GUIDELINES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDICATOR 8

PROCUREMENT

UN DISABILITY INCLUSION STRATEGY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASR	Annual Statistical Report on United Nations Procurement
BN USD	Billion United States Dollars
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EN	European Norm
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
EU	European Union
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management
HQ	Headquarters
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Information Technology
LTA	Long-Term Agreement
M USD	Million United States Dollars
PN	Procurement Network
PO	Purchase Order
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UD	Universal Design
UN	United Nations
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNGM	United Nations Global Marketplace
US	United States of America
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

GLOSSARY

Accessibility

Ensuring that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas (Convention, art. 9).

Disability inclusion

The meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Organizations of persons with disabilities

Organizations comprising a majority of persons with disabilities—at least half of their membership – and governed, led and directed by persons with disabilities (CRPD/C/11/2, annex II, para. 3). Such organizations should be rooted in, committed to and fully respectful of the principles and rights recognized in the Convention (CRPD/C/GC/7, para. 11).

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, art. 1).

Reasonable accommodation

Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Convention, art. 2).

Universal design

The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (Convention, art. 2).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Persons with disabilities, who comprise an estimated 15 per cent of the global population, are one of the largest minority groups in the world. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The number of people with disabilities is expected to increase over the coming decades, owing to population aging, longer life expectancy, and an increasing number of injuries resulting from natural disasters, among other factors. Many people will experience a disability at some stage in their lives.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) affirms the inherent dignity and worth of persons with disabilities and calls for urgent action to address the impacts of exclusion, discrimination, and segregation. The CRPD lays out the fundamental requirements to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability. The CRPD also expresses the obligation of States parties to ensure that their public procurement procedures incorporate accessibility requirements so that public funds do not create or perpetuate the inequality arising from inaccessible services and facilities. It also highlights the role of public procurement to implement affirmative action promoting de facto equality for persons with disabilities. The CRPD thus represents a comprehensive international commitment – by the United Nations as well as States parties – to respect the rights of persons with disabilities in all areas of life and is a foundational document for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the United Nations system.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Throughout the SDGs, there are references to disability inclusion and several SDG goals have specific targets. For instance, disability inclusion topics are part of Goals 4 (Guaranteeing equal and accessible education by building inclusive learning environments and providing the needed assistance for persons with disabilities), 8 (Promoting inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment allowing persons with disabilities to fully access the job market), 10 (Emphasizing the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with disabilities), 11 (Creating accessible cities and water resources, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, providing universal access to safe, inclusive, accessible and green public spaces), and 17 (Underlining the importance of data collection and monitoring of the SDGs, emphasis on disability disaggregated data). The SDGs also include a global commitment 'to leave no one behind'.

Procurement and supply can contribute in many important ways to achieving disability inclusion and can have transformational effects for persons with disabilities. It can, thus, also contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, procurement can contribute that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications systems, and to other facilities and services.

1.2. Scope and purpose

The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations. Through the Strategy, the United Nations system will systematically embed the rights of persons with disabilities into its work, both externally, through programming, and internally, and will build trust and confidence among persons with disabilities to ensure that they are valued, and their dignity and rights are respected. Two main parts of the UNDIS are a system-wide policy and an entity accountability framework. The policy contains

15 indicators in the areas of leadership, strategic planning and management; inclusiveness; programming; and organizational culture. Indicator 8 is on Procurement and the most relevant one for the procurement and supply departments of the UN organizations.

Indicator 8 covers four key elements that together enable a procurement process to address disability inclusion. (1) Procurement policies consider accessibility and do not create new barriers for persons with disabilities. (2) The procurement process is accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. (3) Accessibility targets for procurement are set and met. (4) The entity's procurement policy promotes purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers, and guidelines have been developed.

The indicators are measured on a graduated aspirational five-point rating system: Exceeds requirements, Meets requirements, Approaches requirements, Missing, and Not applicable. The rating "Meets requirements" is the minimum to which all United Nations organizations should aspire, and organizations should also commit themselves to exceeding requirements over time. Progress against the indicators is reported to the General Assembly on an annual basis.

Table 1: UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework – Indicator 8: Procurement

APPROACHES REQUIREMENTS	MEETS REQUIREMENTS	EXCEEDS REQUIREMENTS
8.a.i. Procurement policies ensure that relevant goods and services acquired are accessible or do not create new barriers and **8.a.ii.** Procurement policies ensure that the procurement process is accessible	**8.b.i.** Procurement policies ensure that relevant goods and services acquired are accessible or do not create new barriers and **8.b.ii.** Procurement policies ensure that the procurement process is accessible and **8.b.iii.** Target is established and met for number/percentage of relevant procurement documents that have accessibility as a mandatory requirement	**8.c.i.** Procurement policies ensure that relevant goods and services acquired are accessible or do not create new barriers and **8.c.ii.** Procurement policies ensure that the procurement process is accessible and **8.c.iii.** Target is established and met for number/percentage of relevant procurement documents that have accessibility as a mandatory requirement and **8.c.iv.** Procurement policy promotes purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers, and guidelines have been developed for this purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to provide practicable and implementable guidance for the organizations of the United Nations system which supports them in making progress against Indicator 8. This guideline elaborates on the elements of Indicator 8 and provides practical guidance on how to implement and progress on this indicator.

This guideline is to be read in conjunction with the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework and the associated Technical Note on the Entity Accountability Framework. It is important to note that Indicator 8 is linked with a few other indicators of the Entity Accountability Framework, e.g. Indicator 5 (consultation with persons with disabilities), 6 (accessibility), 6.1 (accessibility of conferences and events), 7 (reasonable accommodation) and 14 (capacity development of staff) provide further context. While this guideline specifically addresses Indicator 8 and how to make progress against Indicator 8, these other indicators can be referred to for further context. More information on the UNDIS including associated documents is available on the UNDIS website.

1.3 When and how to use this guideline

This guideline has been developed by a task team of the HLCM Procurement Network's Working Group on Sustainable Procurement. It has been endorsed by the HLCM Procurement Network (PN) for use and adoption by the HLCM PN member within their procurement frameworks as appropriate. Once this guideline has been integrated into the procurement framework of a UN organization, it can be used in a variety of situations such as, for instance, …

… when a programme staff, procurement staff, requisitioner or budget holder want to decide whether their requirement at hand should be disability-inclusive

… when a programme staff, procurement staff, requisitioner or budget holder requires information on how to make their requisitions disability inclusive

… when procurement staff process a specific procurement case and wonder whether and how to include accessibility requirements into the procurement

… when procurement staff draft solicitation documents and want to make them accessible

… when a UN organization would like to make their procurement process accessible and wonder where to start and how to do it

… when a senior procurement officer carries out a strategic procurement spend analysis in order to identify those categories which are most relevant for accessibility and disability inclusion

… when the procurement policies of a UN organization are updated, and the drafter requires sample language and input in order to align the procurement policy of a UN organization with the requirements of the UNDIS

… when procurement training materials are updated, and topics of disability-inclusion and accessibility are included in the training

The above are some situations in which this guideline will be useful, but the above list is certainly not exhaustive.

2. PROCURING ACCESSIBLE GOODS AND SERVICES

This section covers guidance, advice and tools related to two elements of Indicator 8, namely:

- Procurement policies ensure that relevant goods and services acquired are accessible or do not create new barriers; and the related element (8.i)
- Target is established and met for number/percentage of relevant procurement documents that have accessibility as a mandatory requirement (8.iii)

2.1 Overview

Accessibility addresses the fact that everyone, including persons with disabilities, benefits from features in our environment that prevent or remove barriers to our functioning or using a service. These barriers could be, for example, physical barriers such as steps, or barriers to communication in case of visual or sensory impairments. In this regard, the 'accessibility' of a product, service, or infrastructure/space describes the level of usability enjoyed by the largest range of people with differing characteristics (e.g. height, age, sex, body weight/size).

In order to implement this element of Indicator 8, UN organizations will need to include a policy clause in their procurement frameworks which ensures that relevant goods and services which are procured by the organizations are accessible. For this to be effective, what is a relevant product or service needs to be defined and this should be based on a prioritization such that the most 'relevant' goods and services are covered first. Where feasible and practicable, universal design should be the basis of designing or acquiring goods and services (see Section 2.5 for more details on Universal Design).

Secondly, a target (8.iii) needs to be set on the number/percentage of total procurements which specifically contain accessibility as a mandatory requirement, i.e. have requirements which incorporate accessibility in some form. As such, each UN entity needs to develop a system on how to efficiently monitor its procurements portfolio of accessible products and services to decide how to set and achieve targets that have the

highest positive impact. Lastly, both requisitioners and procurement staff need to have access to training and learning resources required to effectively procure accessible products and services and work collaboratively with users with disabilities to get the necessary input.

