



Technical Note on Accessibility

The Project Cycle Guidance

2



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Inside front cover

Technical Note on Accessibility

Part 2: The Project Cycle Guidance



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This guidance is one of **four sets of documents constituting the World Bank Technical Note on Accessibility**. It is primarily meant for the Bank’s task team leaders (TTLs), program implementing units (PIUs) and E&S specialists. The note can be also used by other development partners, including World Bank clients. It focuses on investment project financing (IPF).

The sections that comprise the **Technical Note on Accessibility** are: **The Narrative (Part 1); The Project Cycle Guidance (Part 2); The Five Thematic Fact Sheets (Part 3); and The Technical References (Part 4)**.

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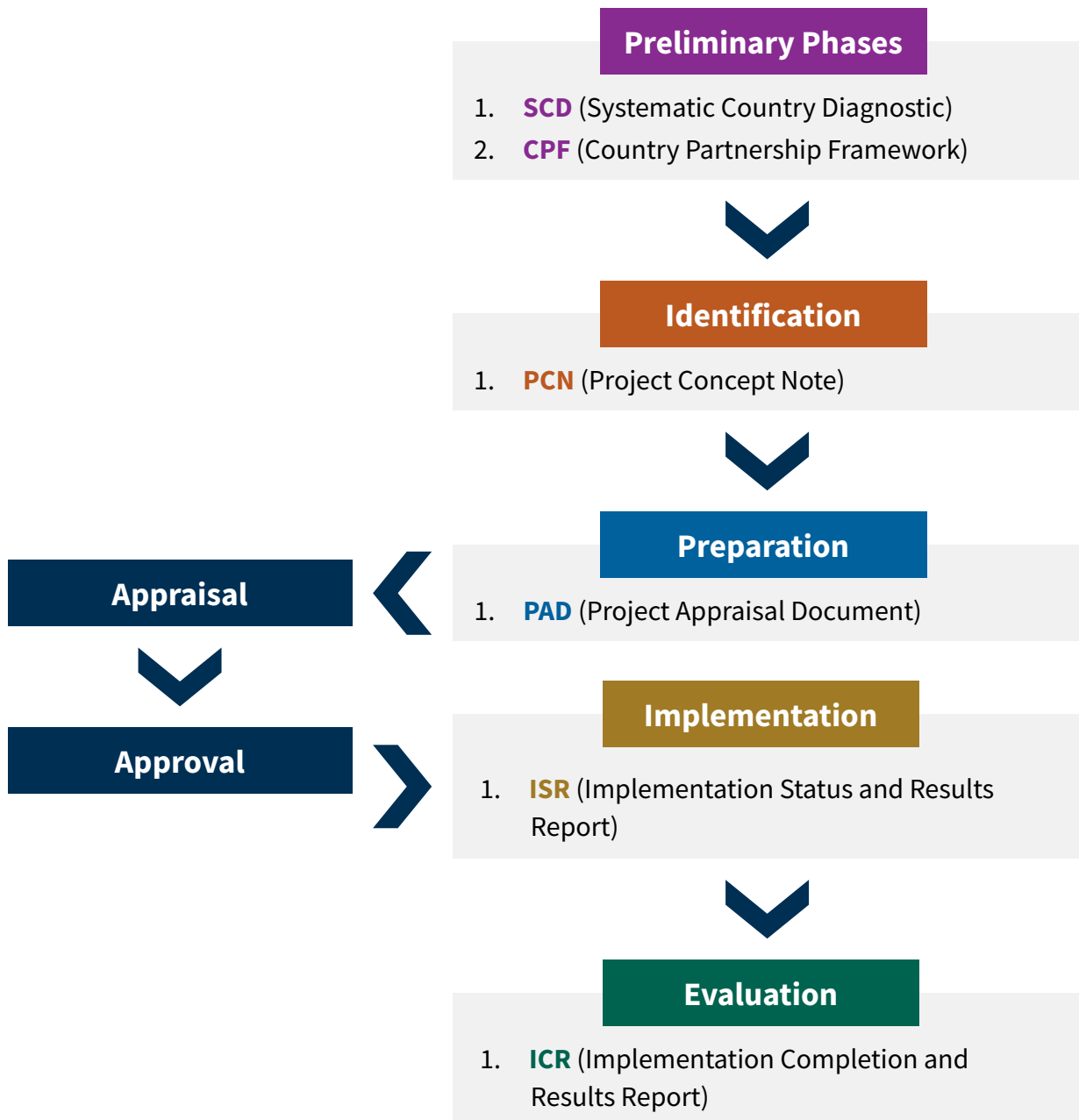
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1

