" if all the other items were met and the location of the drop was in a less critical area.

4. The project budget is not sufficient to meet one or more of the items in the checklist, can I record this as a reason in the comment area of the checklist form?

This can be noted in the comments for review by the project funders and PMU, but budget should not be the reason not to meet minimum accessibility requirements found in the checklist. The project funder/partner has made a commitment to the principle of disability inclusion and accessibility is a Human Right protected by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5. What if the project is not subject to an accessible code or standard and we are not using a code or standard that includes accessibility?

Where you are using a code or standard that does not include accessibility, then please apply one of the following for all public areas and places of work within your project, even when the code does not explicitly list the infrastructure in question as an applicable facility:

- OECS Building Code, Appendix F: Accessibility Guidelines for Persons with Disabilities
  https://www.oecs.org/en/our-work/knowledge/library/oecs-building-codes/viewdocument/1218

- International Building Code, Chapter 11 Accessibility

https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IBC2021P1/chapter-11-accessibility

- AASHTO Guide for Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities

- Overseas Road Note 21: Enhancing the mobility of disabled people: Guidelines for Practitioners

The checklist items with an asterisk refer to the accessibility standards in the OECS Building Code Appendix F and IBC Chapter 11 Accessibility. The code reference is included, please review these for more detail. Where standards diverge between the two codes, it has been noted on the form.

If your project, or the country where your project is located, is using an alternate building code that does include accessibility, then please use the dimensions and standards within that code for consistency.

6. There are no persons with disabilities affected by the project OR Our team does not know any persons with disabilities in the affected area. Can I skip Review B: User-Assessment Review and only complete Review A: Project Team Review?

Reach out to the regional or national organisation representing persons with disabilities to see if they wish to be involved in the user-assessment and/or if they can put you in contact with people with disabilities in the affected area. You can also contact the relevant Ministry. Only if, after concerted effort to reach out to local PWD or organisations representing persons with disabilities, there is no PWD interest in engaging, then you can skip Review B and instead submit a report noting the efforts you took to engage PWD including the organisations and contacts that you reached out to.

Infrastructure project types – highlights of what to consider

Agricultural Development

When reviewing agricultural development sector projects for disability inclusion, areas to review include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Water access and controls to be reachable and easy-to-use by people with disabilities.

- Household/farm access rather than centrally-located community standpipe, as the latter presents issues including travel;

- Construction mitigation to include clear wayfinding, signage, protection from equipment, debris and excavations, alternate routes, and temporary crossings to be barrier-free (no steps and ramps to comply with maximum slopes and handrails) as per OECS Section 6 or equivalent construction mitigation code or standard;

- New and reconstructed roads to include barrier-free pedestrian walkways, crossings and signage;

- Barrier-free access, washroom facilities and signage required for offices and places of employment for roles that can be performed by people with disabilities (e.g. administration, management, monitoring, engineering);

- Location, height and types of door hardware, controls and electrical outlets to be reachable and easy-to-use by people with disabilities; and

- Accessible parking stalls to be available in close proximity to facilities with a barrier-free walkway separated from vehicular traffic between the accessible parking stall and facilities.

Energy and Water Infrastructure

When reviewing energy and water infrastructure sector projects for disability inclusion, areas to review include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Water access and controls to be reachable and easy-to-use by people with disabilities.

- Household access rather than centrally-located community standpipe is preferred, as the latter presents issues including travel;

- Where public washrooms are provided, at least one toilet must be accessible and the route to the washroom must be barrier-free and include accessible signage and wayfinding;

- Barrier-free, step-free access to office where members of the public may go in person, for example to pay bills;

- For locations that have been identified as emergency shelters: barrier-free access, washroom facilities and signage are required;

- Places of employment for roles that can be performed by people with disabilities (e.g. administration, management, monitoring, engineering) require provision of barrier-free access, washroom facilities and signage.

- Location, height and types of door hardware, controls and outlets to be reachable and easy-to-use by people with disabilities within and around homes, areas open to the public, and in places of employment;

- Where underground wires or pipes require road works, road reconstruction to include barrier-free pedestrian walkways, crossings and signage;

- Manholes to be located where they do not pose a safety concern or tripping hazard and the cover to be in place, secure, flush with the road surface, and not have openings larger than 19mm especially in locations where they are located within pedestrian walkways and road crossings.

- Construction mitigation to include clear wayfinding, signage, protection from equipment, debris and excavations, alternate routes, and temporary crossings to be barrier-free (no steps and ramps to comply with maximum slopes and handrails) as per OECS Section 6 or equivalent construction mitigation code or standard; and

- Automation messaging and bill payment processes to be reviewed with PWD.

Port Development

Note that OECS Building Code, Appendix F states in 1.4(a) that all public buildings including sea port terminals shall have provisions for persons with disabilities including those persons in wheelchairs. When reviewing port development sector projects for disability inclusion, areas to review include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Barrier-free pathway with signage and lighting, separated from vehicular traffic to and from all buildings or spaces where members of the public may go in person, for example to purchase tickets, collect a package, meet a passenger, wait for a ferry, embark or disembark a boat or ferry, clear customs, shop or dine;

- Where public washrooms are provided, at least one toilet must be accessible and the route to the washroom must be barrier-free and include accessible signage and wayfinding;

- Barrier-free access, washroom facilities and signage to be provided for places of employment for roles that can be performed by people with disabilities (e.g. administration, ticket sales, customs, management, monitoring, engineering);

- Location, height and types of door hardware, controls and outlets in areas open to the public and in places of employment to be reachable and easy-to-use by people with disabilities;

- New and reconstructed roads to include barrier-free pedestrian walkways, crossings and signage. Pedestrians and vehicular traffic to be separated wherever possible;

- Accessible parking stalls to be available in close proximity to facilities with a barrier-free walkway separated from vehicular traffic between the accessible parking stall and facilities;

- Announcements to accommodate people with both visual and hearing impairments (e.g. screens and speakers to announce arrivals/departures); and

- Construction mitigation to include clear wayfinding, signage, protection from equipment, debris and excavations, alternate routes, and temporary crossings to be barrier-free (no steps and ramps to comply with maximum slopes and handrails) as per OECS Section 6 or equivalent construction mitigation code or standard.

Road Infrastructure

When reviewing road infrastructure sector projects for disability inclusion, areas to review include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Barrier-free access, washroom facilities and signage to be provided for places of employment for roles that can be performed by people with disabilities (e.g. administration, management, monitoring, engineering);

- Location, height and types of controls to be reachable and easy-to-use by people with disabilities;

- Construction mitigation to include clear wayfinding, signage, protection from equipment, debris and excavations, alternate routes, and temporary crossings to be barrier-free (no steps and ramps to comply with maximum slopes and handrails) as per OECS Section 6 or equivalent construction mitigation code or standard; and

- New and reconstructed roads to include: barrier-free pedestrian walkways and kerb ramps; signalised intersections or crosswalks with audible traffic signals; high contrast signage and road markings, bus shelters and lay-bys with no steps, clear space for wheelchairs and a bench; tactile warning for grade changes, crossings and driveways; drainage; and safety zones by schools and other sensitive/priority areas.