2.2 Policy clause

In order to make progress against this element of the Indicator, a simple policy clause can be integrated into the respective organization's procurement framework. For example:

"Requirements are defined in a specification, which is a description of the technical requirements for a material, product or service. The requirements document also states:

- […]
- requirements for disability inclusiveness and accessibility for relevant products and services.

Such a straightforward policy clause, integrated at the appropriate place in the UN organization's procurement framework, gives procurement colleagues the necessary leverage to review requirements specifications for disability inclusiveness.

The term "relevant" is key here and products/services will need to be prioritized in order to focus efforts on the most relevant products and services to ensure the UN entity's efforts in a prioritized and sequenced manner.

2.3 Prioritization

This section lays out how to prioritize the review of products and services for their accessibility and disability inclusiveness. Prioritization is important as most UN entities will not be able to address all accessibilities issues at the same time, so they should start with those that will have the biggest impact. The prioritization method suggested in this guideline works as follows:

1. **Determine relevant categories:** The UN entity determines the relevance of the products and services it procures by using the suggested list below (Section 2.3.1) or the generic questions (Section 2.3.2)

2. **Map procurement spend:** The UN entity obtains its procurement spend in the relevant categories. The UN entities report annually their procurement spend for the United Nations Annual Statistical Report on Procurement, so this data is readily available.

3. **Create relevance / spend matrix:** The UN entity uses the provided Excel tool to map its categories in the relevance / spend matrix. The quadrants of the matrix will provide the priority in which the products and services should be reviewed.

The following subsection contain details on how this process works.

2.3.1 Commonly relevant categories

A relevant product or service is one which is used by a person with a disability, who is not able to access the product or service due to the barrier it provides for a person with a disability. Such users can be both internal as well as external to the organization, i.e. be part of the organizations' personnel or be a beneficiary of the organizations' programmes. Also, the range of disabilities which need to be considered are diverse as they could be any long-term physical, psycho-social, intellectual or sensory impairment. Hence, the attribute "relevant" is potentially very broad and a prioritization is required in order to sequence in which the UN organization reviews the categories of goods and services they procure.

In order to guide and focus the efforts of the UN organization on those products which have the highest impact on persons with disabilities, this section provides a selection of commonly relevant categories which should be prioritized when reviewing requirements specifications. Additionally, several generic questions are provided which can help determine in each specific case whether a category is relevant for disability inclusiveness.

The following list of frequently procured categories of UN organizations provide a generic, suggested rating of their relevance for disability inclusiveness. It is important to keep in mind that whether or not a specific category is indeed relevant, depends on by whom it will be used – see Section 2.3.3 for more details. Hence, this is just a suggested, simplified starting point meant to accelerate a UN organization's analysis of their relevant spend categories. In order to determine the specific categorization from low to high relevance for a UN organization, the below as well as the generic questions provided in the next section can be used as starting points but the final determination of relevance should only be made by engaging persons with disabilities (personnel or beneficiaries ideally) or organizations of persons with disabilities through consultation.

While any service or product could be required by any person with a disability, categories with **commonly high relevance** for disability inclusiveness are:

- All construction works and buildings (e.g. medical facilities, schools, etc.) including associated services (e.g. engineering and design)
- All food and nutrition items to be used independently by beneficiaries
- All medicine and pharmaceutical products administered or handled by beneficiaries[1]
- All products and materials used for educational purposes
- All sanitation products (including diapers and menstrual hygiene) products used by beneficiaries
- Financial services (if used or provided to beneficiaries such as, for instance, direct cash transfer)
- Hotels, lodging, meeting facilities, event and conference management services
- Information and Communication Technology and associated services (e.g. web conferencing, IT equipment such as laptops, websites and applications, etc.)

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[1] This category also includes many assistive products. Assistive products refer to any product whose primary purpose is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence, including wheelchairs, hearing aids, walking frames, spectacles, pill organizers and prosthetic legs, as well as assistive information and communication technology such as memory aid, specialized computer hardware, augmentative and alternative communication and customized telephones (WHO, 2018, A71/21). Procurement of assistive products should follow available standards and technical specifications to ensure quality and safety. More information is available on the WHO website: https://www.who.int/health-topics/assistive-technology#tab=tab_1

- Prefabricated structures (particularly toilets/WASH structures)
- Water containers and buckets and related kits and products (e.g. water purification products if used by beneficiaries)

Categories with **commonly moderate to high relevance** for disability inclusiveness are:

- All clothing items to be used by beneficiaries
- All services provided to beneficiaries
- Facility Management services
- Hand pumps if used by beneficiaries
- Office furniture
- Passenger transport services (all kinds of transport modes including road and air)
- Personal protective equipment
- School furniture
- Translation services
- Vehicles

Categories with **commonly low to moderate relevance** for disability inclusiveness are:

- All items mentioned above which are not used by beneficiaries
- All services provided to personnel
- Business Administration services
- Energy and utilities
- Financial and insurance services (not provided to beneficiaries)
- Fuels
- Mail and cargo transport services
- Management advisory services
- Mosquito nets
- Office supplies, e.g. stationery etc.
- Real estate services

2.3.2 Generic assessment of relevance

Any other category of spend may still be relevant for disability inclusiveness. Additionally, whether a category of spend is relevant ultimately depends on whether it will be used by person with a disability. The following set of questions can be used to carry out a quick analysis to determine whether any product or service is relevant or not:

#	QUESTION
1	Will the product / service be used by many people (which increases the likelihood that it will also be used by people with a disability)?
2	Will people with a disability be among the users of the good/service or – if not known – is it likely that they are?
3	Will the impact of the good/service **NOT** being accessible be severe? For example, will the impact of the good/service not being accessible mean that a person with a disability will be deprived of a basic human right? Will it impact their health and safety?
4	Will the users of the good/service be non-personnel (e.g. beneficiaries of the programmes of the UN organization)?
5	Do persons with disabilities (e.g. represented through Organizations of Persons with Disabilities) assess this product or service as relevant?

If almost all or all answers to the above questions are "Yes", then the category should be considered relevant. While the above questions and categories with common relevance can be used to inform the final determination of relevance by each UN organization and should only be made by engaging persons with disabilities (personnel or beneficiaries ideally) through consultation.

This role can also be fulfilled by Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). The UN organizations can work with the International Disability Alliance, which is an umbrella organization of OPDs, and the International Disability and Development Consortium, which is a group of civil society organisations including OPDs, as well as their regional and local members to identify OPDs or persons with disabilities to work with. The IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action provide further extensive guidance on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in programmes and operations. Although the guidelines have a specific focus on humanitarian action, most of the guidance is applicable for other types of programmes and projects, too and can be particularly helpful when determining relevance of specific goods and services.

2.3.3 Relevance-spend matrix

Once the most relevant categories which need to be accessible have been determined, these may be correlated with the organization's annual procurement spend in order to determine the priorities. These priorities can be then used to review the specifications for each of the prioritized requirements in order to ensure that the goods/service are accessible.

A simple XLS tool is available to support this final step, which can be downloaded from the UNGM. Below is a screenshot from the XLS which shows some sample results – for illustration purposes only, i.e. these are not actual results but rather meant to show how to carry out the prioritization based on spend vs. relevance. The XLS is built such that a UN organization only needs to insert its category ratings for relevance and relative spend and the chart below is created automatically.

Any category which is in a red field is highest priority to be reviewed for necessary adjustments or ideally universal design. Any category in a yellow field is a runner up category which should be approached once all categories in the red field have been processed. A category which is in a green field should only be reviewed once all categories in the red and yellow fields have been reviewed.

The relevance-spend matrix provides clear guidance on setting the right priorities when reviewed acquired goods and services and ensure that the efforts and focus are put on those categories which will have the highest impact on persons with disabilities.
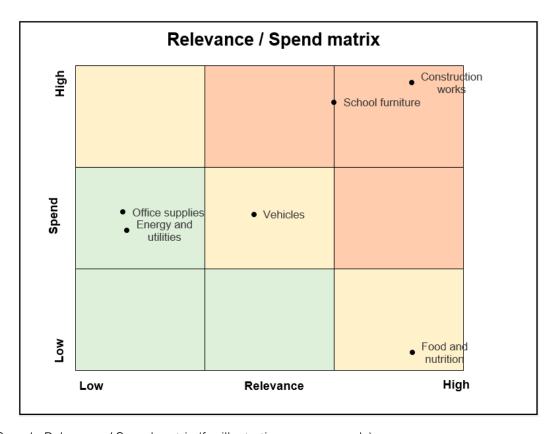

Figure 1: Sample Relevance / Spend matrix (for illustration purposes only)

2.4 Integration into the procurement process

Once an organization has incorporated the requirement for disability inclusiveness into its procurement framework (i.e. the respective policy, manual, procedure or other relevant document) and also prioritized the need to review products and services for accessibility as described in the previous sections, accessibility requirements for prioritized products and services can be incorporated into specific procurement processes.