The Project Cycle

Given the importance of accessibility to the World Bank's mission and vision, there are several entry points to ensure accessibility across World Bank sectors. Considerations about accessibility should be addressed at all stages of the project cycle. These guidance sheets provide support for TTLs and other Bank teams regarding entry points for accessibility-related issues throughout the project cycle and the core project documentation.

Figure 1: Schema representing the World Bank Project Cycle phases, and indicating the project documents which are addressed in this note.



2

Preliminary Phase

SCD (Systematic Country Diagnostic)

Objectives of this Phase: The World Bank works with a borrowing country's government and other stakeholders to determine the country's priorities and how financial and other assistance can be designed to have the largest impact (**Systematic Country Diagnostic, SCD**). This is intended to become a reference point for client consultations on priorities for World Bank Group country engagement.



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Recommendations

- ✓ **Make sure that accessibility is part of the assessment.** Evidence is important for designing projects with the best development outcomes, based on local conditions, needs, and challenges.
- **The accessibility assessment can be overarching.** For example, it may determine the existence of overall accessibility policies or operationalization mechanisms for all new constructions and websites; describe the level of local awareness and capacities for accessibility; and the degree of accessibility in existing infrastructure or public websites, regardless of the sector. **It can also target a specific sector that has been identified as a priority** (For example, existence of an accessibility policy for the education sector; quality of operationalization mechanisms for all new public hospitals and clinics; level of local awareness and capacities for accessibility in mobility and transportation; degree of accessibility in existing social protection infrastructure or public websites).
- ✓ **Highlight the required improvements and advocate for them with the borrower.** This process can address accessibility as a whole, or it can be applied to a specific sector. It should highlight the benefits that improved accessibility would produce.



- ✓ **Highlight the borrower’s obligations and commitments toward accessibility, both locally and internationally.** These obligations can be addressed, with the support of the World Bank, as a whole or within a specific sector.

Why is this relevant for the World Bank?

...**because** the World Bank is in a strategic position to address accessibility barriers with the largest and most effective impact, supporting borrowers both in understanding the need for better accessibility and in complying with their legal obligations.

Accessibility-related problems have causes which are deeply rooted in the way a country functions at various levels and involve a variety of stakeholders. The Bank has a crucial role in highlighting these issues to the borrower at the earliest possible stages of negotiations, so that corrective measures can be taken with the support of the Bank, and legal requirements can be met by the borrower. The more advanced the legal framework in the country is, the stronger the Bank’s leverage can be in promoting compliance with accessibility requirements.

Negotiating accessibility compliance with a country entails the existence or setting up of implementing mechanisms and resources, which need to be identified as early in the process as possible.

And to go more in depth

Example of an SCD that takes Disability into Account: Albania

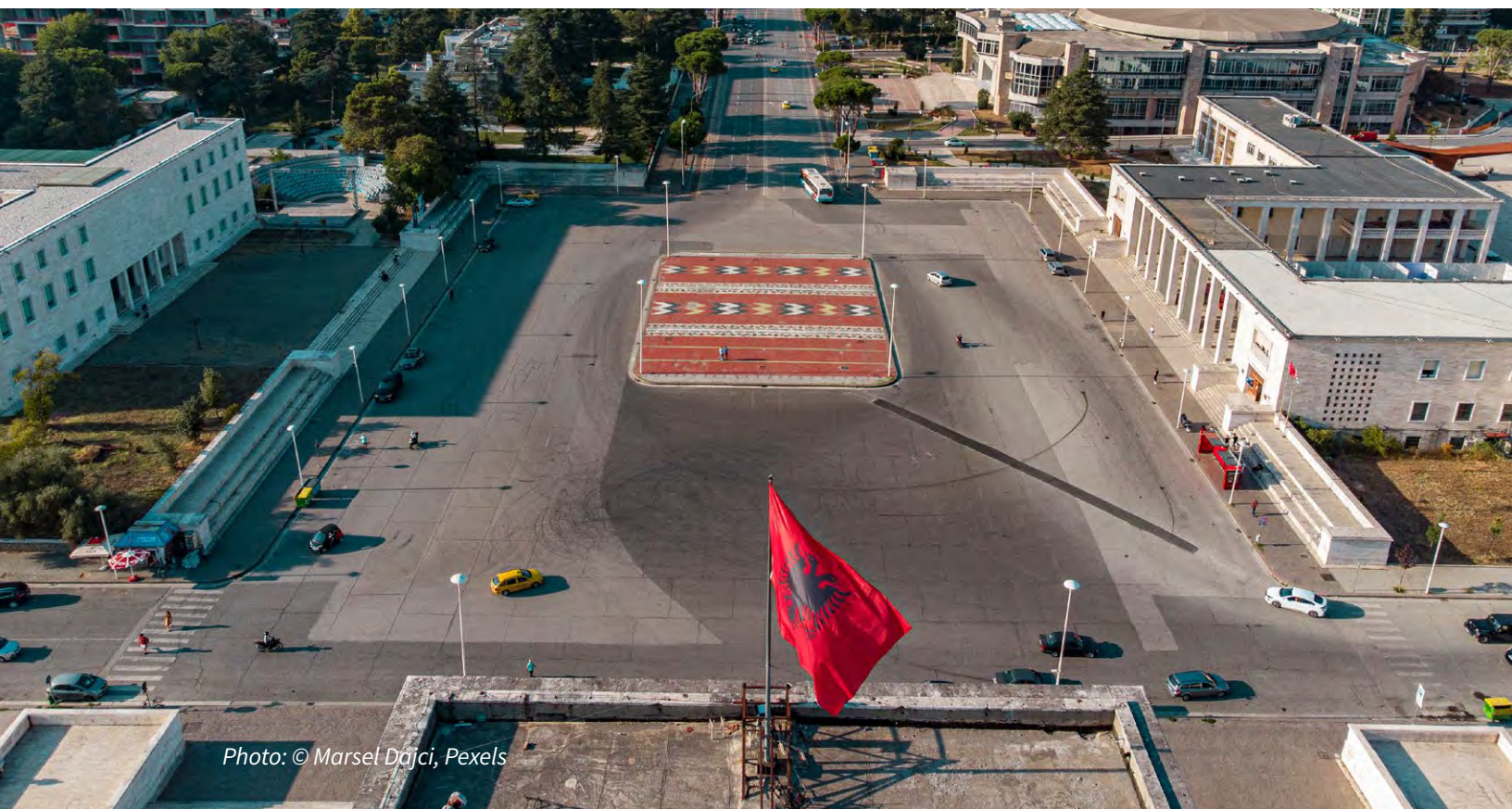
Examples of Preliminary Accessibility Assessments:

- 1 Analyze the framework for accessibility in the country (laws, norms, standards, guidelines, etc.) and identify gaps such as:**
 - Missing tools (policy but no strategy or action plan; law but no applicative decree or standards);
 - Missing implementing procedures (accessibility not required for delivery of building permits for new buildings, or for websites of public services);
 - No evaluation of the proposed accessibility solutions (submitted architectural plans, ongoing construction works, or new products);



- Narrow field of application (focus on the needs of persons using a wheelchair, but few or no indications on how to improve accessibility for persons who are blind, deaf, or who have other types of disabilities);
- Limited scope (focus mainly on infrastructure, with few or no prescriptions for mobility, information/communication, and information and communication technology (ICT));
- Partial provisions (no clear roles and responsibilities, no sanctions or deadlines, no specified rules for existing facilities);
- Weak foundations (no disaggregated data about accessibility and disability available, or planned in the country).