The image below presents an overview of the key steps in a typical procurement process and how disability inclusiveness can be incorporated into the specific step.

As disabilities can be diverse, i.e. people can experience different barriers based on their individual impairment, gender, location or other factor, making products and services accessible can be complex. Therefore, it is beneficial to involve the actual users of the products and services, i.e. persons with disabilities or their primary carer, at various stages of the procurement process. For instances and as outlined above, persons with disabilities can help make the final determination of what categories are "relevant", they can provide ideas for requirements and features to make the products accessible or helping in the sample testing for usability. Specific details on how to involve persons with disabilities are outlined above in Section 2.3.2.

Table 2: Checklist for key interventions in the procurement process

PROCUREMENT PROCESS	INTERVENTION
Planning & budgeting	☐ Engage in annual planning process to ensure relevant categories for accessibility are prioritized ☐ Plan review of requirements with new upcoming needs ☐ Engage with requisitioner as early as possible to provide information regarding the integration of accessibility requirements
Requirements specification	☐ Focus on prioritized / relevant categories ☐ Use existing international standards ☐ Apply Universal Design if possible ☐ Engage persons with disabilities already here if possible
Sourcing & solicitation	☐ Suggest inclusion of accessibility criteria into evaluation criteria ☐ Suggest inclusion of questions on disability-inclusiveness of suppliers (see Section 4 for more details) ☐ Upload solicitation documents on UMGM, checking all applicable Sustainable Procurement indicators
Evaluation	☐ Compliance with requirements can be demonstrated through provision of statements of accessibility certification or use of accessibility standards ☐ Use sample testing with persons with disabilities
Contracting & contract management	☐ Testing by persons with disabilities to ensure fit for purpose

2.4.1 Planning & budgeting

Budget holders, requisitioners, programmes, and similar other teams or departments within their UN organization must be engaged as early as possible on disability-inclusion to ensure that accessibility considerations are incorporated into the earliest stages of programme design and needs analysis. Procurement staff can assist in this effort, for instance, at the very onset of the design of a programme or project/ procurement planning by highlighting the specific requirement to consider that any relevant goods are services acquired need to be accessible.

Frequently, procurement departments or teams also have annual or even quarterly planning meetings with key requisitioners during which the upcoming procurement needs are discussed and planned. These are also excellent opportunities to highlight the need to consider accessibility of the upcoming procurement needs and to discuss with requisitioners or budget holders the relevance of the specific planned requirements.

Another way Procurement staff can assist in this effort is by preparing and disseminating tools and information to colleagues on disability-inclusive procurement, possibly targeting those departments that often purchase relevant goods or services. These resources can also be shared with project drafters to increase the likelihood that disability-inclusive procurement and accessibility is included at the project design stage.

It is important to realize that once the requirement specifications or TOR (see next section) are received by procurement, it is almost already too late to fully incorporate accessibility (and the associated costs) – hence the earlier procurement staff have the opportunity to comment on the specification or design of the requirement, the better.

An anticipated cost increase should not be a factor of relevance at this stage, i.e. even if costs are higher for products which are disability-inclusive, they need to be included where relevant and to meet the basic human rights of persons with disabilities. Purchasing poorly designed products will represent an ineffective use of UN organization's resources if they cannot be used by all users.

Procurement staff could share relevant documents with requisitioners, budget holders, or programmes / project colleague as appropriate. These could include the UNDIS itself including the Entity Accountability Framework, the Technical Note on the Entity Accountability Framework or this guideline.

In terms of product / service portfolio review, it is recommended to integrate accessibility requirements into the relevant categories as and when the need to establish a new contract arises – rather than adapting and changing the entire procurement spend portfolio all at once. This will help to further prioritize and sequence the review of relevant categories of goods and services as each new procurement can be considered for its relevance for disability inclusiveness.

2.4.2 Requirements specification

Requirements for goods are defined in a specification, which is a description of the technical requirements for a material or product. Similarly, requirements for a service are laid out in the Terms of Reference and requirements for construction works are expressed in the Statement of Work. The requirements document is the most essential document to ensure disability inclusiveness as it expresses the requirements which need to be met by a product or service for it to be disability inclusive.

The requirements are primarily owned by the requisitioner (also known as internal client, budget holder etc.) and collaboration between the requisitioner and procurement staff is needed to support efforts of disability inclusiveness in UN procurement. This includes exploring whether the design of relevant products, their packaging, accessibility standards, context or guidance for use can improve access for persons with disabilities.

The accessibility requirements need to be stated as precisely as possible. Where possible, the requirements should reference appropriate accessibility standards, international norms or other guidelines that suppliers can be instructed to adhere to. Standards and guidelines are not always clear cut, however. They are sometimes open to interpretation, sometimes inconsistent or incomplete and adherence may not even

be fully achievable in certain situations. It may prove difficult to say categorically whether a product meets a standard. In some cases, there may simply be no products available in the relevant market that fully meet the appropriate standard. In these cases, and with the understanding that different markets will have different levels of advancement in the area of disability-inclusion, the recommendation is to try and adhere to the spirit of standards and guidelines and follow them where possible, but also be prepared to use ones professional judgement in this regard.

If a product or service is relevant and prioritized for disability inclusiveness, there are two distinct approaches which the UN organization can choose: 1) Adapt a Universal Design (also known as "Design for all") approach or 2) Adapt the requirements of previously procured goods or services to make them accessible and disability inclusive. The former is the ideal choice but usually takes significantly more effort or time such that the first option may be the more practicable short-term & quick win solution at the beginning.

The first option relies on making adaptations to existing products to make them more accessible or accessible to more people with disabilities. Usually, it makes sense to make the adaptations for the entire procurement, i.e. not to split the requirement into two distinct products (one part being suitably adapted and the other not). However, this approach may vary from one requirement to another.

Adaptations to the products to make them disability-inclusive and ideally universally accessible will vary from one product to another product. Typical adaptations include enhancing the accessibility for persons with visual, hearing or mobility impairments. It is important to remember that even small adjustments to a product or service can make it more accessible – every step counts!

The following table contains practical explanations on what visual, hearing and mobility related accessibility followed by suggestions on what types of adaptations can be made to the product its packaging and associated guidance/operating manuals. These can be used as samples or ideas for adapting requirements documents.

Table 3: Explanation what visual, hearing and mobility accessibility means

ACCESSIBILITY	EXPLANATION
VISION	• If the product includes letters or numbers relevant to the end user to read or understand to use the product, add braille or raised text, or large print. • Tactile aids: Aids that can be felt by touch. It can be raised text and numbers, dots that lead a person with vision impairments etc. • Contrast colours: Use of colours to highlight text, figures, drawings or tactile aids. • Safety and usage: Increase safety (through for instance guide-railing) or usage (through guidance strips for white canes, easier access etc.).
HEARING	• Visual and vibrating alarms: Replace sound with visuals such as flashing lights or vibration. Examples of products that can be changed from sound to lights: fire detectors, doorbells, alarm clocks • Pictograms: If the product is something the end user needs to learn how to use, it can be beneficial to include pictograms on the package/guidance to aid learning and ensure the instruction are clear even after training.
MOBILITY	• Physical access: Consider parameters like: Access height (step or steps), access width, to accommodate wheelchairs – space inside for wheelchair and caregiver (for instance in emergency latrines). If transfer is needed from wheelchairs, does space allow? • Safety and Support: Examples include railing, grapple hook, handlebars etc.

Additionally, for certain product and service categories, there are internationally or regional (European, North American) standards for accessibility which can be very helpful reference materials when developing requirements specifications:

- Annex II of the JIU Report on Accessibility of Conferences and Meetings contains a non-exhaustive list of international accessibility standards with relevance to the UN system

- European Commission efforts on accessibility standards which help remove barriers for people with disabilities can be access on the European Commission's website.

- The United States Access Board ADA standards apply to facilities covered by the ADA in new construction and alterations and are available on their website.