Make sure that Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) are involved in the assessment, based on their strength, interest, and capacity to work toward better accessibility in the country. Approach them and begin discussions about the country's main accessibility needs across all sectors (infrastructure, mobility, ICT); determine how they can and want to be involved, under what conditions, in what capacities, etc.





2 Investigate the country's readiness for an “accessibility shift.”

- Assess the existence, quality, and length of accessibility modules in academic curricula, trainings, and certification mechanisms of professionals (for engineers, architects, urban planners, media managers, web developers, communication specialists, designers, etc.);
- Determine the level of awareness of decision makers at the local and national level; of the general public; of OPDs; of civil society organizations (CSOs), etc.;
- Determine the availability and quality of local accessibility-related products and services (sign language interpreters, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioners, tactile tiles, grab bars and adapted toilet equipment, braille devices, hearing loops or other hearing enhancement equipment, etc.);
- Identify examples of accessible facilities realized within the country and evaluate the quantity and quality (buildings, websites, urban areas, transportation solutions, organization of public festivals, conferences, etc.);
- Assess whether government buildings take accessibility into consideration, and if so how, and how often;





- Determine how present persons with disability are within the government's teams.

3 Investigate the possible concrete applications of accessibility in the country in coming years, and determine who the main implementing actors are:

- Real estate developments for residential, business, commercial, or touristic areas;
- Planned urban developments for coastal areas or public urban spaces;
- Valorization of historical heritage or natural environments;
- Construction or rehabilitation of large infrastructure (airports, hospitals, universities, etc.);
- Reorganization of the mobility network in a neighborhood, or replacement of existing means of transportation (buses, trains, metros, etc.);
- Redesign of institutional websites, or creation of new platforms to deliver services relevant to all;
- Large upcoming communication campaigns on health, social protection, education or other topics of public utility.

3

Preliminary Phase

CPF (Country Partnership Framework)

Objectives of this Phase: After the analytical work is conducted, the borrower and the World Bank produce a strategy, called a **Country Partnership Framework (CPF)**, to identify the country's highest priorities for reducing poverty and improving living standards. The findings from the SCD help to articulate the country's main development goals in the CPF.



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Recommendations

- ✓ **Obtain a commitment from the borrower** regarding addressing some or all of the problems identified through the SCD. This could concern overall accessibility issues, or it could address accessibility only within a specific sector.
- ✓ **Ensure that accessibility is embedded into the country's objectives.** Regardless of the sectors that are designated as priorities, accessibility should be a cross-cutting element. In particular, the meaningful and active participation of OPDs and persons with disabilities through consultations and other mechanisms throughout all project phases should be clearly stated and indeed required. Ideally, the will to engage with the private sector through public procurement, incentives, and other mechanisms should be identified as another key strategy for enhancing accessibility.

Why is this relevant for Task Team Leaders (TTLs)?

...because an explicit commitment of the country's government to accessibility from the beginning, together with a clear road map and (possibly) a financial engagement, are essential in order to identify accessibility as a priority, and to substantiate all further project interventions. Addressing accessibility is a condition for the



achievement of the World Bank’s goal of ending extreme poverty by identifying the most vulnerable and addressing related barriers. If accessibility is not included in the initial overall agreements, it is likely to be overlooked in the following project phases.

And to go more in depth

Including disability and accessibility-related issues within implemented projects requires the borrower’s willingness to invest time and resources. It should be the role of the World Bank to engage in advocating for accessibility and helping to show the clients how to fulfill their obligations (under international and national law as well as World Bank financing requirements, such as the **ESF**).

More detailed suggestions:

- In the CPF, formalize the country’s engagement in creating or upgrading accessibility policies, strategies, laws, standards, implementing procedures, and any other needed tools.
- Ensure that key messages about the importance of disability-sensitive and accessibility-oriented projects are passed on to local decision makers, and that experts are available to provide sensitization sessions when needed.





- Require the systematic involvement of OPDs (identification, prioritization, planning), and ask for a clear commitment to work alongside the government and the World Bank in every step of the process.
- Strongly recommend that the borrower improve its strategies for employing persons with disabilities, and integrating the necessary accessibility adaptations in their overall strategy.
- Include disaggregated data collection concerning accessibility as an essential corollary of the strategy. (This could include, for example, a mapping of existing accessible institutional buildings or institutional websites realized via participatory assessments.)
- Require a strong capacity development plan for accessibility as an essential component of the strategy.
- Encourage the borrower to build upon national projects concerning accessibility, and to liaise with “accessibility champions” in other nations to exchange ideas, good practices, lessons learned, technical capacities, operational tools, etc.
- Strongly recommend engaging with the private sector to enhance the technological potential of accessibility-related products and services.
- Make sure the borrower commits to ensuring that accessibility is systematically considered from the design stage to the implementation and evaluation stages of all new projects and interventions.
- Ensure that an E&S specialist is on the CPF team to help advocate for disability and accessibility-related inclusion measures.

4

Identification Phase

PCN (Project Concept Note)

Objectives of this Phase: The World Bank and the government agree on an initial project concept and its beneficiaries, and the World Bank's project team outlines the basic elements in a **Project Concept Note**.



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Recommendations

- ✓ **Clarify the specific areas and gaps** that will be addressed by the project, including the main objectives and macro indicators. Accessibility can be addressed as a cross-cutting issue throughout a sectoral project or it could be a pillar of a project aiming, for example, to protect and empower the most vulnerable in the country.
- ✓ **Highlight how the project would help the borrower in achieving the goals of Agenda 2030 through accessibility advancements**, by complying with the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** as well as with other relevant international, regional, or national frameworks. In particular, explain what social and economic benefits would be brought about by accessibility-related interventions.
- ✓ **Make sure that accessibility-related results and indicators are thought about from the early stages of the project.**
- ✓ **Ensure that OPDs are involved in the design of the PCN**, either through systematic consultations, or their involvement in the relevant committees;
- ✓ **Show the relevance of the proposed objectives to the beneficiaries.** The PCN should be defined with the active involvement of local and international OPDs, and endorsed by them.



- ✓ Clarify if and to what extent **urban or infrastructure interventions** will be integrated into the project, and identify accessibility as one of the main requirements.
- ✓ Make sure that all activities (operational and corporate) will comply with **inclusive procurement policies**.
- ✓ Roughly, evaluate the **financial needs** for accessibility-related aspects of the project.
- ✓ Plan from the beginning for accessibility-oriented **capitalization strategies** that collect lessons learned and good practices.

Why is this relevant for Task Team Leaders (TTLs)?

...because accessibility-related operational, technical, and financial challenges have to be clearly planned since the beginning, so that they are not overlooked, or they do not generate extra costs in subsequent phases. A project that successfully tackles accessibility barriers must be designed with accessibility in mind in each structuring element: objectives, expected results, indicators, activities, roles and responsibilities, and so forth.

The World Bank ESF states that the concept of universal access should be applied in the Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA) and project design when it applies to new facilities, and when it is technically and financially feasible. The refurbishment of existing facilities should also be reviewed for accessibility. E&S specialists should support TTLs helping to address accessibility in the project design and the resulting E&S instruments.

And to go more in depth

Examples of accessibility-sound objectives for a PCN might be:

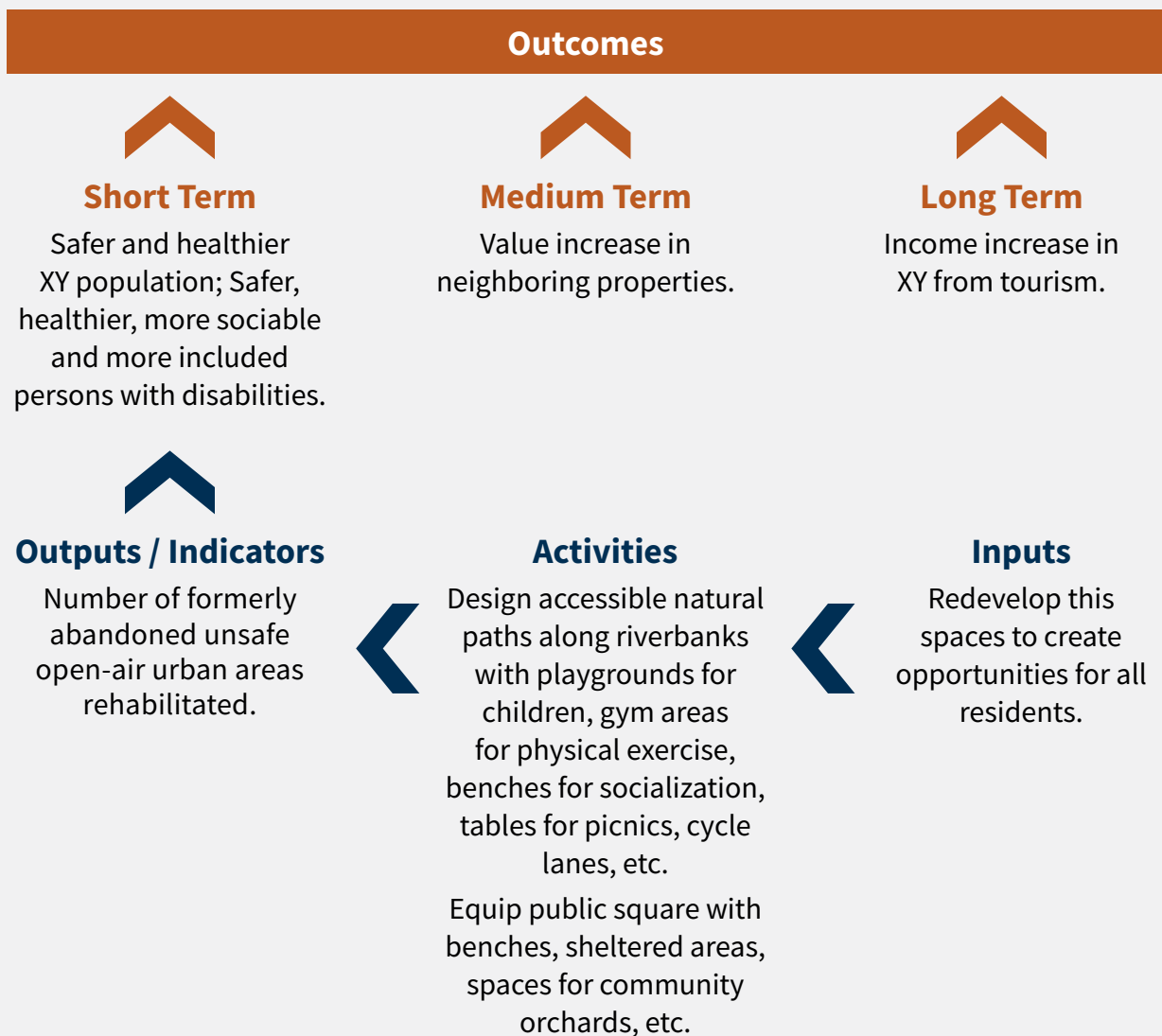
- > Protect and valorize the historical heritage of the city center of XY, ensuring equitable enjoyment to all regardless of their abilities or disabilities.
- > Redesign the network of public urban spaces of XY in a more sustainable, inclusive, ecofriendly and accessible way.
- > Enhance the touristic potential of XY, increasing the capacity and inclusiveness of accommodation facilities, natural environments and cultural offerings, and ensuring equitable enjoyment for all, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.



- > Improve access to ICT for persons with disabilities in order to enhance their protection against the COVID-19 pandemic, their access to quality education, and their preparedness and protection against natural disasters.
- > Increase access to safe water, inclusive education, and health care for the population in Province XY, considering the needs of persons with different types of disability.

Problem Statement: Existing public open-air spaces of XY (parks, squares, gardens, river banks, etc.) are unequipped, unsafe, inaccessible, under used by residents, often abandoned

Figure 2: Sample of Problem Statement



5

Preparation Phase

PAD (Project Appraisal Document)

Objectives of this Phase: The borrower and the World Bank review the work done during the identification phase and confirm the expected project outcomes, intended beneficiaries and evaluation tools for monitoring progress.