- For the built environment, i.e. for instance for construction projects, the ISO Standard 21542 specifies a range of requirements and recommendations for many of the elements of construction, assemblies, components and fittings which comprise the built environment. These requirements relate to the constructional aspects of access to buildings, to circulation within buildings, to egress from buildings in the normal course of events and evacuation in the event of an emergency. It also deals with aspects of accessibility management in buildings.

Table 4: Suggestions for suitable product adaptations

DISABILITY	PRODUCT	PACKAGING	GUIDELINE
VISION	• Include braille writing[1] • Include tactile aids • Include large print • Ensure contrast colours • Can product be adapted for safety and usage	• Include braille writing • Include tactile aids • Include large print • Ensure contrast colours • Consider text size	• Include braille writing • Include tactile aids • Include large print • Ensure contrast colours • Consider text size
HEARING	• Consider if visual or vibrating alarms are relevant • Consider if connection to hearing aids is relevant	• Consider adding pictograms	• Consider adding pictograms
MOBILITY	• Easy to use and can be done with one limb and little force (hand or foot) • Consider if physical access and space is an issue with this product • Consider safety and support • Consider usage by persons with low dexterity and strength	• Consider whether the packaging is easy to handle, open and close	• Consider if the guideline is easy to use or requires many steps.

[1] Note that braille is not universal. Most universal is unified English braille – but adaptation to local braille language may be needed.

The above focuses on how to make existing products disability-inclusive. When entirely new products are procured (rather than a repetitive procurement of previously purchased products), the UN organization should seek to purchase or work with suppliers to co-design products that can be used by as many people as possible. This is known as universal design. In other words, universal design aims to ensure that products, environments, and programmes and services, to the greatest extent possible, can be used by all people without adaptation or reconfiguration. There are practical check lists which can be used to determine if a product is universally accessible. More guidance on universal design is provided in Section 2.5.

If a determination is made that a relevant product or service cannot be made accessible, or if there is going to be a significant time lag before accessibility can be achieved, the UN organizations should plan for how to provide an alternative means of accessing the service so that persons with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

If possible, it is ideal to already include the prospective users of the products at this stage of the procurement process as they may be able to review and advise on suitable requirements to make the products accessible.

The table below contains some examples of products which have been reviewed and adapted to make them disability inclusive.

Example: Pictogram	Example: Tactile aid & contrast colour	Example: Use of Braille	Example: Visual alarm with vibration

2.4.3 Sourcing and solicitation

The requirements document forms the heart of the solicitation documents. The requirements need to be translated into evaluation criteria which will be used to assess whether offers provided by suppliers are compliant with the requirements.

When drafting the solicitation documents, it is important to also assess whether sample testing by users, e.g. by persons with disabilities should be incorporated. If yes, the result of the sample testing should form an evaluation criterion. This is often a good practice to ensure that the products are indeed accessible but due to the additional time investment this may be most relevant for higher value procurements.

At this point, sample questions can also be incorporated to promote purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers. More on the promotion of purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers as well as how to do this is included in Section 4.

Furthermore, even if no specific accessibility adaptations have been made to the requirement, the following sample text can be included as a standard into almost all solicitation documents. This will show that accessibility is important to the UN organization and will raise the awareness of suppliers of the importance of accessibility and disability inclusiveness and hence may influence their future product and service development:

Table 5: Sample generic text on accessibility for solicitation documents

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The <procured item> should be accessible to all potential users, including persons with disabilities. To the greatest extent possible, it should:

- Be technically accessible, in that it is possible for all users to access all information and functionality;
- Be equally usable, in that it is not prohibitively difficult or time consuming for users with disabilities to carry out normal tasks;
- Be capable of being adapted or configured by individual users to meet their specific needs and preferences;
- Be capable of interfacing with appropriate, widely available assistive technologies employed by users.

2.4.4 Evaluation

At this point in the procurement process, all parameters are set – the provided offers are assessed against the pre-determined evaluation criteria and if it has been specified before, sample testing by users (including persons with disabilities) is carried out. If sample testing is carried out, a sample questionnaire developed by The Center for Universal Design can be used to evaluate the product. This questionnaire is available for download here. More useful information and guidance on user testing is available from the National Disability Authority.

If the procurement framework of the UN organization allows that external parties form part of the technical evaluation team as either observers or even voting members (for many UN organizations, this is a possibility), it is a good practice to consider to include representatives of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities during the technical evaluation.

Suppliers can demonstrate compliance with requirements through provision of statements of accessibility certification or use of appropriate accessibility standards which will vary from category to category, and country to country. When it comes to evaluation, only those criteria can be evaluated which have been disclosed in the solicitation document. Therefore, more information on possibly applicable accessibility standards have been included in Section 2.4.2 (Requirements Specification) above.

2.4.5 Contracting and contract management

The contract management phase of a procurement can be used to continuously monitor the accessibility of a product or service, e.g. by requesting feedback from actual users, i.e. also persons with disabilities or organizations of persons with disabilities.

It is important to bear in mind that accessibility is not just about whether a person can or cannot perceive and physically operate a device. It is also about whether they can do so effectively and efficiently to enable them to carry out their tasks without undue difficulty. This means that success should ultimately be measured by looking at the experiences of the people using the product or service. Can they carry out their tasks? Can they do it quickly and easily? Is the experience "user friendly" for all users?

While the products are used or the services delivered, feedback should be sought from those who use the products, i.e. also from persons with disabilities. Many UN organizations have mechanisms which allow users or beneficiaries to provide feedback. It is recommended that UN organizations which employ such mechanisms, to also actively open these up for users or beneficiaries to provide feedback on the accessibility of the goods and services. This can, for instance, mean in practices that standardized questionnaires are suitably adapted to include questions on accessibility or that information on the UN organization's websites or information and handouts provided in programmes / projects include such information. This feedback mechanism is vitally important to ascertain that persons with disabilities effectively have access to the goods and services.

2.5 Universal design

Universal Design (UD) is a design approach supporting this thinking and is often interchangeably used with terms such as design for all and inclusive design. The aim of universal design is to ensure that products, environments, programmes and services are accessible by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or reconfiguration. The importance of Universal Design lies in the user experience, with an emphasis on access and use of facilities, goods, information and services with such ease that accessible features are not noticeable.

There are seven principles underlying UD which support the 'design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The principles are:

1. **Equitable use:** design that is useful and marketable to persons with diverse abilities.

2. **Flexibility in use:** design that accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

3. **Simple and intuitive use:** design that is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or concentration level.

4. **Perceptible information:** design that communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

5. **Tolerance for error:** design that minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

6. **Low physical effort:** design that can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

7. **Size and space for approach and use:** design that provides appropriate size and space – for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture or mobility.

Ideally, all products or services which the UN organizations procure should be universally designed and the table can be used to ascertain whether a product is universally designed. It is recommended that the developed prioritization as described in the previous section is used to progressively review the most relevant categories first.

As a rule, Universal Design means considering all users equally, not designing for specific disabilities or specific assistive technologies. However, in some cases, where the target user group is restricted, it may be possible to specify a restricted set of accessibility requirements for example, where a product is being purchased for specific staff member to use and will not likely be used by others.

The following table includes sample probing questions on universal design, some of which are more applicable to products, some more to services and some to both. The table or a selection of questions can be included in solicitation documents to probe the universal design of products. Naturally, the table is not comprehensive, and the questions may need to be adapted to the specific category being procurements. In the evaluation, either additional points can be attributed to products/services which achieve a high universal design score or the universal design requirement can even be made a mandatory requirement, i.e. products/services which receive a considerable number of "Nos" in the table below would not qualify. Bidders should be provided with an opportunity to also suggest mitigating measures if the goods or service does not directly comply with the requirement.