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Recommendations

- ✓ **Clearly highlight the problem statements** at the foundation of the project and explicitly show the relevance and impact of accessibility interventions for addressing them. This could concern the overall social empowerment of persons with disabilities (because accessibility is a condition for freedom of movement, independent living, freedom of speech, the possibility to learn and work, etc.). It could also concern a specific sector (because, for example, accessibility in schools and in mobility infrastructure is essential for enhancing education, accessibility in WASH facilities is essential for enhancing the health conditions of persons with disabilities, and so on).
- ✓ **Make sure that different OPDs are involved** in the project from the design stage to the assessment, implementation, and evaluation phases. This could be done by seeking the support of national umbrella organizations that represent several different OPDs.
- ✓ **Demonstrate the feasibility of the project** and show how it will help to achieve some of the accessibility-related objectives of the CPF and the PCN.
- ✓ **Define the accessibility-related project's expected results, indicators, activities, and resources.**



- ✓ **Detail the accessibility-related features in the project’s procurement plan.**
This could involve defining the accessibility requirements for products, services, or works to be purchased, as well as determining the desired accessibility-related qualifications of the project’s team members, construction companies, or consultants.
- ✓ **Make sure that the monitoring and evaluation plan contains clear objectives concerning accessibility indicators and overall quality.** This can include a participatory following up of design and construction activities to ensure that accessibility standards are adopted and met, or that accessibility is included in training programs for relevant stakeholders, or that digital accessibility is ensured for public Web services.

Why is this relevant for Task Team Leaders (TTLs)?

...**because** the Loan Agreement (LA) with a borrower is based on the PAD, and if accessibility-related interventions and provisions are not included, planned for, and budgeted in the PAD itself, it will be very difficult to have them reflected in the LA afterwards. A PAD needs to clearly show the World Bank’s practical commitment to disability and accessibility and to demonstrate that the project will achieve its objectives.

Legal obligations and international agreements require the effective implementation of accessibility; if appropriate actions and funds are not included from the beginning, the risk is that the project might miss the opportunity to be fully inclusive.

In other cases, it might need to be heavily revised during implementation to allocate extra budget, include extra activities, or modify approved designs while under construction because they are not accessible (entailing extra costs, delays, variants to be approved, etc.)

And to go more in depth

Additional Recommendations:

➤ **Budget and Human Resources**

- ✓ Ensure that there are persons with disabilities among the project staff.



- ✓ Ensure that the implementation agencies identified have the technical capacity for accessibility that the project requires, or plan for trainings and capacity developments.
- ✓ Ensure that for each planned new construction, renovation work, product design, development of ICT services and materials, etc. (including missions of accessibility experts for quality assurance) a percentage of the budget is allocated for accessibility.
- ✓ Engage consultants who have experience in disability and accessibility.
- ✓ Ensure the support of E&S specialists in defining the project.
- > **Assessment and Data Collection**
 - ✓ Develop disability disaggregation and/or inclusive indicators for the project.
 - ✓ Evaluate environmental and social impacts of the project on persons with disabilities, and identify mitigation strategies.
- > **Procurement**
 - ✓ Ensure compliance with the disability inclusion-related evaluating criteria for bidders under the Bank's procurement framework (for example, suppliers with disability policies, who hire persons with disabilities, and/or that produce mainstream goods that are also accessible, or that supply accessibility-specific goods).
- > **Compliance with the Bank's Framework**
 - ✓ Make sure the project's interventions comply with the **IFC's Environmental & Social Due Diligence process** and the **Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP)**.

6

Implementation Phase

ISR (Implementation Status and Results Report)

Objectives of this Phase: With technical assistance and support from the World Bank team, the borrower's implementing agency prepares the specifications for the project and carries out the procurement of all goods, works, and services needed, as well as any environmental and social impact mitigation set out in agreed-upon plans. The Implementation Status and Results Report (ISR) is a management tool to assist TTLs in monitoring projects. It is used to deliver real-time information on implementation performance and the prospective outcomes of a project. At a glance, it provides information on the status of a project: progress toward results, any restructuring that may be needed, disbursement levels, and risk factors.



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Recommendations

- ✓ **Ensure that accessibility standards are followed** and complied with in all infrastructure and digital interventions.
- ✓ **Provide appropriate accessibility training** for relevant stakeholders.
- ✓ **Ensure the implementation of accessibility-sound procurement activities**, as defined in the PAD.
- ✓ **Make sure that the project contributes to data collection concerning accessibility.** For example, budgets should be disaggregated to allow clear identification of accessibility-related items or services.
- ✓ Ensure that **indicators related to accessibility** are monitored and achieved.
- ✓ Ensure that **lessons learned and good practices** concerning accessibility are identified and collected to feed the capitalization process.
- ✓ Make sure that the project's strategies and activities, for sectoral projects, do not hinder accessibility.



- ✓ **Assess whether the active and effective participation of OPDs has been ensured** in the previous project's phases, and whether it is effectively planned for the following ones. This could concern accessibility as a cross-cutting topic (participatory design of accessibility training sessions, sensitization of relevant stakeholders, working with municipalities to set up accessibility operationalization mechanisms, etc.), or as a sectoral specification (participatory revision of architectural designs for new accessible schools, accessibility assessments of existing transportation networks, etc.).
- ✓ **Adopt disability and accessibility-oriented reporting**, including the progressive impacts of the project on persons with disabilities, strategies to keep OPDs involved, corrective actions, and so on.

Why is this relevant for Task Team Leaders (TTLs)?

...because a project is an evolving entity that is implemented throughout a long-time span by different teams, and with variable stakeholders. It is important to keep accessibility in mind during the entire implementation phase, with the support of OPDs, so that focus is not lost and the risks of not achieving the planned objectives and indicators are avoided (especially in sectoral projects, where accessibility is only one of various requirements).



7

Evaluation Phase

ICR (Implementation Completion and Results Report)

Objectives of this Phase: When a project is completed, the World Bank and the borrower document the results achieved, the problems encountered, lessons learned, and the knowledge gained from carrying out the project. A World Bank operations team then compiles this information and data in an **Implementation Completion and Results Report**.



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Recommendations

- ✓ **Evaluate the overall satisfaction of beneficiaries** with accessibility-related activities. This can be done through surveys, participatory workshops, post-occupancy evaluation of realized infrastructure, user tests of digital services, and so on.
- ✓ **Assess the effectiveness of revised or created operationalization mechanisms** (if any). For example, measure how many architectural projects submitted for a building permit actually include accessibility features after such an authorization procedure is put in place.
- ✓ **Assess the efficacy of accessibility capacity development strategies** adopted through the project.
- ✓ **Measure the effects of accessibility-sound procurement** on the local market over time. This could concern the appearance on the market of new products related to accessibility, an increase in the sales of more accessible products, etc.
- ✓ Assess the accuracy of **budget estimations** concerning accessible goods or services have been by comparing them with the actual costs of hard and soft accessibility-related activities.



- ✓ **Analyze collected data and information** to inform research and capitalization papers. This could include, for example, data on the incidence of accessibility costs in the project's overall budget, or on good practices, or innovative experiences.
- ✓ **Assess the effects of accessibility sensitizations and trainings** on various stakeholders and the overall environment. For example, find out if, and if so, how public events organized by different sensitized actors have taken accessibility measures into consideration; if, and if so, how public websites have begun to take accessibility into account, and so on.

Why is this relevant for Task Team Leaders (TTLs)?

...because accessibility is an obligation; but it is also a topic that is still widely unknown and is sometimes ignored due to the lack of practical knowledge on how to implement it concretely. It is also undermined by preconceived ideas and misconceptions that contribute to the limited application of its principles, especially in low and middle-income contexts. Each World Bank project is a tremendous opportunity to produce and share knowledge about accessibility, which will contribute to the improvement of other projects; to the overall demystification of the topic; and to the multiplying of activities around it.



Inside back cover