Table 6: Example questions to check for accessibility and universal design in products / services

PRINCIPLES	QUESTION	APPLICABLE TO GOODS	APPLICABLE TO SERVICES
Equitable use	**1.1:** The user does not feel segregated or stigmatized to use your product / service as it is used by everyone else?	Yes	Yes
	1.2: The product can be used privately and safely by all users?	Yes	No
	1.3: If your service is partly or completely digital, does it adhere to digital accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG)?	No	Yes
	1.4: If your service is not fully digital, have you ensured the physical environment is accessible for everyone, e.g. using the RECU principles (Reach, Enter, Circulate, Use your service)?	No	Yes
Flexibility in use	**2.1:** The product can be used by right or left side, hand or foot alone?	Yes	No
	2.2: The product can be used at various paces (slowly or quickly)?	Yes	No
	2.3: The product / service can be used safely by all users?	Yes	Yes
Simple and intuitive	**3.1:** The most important features of product are the most obvious?	Yes	No
	3.2: The product / service is as simple and intuitive as possible to understand and use?	Yes	Yes
	3.3: If the service is delivered to someone's home, is the service delivery model easily understood by all users?	No	Yes
Perceptible information	**4.1:** A user with a hearing impairment can use this product / service?	Yes	Yes
	4.2: A user of low vision or without vision can use this product / service?	Yes	Yes
	4.3: A user with cognitive impairments can use this service?	Yes	Yes
Tolerance for error	**5.1:** The user will not be harmed if she/he makes a mistake using the product?	Yes	No
	5.2: Product features (e.g. button/levers) are easy to reach and use?	Yes	No
Low physical effort	**6.1:** The product does not need excessive force or repetitive movement?	Yes	No
	6.2: The user is not in an uncomfortable/awkward posture when using the product / service in sitting or standing?	Yes	Yes
Size and space for approach and use	**7.1:** The user can use the product / service either from sitting or standing?	Yes	Yes
	7.2: There is enough space to use product / service with an assistive device or caregiver?	Yes	Yes

A more comprehensive list of evaluation/probing questions on Universal Design has been developed by The Center for Universal Design. This list of questions is available for download here.

There are many additional resources and training materials on Universal Design. Some which can be particularly recommended for further reading include:

- Whole Building Design Guide (WBDG): WBDG is a gateway to up-to-date information on integrated 'whole building' design techniques and technologies. The goal of 'Whole Building' Design is to create a successful high-performance building by applying an integrated design and team approach to the project during the planning and programming phases. This website also contains guidance on Universal Design of Buildings.

- Inclusive Design Toolkit by the University of Cambridge: This website introduces inclusive design and applies provides a variety of helpful tools for universal design.

- Universaldesign.com: This website by the IDeA Center, which is a center of excellence in the field of universal design (UD), is dedicated to improving the design of environments and products by making them more usable, safe, and appealing to people with a wide range of abilities, throughout their life spans. The website is also helpful and has more news and articles for inspiration.

2.6 Target setting

Indicator 8 also calls for the setting and meeting of a target for a number or percentage of relevant procurement documents that have accessibility as a mandatory requirement in order to meet the requirements of this indicator. While it is required that such a target is set and that the target should be met, the UNDIS does not specify the value of the target itself. While the indicator asks the target to be expressed in number or percentage of procurement documents, it is recommended that UN organizations either set and measure a target for number of procurement documents including accessibility as a mandatory requirement or else volume of procurement which includes accessibility as a mandatory requirement.

It is recommended that a specific target is set depending on the relevance of a category (see Section 2.3.1), e.g. as follows:

RELEVANCE	SUGGESTED TARGET
Categories with **high relevance** for disability inclusiveness	100%
Categories with **moderate to high relevance** for disability inclusiveness	20%
Categories with **low to moderate relevance** for disability inclusiveness	5%
Categories with **low relevance** for disability inclusiveness	0%

These values are indicative only and each UN organization should set the value such that it feels comfortable with it bearing in mind that the target should be achievable within a defined time frame such that it can serve as a motivation. Additionally, it is recommended to continually adjust these targets over time. At the beginning of the implementation of this strategy, there may only be a target for categories with high relevance for disability inclusiveness and this value may be set at only 10% (instead of the suggested target of 100% in the table above). Over time and as more categories have been reviewed for accessibility, the targets may be successively increased and expanded to

the categories with moderate or even low to moderate relevance for disability inclusiveness.

One major challenge to fulfil this requirement is how to measure and report on the achievement of the set target. A manual data analysis is likely impracticable for most UN organizations. Instead, efficient reporting will likely only be possible if the reporting can be automated through the UN organization's ERP and/or e-Procurement system.

As a first step, it is recommended that UN organizations publish their solicitation documents on the UNGM using the Sustainable Procurement (SP) indicators framework (see Section 4.5.1 for more details on the SP indicators framework). This framework already partially allows to indicate whether requirements on accessibility have been included in the procurement. This data, while leading to a certain overreporting (see Sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 for details), can already be gathered now and the SP indicators can be suitably adjusted to lead to a more accurate reporting in the mid-term.

As an alternative means of reporting for UN organization who do not publish their solicitation documents on the UNGM, their respective ERP/e-Procurement system would need to be suitably adapted to procurement staff indicate whether the solicitation document considers accessibility and disability inclusiveness.

Further training material and resources for procuring accessible products and services are provided in Section 6 of this guideline.

2.7 Summary

The following is a list of selected key actions which are recommended in this section. This list can be used to do a quick check to identify the current status of implementation of Indicator 8.i and 8.iii and to help prioritize actions

Indicator 8.i // 8.iii

☐ Procurement policy includes accessibility requirements for relevant categories

☐ Relevance-spend matrix completed to define prioritized categories

☐ First procurement case completed where accessibility has been included

☐ All categories with "high" priority reviewed for accessibility and appropriate actions taken

☐ All categories with "medium" priority reviewed for accessibility and appropriate actions taken

☐ Target defined number/percentage of relevant procurement documents that need to have accessibility as a mandatory requirement

☐ Target regularly tracked and reported

☐ Target met

3. MAKING THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS ACCESSIBLE

This section covers guidance, advice and tools related to one element of Indicator 8: Procurement policies ensure that the procurement process is accessible.

3.1 Overview

This element of Indicator 8 ensures that the procurement process itself is accessible for people with disabilities. In order to understand how to best approach meeting the requirements to fulfill this indicator, it is important to define what the procurement process is, what makes the procurement process accessible or not accessible and, connected with this, which disabilities to mainly keep in mind when thinking about accessibility of the procurement process.

A simplified and generalized overview over the procurement process is presented in Section 2.4 above. The procurement process usually spans a broad range of activities which may include annual procurement planning, budgeting, requirements definition, planning of specific procurement strategies and approaches, sourcing, preparing and issuing solicitation documents, receiving offers from bidders in either digital or hard-copy format and responding to questions from bidders, facilitating a pre-bid conference and responding to questions from bidders, formal bid opening, evaluating received offers both technically and financially, negotiations, preparation of contract award, review of the proposed contract award by a procurement review committee, awarding the contract, preparation and issuance of the contract, handover of the contract to the contract manager, and then ongoing contract administration during the lifetime of the contract.

As can be seen from this non-exhaustive list, the procurement process often involves a broad range of activities. These activities also involve a diverse range of stakeholders, which may encompass the requisitioner, procurement or supply staff, a range of different bidders, an awarding authority (those who have the authority to engage the UN entity in a contract, members of the procurement review committee, and many others.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the multitude of systems involved and variety of documents created during a procurement process. Central elements of a procurement process will usually be the UN organization's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, e.g. as provided by SAP, Microsoft, Oracle, or any other provider as well as the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM), which is a vendor registration portal which most UN organizations use. Beyond the ERP system and UNGM, UN entities often have dedicated e-Procurement systems supporting any of the above activities. Additionally, there will be further applications, web-based, mobile or other, to further support the steps outlined above, e.g. when creating procurement plans, preparing a submission to a procurement review committee, preparing a contract etc. Lastly, standard office applications such as MS Office will be used throughout the procurement process.

Considering all of the above, when thinking about a truly accessible procurement process – in particular when recognizing the diverse and complex operational environments that the UN entities work in – one quickly realizes that establishing a fully accessible procurement process at all times, for all stakeholders and for all procurement activities, becomes particularly complex.

Therefore, in this guideline, it is recommended to focus efforts on a few actions which will have the highest impact on the accessibility of the procurement process. In order to make the procurement process more accessible, it is recommended to focus on issuing accessible solicitation documents and making the supplier-facing procurement systems accessible. For both actions, clear standards exist in terms of what makes a document or IT system accessible which the UN entities can benefit from. The remainder of this section is dedicated to selected key actions that each UN entity can take.

3.2 Prioritization

In order to prioritize the UN organizations' efforts, two key actions have been identified as first priorities to make the procurement process more accessible:

1. **Developing and issuing accessible solicitation documents only.** Guidance on how to do this is provided in Section 3.3.1.

2. **Making the supplier-facing part of the procurement process accessible.** Guidance on how to do this is provided in Section 3.3.2.

These two actions should be taken first before additional efforts are undertaken to make the procurement process accessible.

As the systems or processes used in procurement are not static but evolve over time, once accessible systems and processes may become inaccessible or introduce new barriers. With this in mind, organizations should perform regular reviews of their procurement process to identify and remove barriers or provide accessible alternatives. It is critical that persons with disabilities are included in the testing of these systems and validation that the procurement process is accessible.

When an organization has taken the previous two actions, it will be compliant with the spirit of the UNDIS Indicator 8. However, this does not necessarily mean that the entire procurement process, considered end-to-end is accessible for all, i.e. both external stakeholders such as suppliers as well internal stakeholders such as procurement staff and requisitioners as outlined above.

Whether or not a procurement process of a specific UN organization is fully accessible, will require a full assessment of the accessibility of the process. This requires specialized expertise and usually a significant investment by the organization. An example TOR, developed for some of UNICEF's IT systems (not specific to procurement systems), is available in the resources section of the UNGM site where this guideline is hosted. It is recommended that, once the above two measures are fully implemented within a UN entity, a more comprehensive accessibility assessment is to be carried out which then also involves the other systems (e.g. used by personnel) supporting the procurement process.

3.3 Key measures

3.3.1 Accessible solicitation documents

This element of Indicator 8 calls for procurement policies to ensure that that the procurement process is accessible. For procurement policy to enhance the accessibility of the procurement process, a simple policy clause can be integrated into the respective organization's procurement framework. This could read, for instance, as follows:

"Solicitation documents are checked for their accessibility prior to issuance. Issues identified during the accessibility check should be addressed as far as practicable. Guidance on how to improve the accessibility of digital documents is available on the ITU website."

Such a straightforward policy clause, integrated at the appropriate place in the UN organization's procurement framework, reminds procurement colleagues to carry out the available, automatic accessibility checks provided by, e.g. Microsoft office suite or Adobe Acrobat, and to edit the solicitation documents accordingly.

Additionally, UN entities should ensure that either this document or the tips provided below are incorporated into their procurement policies, manual or guidelines as appropriate. This will ensure that procurement staff are put in a position where they can easily ensure that only accessible solicitation documents are published.

Solicitation documents often consist of several documents (sometimes these are combined in one document, sometimes these are separate documents such as:

- Instructions to bidders
- Terms of Reference, Requirements document, Statement of Work or similar
- General Conditions of Contract
- Supplier Code of Conduct
- Evaluation matrix
- Bid submission sheet, pricing table or similar

For most recipients (i.e. in this case bidders or potential bidders), reading and understanding these documents may be a relatively easy task and accessibility is

achieved. But for persons with a disability such as low vision or blindness who need to access these documents using a screen reader, these documents need to fulfil certain properties which will make them accessible.

Making documents accessible means that persons with disabilities can maneuver through the documents, also for instance by using assistive technologies, utilize the document properties for contact information and document styles to jump from one part of a document to another, to hear descriptions from pictures and image tags to help understand the images on the pages, and to have equal access to information that most of us take for granted.

Key tips for creating accessible documents:

1. **Complete the document properties:** Whether a word processing, spreadsheet, or presentation program is used, every document has an area where Document Properties can be entered. Document Properties allow the creator to enter information about the Title, Author, Key Search Words, Language, and Subject Matter of the document. Best practices for Document Properties is to include the UN entity name, Address, and Phone Number in the Author field as contact information for the reader. Also, strategically utilizing key search words, will help to let the reader determine the key topics covered quickly.

2. **Add Alternative Text to Images, pictures, clip art, charts, tables, shapes, embedded objects, inked entries, signatures, video, or audio files:** Alternative text provides an audible description of a non-text object when an individual using a screen reader hovers over an image with their cursor. Alternative Text is also known as "alt text". In most programs, a right click on an object will bring up a context menu in which alternative text can be entered.

3. **Use styles and document structure using headers and sub-headers in long documents:** Use the program's built in or custom style menus to creating titles, headings, lists, and normal paragraphs. Whenever possible, use heading styles, with high contrast colors, in numerical order. When creating lists, use only round bullets as very few fancier bullets are recognizable or read by today's screen readers.

4. **Specify column header rows in tables:** Design tables with as simple a structure of rows and columns as possible. Use the first row to enter descriptive titles for the columns.

5. **Use meaningful hyperlink descriptions:** When formatting a hyperlink, be as meaningful as possible. Hyperlinked text should therefore be descriptive and short and should make sense out of context. For instance, don't use the following sentence with the word "here" as the hyperlink (e.g. "To apply click here.") Use a hyperlink that describes the item such as "To apply go to the fillable Bid Submission Form."

6. **Avoid using blank cells for formatting or paragraph marks for spacing between lines or paragraphs.** Blank cells in a spreadsheet and formatting marks in a word document create a stutter sound on the screen reader that can become annoying to a listener. It is better to us cell padding, cell spacing, and paragraph and line spacing when creating documents.

7. **Avoid using watermarks that are images:** Watermarks are typically defined as "background" which is not read by a screen reader so most things that are placed as a watermark in a document are lost on the reader using a screen reader.

8. **Include closed captions for all audio files.** Accessibility is as important to individuals with low or no hearing ability as it is for people with site challenges. Therefore, include closed caption for all audio files in a document or presentation.

9. **Add a space or small image or text box at the start of each document with an accessibility disclaimer:** An accessibility disclaimer tells readers who and where to call for assistance with the document or presentation should they have difficulty reading or understanding it.

10. **Utilize Accessibility Check tools in the newer versions of most programs:** Microsoft Word/Excel has a feature with which the accessibility of a created document can be checked and improved. This feature is available under the option "File", "Check for Issues". More information on how to create accessible word documents is available in

the video tutorial under the link below. Make sure that all documents used for a procurement process are accessible. Adobe Acrobat (Pro version required) includes an accessibility check for PDFs which can be used prior to issuing solicitation documents. This will help to create and verify PDFs to meet accessibility standards.

More information and guidance on accessible digital content is available from ITU, which include a series of tutorial videos in English, Spanish, and French for PDFs, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel documents. These are available through this website: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Persons-with-Disabilities/Pages/Video-Tutorials-on-Accessible-Digital-Content.aspx. Also, an ICT checklist has been developed which can be used if suppliers provide any document to be used in a procurement process. This ICT checklist is available on the UNGM, where this document is also hosted.

Furthermore, and as a more long-term measure, it is recommended that an automatic accessibility check of solicitation documents is integrated into UNGM. Such a check could automatically check the accessibility of PDFs, Word and Excel documents when users publish such documents on the UNGM. Should issues be identified, the user could then automatically be notified of the identified accessibility issues while it would not stop the publication.

Once an organization has established as a common practice that all solicitation documents are accessible, the scope could step-by-step be widened to include additional procurement-related documents. The first step should then be that all general documents which relate to the procurement process and which suppliers reasonably need to read and understand in order to participate in a procurement process (e.g. the respective UN organization's Procurement Manual or Policy) should be accessible. The second step should then be to also look at procurement-related documents which are only used internal to a UN organization (e.g. a submission to a contracts review committee or a technical evaluation matrix/scoring sheet) are accessible.

3.3.2 Accessible supplier-facing procurement systems

The second key element which is required to fulfil the requirements of this indicator is for the UN organizations to make their supplier-facing procurement systems accessible. Most UN organization's procurement processes are reasonably well supported by IT systems; hence efforts should be focused on making the supplier-facing elements of these IT systems accessible.

Supplier-facing procurement systems of the UN organizations will vary from one UN organization to another but will at a minimum include the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM), which is the procurement portal of the United Nations where many suppliers identify business opportunities with the participating UN organizations. Additionally, the UN organization's website often also contains business opportunities as well as specific information on the procurement framework of the UN organization and should thus also be accessible. Lastly, UN organizations increasingly use e-Procurement systems (such as In-Tend) to support their procurement processes, e.g. for making solicitation documents available to bidders, for raising and responding to questions by bidders, for submitting offers, or for managing contracts and issuing invoices. Where such e-Procurement systems are used, they should also be made accessible.

Accessible applications and websites benefit everyone, not just those with disabilities. On accessible digital platforms and interfaces, the user is put at the center of the experience. Text is more readable. Content is better organized. The design is clean and simple.

An accessible procurement system will have the following properties:

- It can be used without or with limited **vision**.
- It can be used without perception of **color**
- It can be used without or with **limited hearing**
- It can be used without **vocal capacity**
- It can be used with limited manipulation or **strength**
- It can be used with limited **reach**
- It can be used with limited **cognition**
- It minimizes **photosensitive seizure triggers**

Fortunately, a range of widely recognized accessibility standards exist which can serve as the basis for making the supplier-facing procurement systems accessible and which can be used or referred to during the procurement or adaptation of procurement systems. These are, for instance, WCAG 2.1, US ADA Section 508, EU EN 301 549 and other UN-specific standards and guidelines.

- **WCAG 2.1:** The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are part of a series of web accessibility guidelines published by World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the main international standards organization for the Internet. These are a set of recommendations for making Web content more accessible, primarily for people with disabilities – but also for all user agents, including highly limited devices such as mobile phone. WCAG are technical standards. They have 12-13 guidelines that are organized under 4 principles: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust. For each guideline, there are testable success criteria, which are at three levels: A, AA, and AAA.

- **US ADA Section 508:** Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act establishes requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal government of the United States. Section 508 requires that electronic and information technology be accessible to people with disabilities. The Section 508 website contains a broad range of resources useful for any procurement of accessible IT products or services including sample language which can be used in solicitation documents for specific ICT categories. This section of the website can also be helpful for bidders as it helps ICT supplier understand how to demonstrate the accessibility of their products and services.

- **EU EN 301 549:** EN 301 549 is an EU digital accessibility standard which sets requirements for the public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe. The structure and content of EN 301 549 is similar to the US ADA Section 508. Both Section 508 and EN 301 549 incorporate WCAG. Importantly, both standards are harmonized, i.e. a product conforming with Section 508 will also conform with 301 549.

Also, both standard can be applied to a broad range of ICT products such as computers and laptops, office equipment as printers and photocopiers, mobile devices, software/applications, websites, and electronic documents.

Key tips for making the supplier-facing procurement systems accessible:

1. **Inventory & Quick check:** The first step is to create an inventory (or more simply a list) of those systems which are used to carry out the procurement process and with which suppliers interoperate. One way to do this is to review the activities involved in procurement processes (see e.g. in Section 3.1 for a non-comprehensive list of such activities) and list the IT systems which support these steps. For UN entities, these may be, e.g. the UNGM, any supplier-facing ERP interface, the e-Procurement system, or others.
   Next, where possible, carry out a quick check of the supplier-facing procurement systems using simple and free tools such as powermapper.com. This is a simple check to get started and can provide a quick and preliminary perspective on the accessibility of the key supplier-facing procurement systems and websites. This is by no means a comprehensive check but can serve to obtain more awareness of the accessibility (or potential lack thereof) for bidders. It is important to note that automated tools have their limitations and that automated tools are best used by experts who can interpret their results accurately. In particular, experts would be able to quickly identify false positive and false negative results from the tools. Hence, these would always only be a starting point.

2. **Establish a norm / standard for IT systems:** Procurement colleagues should support their respective UN entity's IT department in ensuring that a norm is established for any new IT system, including systems supporting the procurement process. This norm would not be owned by the procurement department but rather by the IT and policy departments. However, UNDIS Indicator 8 and its requirement that the procurement process must be accessible provides a starting point for procurement staff to participate in discussions with

IT to establish a respective norm or standard. A norm could, for instance, regulate that for each new IT system, a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) needs to be provided by the supplier. VPATs are used to support the development, procurement, maintenance and use of accessible IT products and services in compliance with ADA Section 508 and its standards. The VPAT is a statement of conformity used by suppliers to demonstrate how their goods or services comply with accessibility standards. The VPAT contains documentation on Section 508, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Success Criteria & Conformance Requirements (Levels A, AA, AAA) as well as the European Accessibility standards EN 301.81. For WCAG, the Level AA is the international best practice which is used frequently by governmental organizations and this level is also recommended for UN entities.

3. **Only procure accessible systems (applicable to new systems only):** Achieving and maintaining accessibility is easiest if accessibility is a requirement from the outset of planning and drafting specifications of an IT system. Hence, for any new IT system procurement or major overhaul of an existing IT system or website, ensure that accessibility is incorporated into the procurement process. This could be by reference to the UN entity's IT accessibility norm (see above).

Alternatively, an accessibility checklist could be added to the procurement of each new IT system or major IT development. An example of such an accessibility checklist is provided on the UNGM. Alternatively, both Sections 508 as well as EN 301 549 (see above) provide sample technical accessibility requirements for a broad range of different ICT products and services. These are readily available on the respective websites and could be used when procuring such products. This would have the benefit that many suppliers of ICT products and services will already be familiar with those standards. For more complex procurements (such as bespoke IT systems), it may be more useful to refer to the functional performance statements which are available in these standards. This would leave it up to the supplier to show which of the relevant technical accessibility requirements their proposed solution meets.

Additionally, the solicitation documents could include a few general requirements which would be applicable to most ICT procurements as shown in the table below.

Table 7: Sample requirements for the procurement of accessible IT goods and services

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The bidder shall specify in its offer the following:
- **A.** The bidder's ICT accessibility policy and metrics to track progress towards ensuring the products it develops or sells and the services it provides are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities in accordance with UNICEF standards.
- **B.** The name of and contact information for the person who is responsible for ICT accessibility issues.
- **C.** The training and capacity building steps taken by the bidder to ensure the availability of relevant ICT accessibility knowledge and skills including defining skills, identifying resources, and managing acquiring skills and allocating qualified resources within its staff.
- **D.** The compliance, feedback and reporting process adopted by the vendor for addressing ICT accessibility.
- **E.** The process and services offered towards remediation/mitigation of accessibility bugs and shortcomings when identified by the users of the solution.

Annex C of EN 301 549 contains a full description of the test procedures and evaluation methodology for each standard technical accessibility requirement in a form that is suitable for public procurement. These test procedures can be particularly useful during the evaluation stage of procuring an accessible IT system as they can be used by both suppliers as well as the UN entity's technical evaluation team.

Supplies can demonstrate conformance through a variety of means such as simple "tick boxes" (lowest degree of credibility but often entirely sufficient), more elaborate declarations of conformance with supporting evidence, or third-part assessments of conformity / certifications (highest degree of credibility). The most appropriate way for suppliers to show conformity with given requirements will depend on a range of factors such as the value of the procurement, risk of non-compliance with a standard, and others.

4. Carry out an accessibility audit: As a next step, it is recommended to undertake an accessibility audit of the existing procurement systems. Accessibility auditing means using standardized tests to establish what elements of the system are accessible and which elements need to be modified and improved. The result of such an audit is a list of actions to improve accessibility of the audited systems. An audit can be carried out either in-house or outsourced to a specialized service provider. While both approaches are viable, the latter will usually be the more appropriate choice for UN entities.

The systems to be audited should be carefully selected with a view already towards how outcomes from the audit will be able to be implemented. An audit can then include the full system or just sample pages or user paths – this choice will have an impact on the overall cost of the audit. Especially for large systems, a full audit may be prohibitively expensive but a good & representative selection of sample pages which are used for the important processes could be selected for an in-depth audit. If the issues found in this representative sample are significant, it is likely an indication that the system also has accessibility issues in other parts. It is essential that an accessibility audit also involves user testing and the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

When procuring services for accessibility audits, the following aspects could be incorporated in the solicitation documents:

Table 8: Determining the qualification of bidders for accessibility audits

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The bidder shall specify in its offer the following:
A. Summary of experience of IT system accessibility auditing;
B. Examples of work in the area;
C. Client references, with names and contact details;
D. Professional qualifications of audit staff;
E. Any specific expertise required to evaluate content on your site that is specialized because of its subject matter, technology or language

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In terms of deliverables, an additional support request beyond the actual accessibility report may be a useful

addition. This could include a presentation by the auditor on the full audit report which includes a list of prioritized specific actions to improve the accessibility of the audited system, including a question and answer session; mentoring and providing additional feedback to staff as they attempt to improve the accessibility of the system to help ensure any changes recommended in the audit report are in line with best practice; and/or training on ICT accessibility for staff to ensure they understand fully the issues raised in the audit report. The final report of the accessibility audit should be reviewed by all relevant stakeholders (including but not necessarily limited to procurement and IT staff) who need to ensure that they understand and agree with the recommendations of the report and if not, any pertinent comments are shared and discussed with the auditor.

A sample ToR, which was created to test the accessibility of the certain systems of UNICEF is available on the UNGM site for information.

Accessibility audits can also be used to build capacity within the UN entity on ICT accessibility on the technical issues involved in ICT accessibility and to raise their awareness of how people with disabilities use procurement systems. This increased awareness and capacity will also help to ensure that future developments on the systems will result in more accessibility. Other steps to obtain sustained gains and build on the accessibility audit may include the creation of accessibility guidelines and checklists for internal use, building accessibility into processes for managing the system, including accessibility awareness in induction training for new staff, and scheduling a follow-up web accessibility audit

5. **Improve the accessibility of existing supplier-facing procurement systems:** Following the accessibility audit, its results should be used to make the procurement systems more accessible. As the issues identified may be of a very technical nature and since changing affected systems may be costly and will require collaboration with other teams within the UN entity, and possibly other stakeholders such as suppliers, the interest and involvement of senior management is a key success factor in working to improve accessibility of the procurement systems.

In many UN organizations, changes to IT systems are reviewed by an inter-disciplinary group or board. These groups take the decisions on projects with a major IT component and often submissions to these boards follow a specific standard. Thus, if the UN entity has a board like this, the accessibility audit (see the previous step) could already include as a deliverable that the final report incorporates the formats or templates required by the board. This will help decision making and speed up the development and implementation of the recommendations of the accessibility audit.

A key question in moving from accessibility audit to implementation is whether accessibility problems can be rectified or whether redevelopment is the only option. There are several factors to consider in making this decision, e.g.

- Is the current system dated or defective in ways other than its accessibility?

- Can redevelopment be justified on other grounds, such as improved functionality, greater reliability and improved efficiency?

- Are there any other drivers towards redevelopment?

- Are accessibility problems embedded in the content to such an extent that a clean start on a new system, with content recreated instead of transferred, is the most sensible approach?

6. **Keep the procurement systems accessible:**
It is critical to bear in mind that IT systems evolve dynamically as standards in the internet, underlying technology and software as well as processes and policies change. Hence, maintaining accessibility means building accessibility into the system operations, including regular checks. No matter how rigorously accessibility is tested and achieved in the first build of a system, and regardless of how strongly it is emphasized during staff training, it constantly needs to be considered. Many issues can affect the accessibility of a newly developed or redeveloped systems, degrading its accessibility over time, such as staff turnover leading to those without accessibility skills working on the site; the pressure of work leading staff to take shortcuts with accessibility; or the inclusion of external content that is not accessible.

Ongoing training is a key element of keeping procurement systems accessible. Classroom-based training can be a good approach for general accessibility awareness raising or in-depth training specific to a person's task. For ongoing development, however, a mentoring or technical support approach may work best. This can be organized, for instance, as a consultancy contract to supply a certain amount of assistance over a period of time on an as-needed basis. A fast-response help-desk service may also work. Each UN entity will need to identify the best way to ensure that accessibility of the procurement systems is maintained over time and the best way to do that will depend on the size, staffing, budget, organizational setup and culture of the UN entity.

In terms of the frequency of an accessibility review, this will depend on how often dynamic content, policy, and technology changes. A frequency between 6–18 months will likely be appropriate for many systems.

3.4 Summary

The following is a list of selected key actions which are recommended in this section. This list can be used to do a quick check to identify the current status of implementation of Indicator 8.i and 8.iii and to help prioritize actions

Indicator 8.ii

- ☐ Mandatory check for accessibility of solicitation documents incorporate in procurement framework (e.g. Procurement Manual)
- ☐ Information on how to make procurement documents accessible provided to procurement staff (e.g. information on training resources)
- ☐ Solicitation documents are published in an accessible format
- ☐ Other procurement-related documents are accessible (e.g. Procurement Manual)
- ☐ Inventory of procurement systems compiled
- ☐ Norm for accessibility for new systems established (in collaboration with IT)
- ☐ Accessibility audit: Scope defined; audit carried out
- ☐ Key recommendations from accessibility audit implemented
- ☐ Accessibility of supplier-facing procurement systems maintained over time

4. SOURCING FROM DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE SUPPLIERS

This section covers guidance, advice and tools related to **Indicator 8.iv**: "Procurement policy promotes purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers, and guidelines have been developed for this purpose."

4.1 Overview

Indicator 8.iv calls for the promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers and the development of respective guidelines. In order to do that, the UN organization needs to define the term "disability-inclusive supplier" and establish how to promote the purchasing from such suppliers within their procurement frameworks, e.g. through respective policy clauses. The promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers will incentivize bidders to become disability-inclusive which in turn will have a positive impact on persons with disabilities. Finally, the UN organization needs to establish guidelines that lay out how to procure from disability-inclusive suppliers.

In this section, a definition and policy options are provided for the UN organizations to adopt within their procurement framework as appropriate. Having a common definition and understanding of what constitutes a disability-inclusive supplier will ensure that there is a consistent approach among the UN organizations and a prerequisite to, e.g. using UNGM for any monitoring or reporting purposes. Additionally, having a common definition among the UN organizations will ensure that the UN speaks with "one voice" to the business community and avoids confusion by bidders or bidder fatigue.

This section also suggests sample questions which can be incorporated into solicitation documents. Additionally, some suggestions are made on how to measure and report on how much has been procured from disability-inclusive suppliers even though this is not a requirement of the indicator itself.

Lastly, this section can thus be the necessary guidance which the indicator asked for. If this guideline itself is suitably adopted by the UN organization, this element of the indicator can be considered fulfilled.

4.2 Definition

The aim of sourcing from disability-inclusive suppliers is to enhance the economic and social empowerment of persons with disabilities by awarding contracts to business entities or civil entities that hire persons with disabilities or are run by them or are otherwise disability-inclusive. In order to ensure consistent and harmonized reporting for this element of Indicator 8 by the various UN organizations, the following definition is recommended to be adopted within the procurement frameworks of the UN organizations:

> "A disability-inclusive supplier is a supplier which makes a dedicated, consistent, and measurable effort to implement disability-inclusive practices. Suppliers can show that they are disability-inclusive through a variety of means such as having an organizational policy on disability inclusion, recruiting and hiring people with disabilities, offering reasonable accommodation to candidates and personnel with disabilities, providing accessible premises, ensuring that their supply chains are disability-inclusive, manufacturing accessible products following Universal Design principles or others."

This definition is flexible in the sense that it can adapt to different goods and services, markets, geographies and supplier sizes and maturities. It is suggested to have this definition as it provides an incentive for suppliers of all sizes and background to take actions to improve their disability-inclusiveness which is considered better than a "black or white" / "in or out" approach.

4.3 Policy clauses

Although promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers can be achieved through a variety of policy options, it is recommended here that it is promoted through an additional benefit at the evaluation stage of procurement as follows:

- **RFQ/ITB[1]:** Request for Quotations (RFQs) and Invitations to Bid (ITB) are the most frequently used solicitation documents among UN organizations for the procurement of clearly specified requirements, i.e. often used for the procurement of goods. Technical evaluation criteria in RFQs/ITBs are usually based on a binary scale of "pass/fail", a compliant or acceptable offer needs to pass all evaluation criteria. The award is then made to the lowest-priced offer which meets all the criteria, i.e. passes all the technical evaluation criteria.

  Due to this evaluation method, which results in the lowest priced, technically compliant or acceptable offer being retained, care must be taken when incorporating the requirement that a supplier for a given product or service must be disability-inclusive. When this is a requirement as per the solicitation documents, only a supplier deemed to be disability-inclusive and having submitted a technically compliant offer will be eligible to be awarded a contract. In a market where there are few disability-inclusive suppliers, this requirement may overly limit the competition and contradict the public procurement principle of open and fair competition.

  It is recommended that the procurement policy requires that suppliers are disability-inclusive for relevant purchases under RFQ/ITB methodology with the limitations provided in the remarks section below.

- **RFP[2]:** Request for Proposals are the most frequently used solicitation documents among UN organizations when the requirements are complex, cannot be clearly or completely specified, where detailed technical evaluations are to be performed, and/or where pricing or cost may not be the sole basis of award. Therefore, RFPs are usually used for the procurement of services or works. RFPs are usually evaluated using the cumulative analysis methodology, i.e. a certain number of points are provided for each evaluation criterion. The technical evaluation is then the sum of all points. All offers over a given threshold (usually between 50–70% of the maximum number of points achievable in the

technical evaluation) pass the technical evaluation, then proceed to the financial evaluation where the financial offers are also scored. The award is then made to the offer which is found most responsive after the technical and financial scores are weighted based on the total score calculated.

Due to this evaluation method, the effect of including a requirement for a supplier to be disability-inclusive does not necessarily disqualify a supplier from the process if it is not disability-inclusive. Rather, suppliers which are disability-inclusive will have an advantage over those which are not due to their higher technical score.

It is recommended that the procurement policy requires that disability-inclusive suppliers are awarded additional points when the cumulative analysis evaluation methodology is used with the limitations provided in the remarks section below. Further, it is recommended that the additional points achievable due to a supplier being disability-inclusive is limited to a maximum of 5% of the total technical evaluation score. This means that if, for instance, a total score of 100 points can be reached in the technical evaluation, a maximum of 5 points of those 100 points can be obtained for a supplier being disability inclusive.

Remarks:

- Sometimes, RFPs also include a preliminary pass/fail evaluation on a number of mandatory criteria, i.e. both evaluation methods described above are combined. If that is the case, it is recommended to use the same approach as described above under RFQ/ITB for the pass/fail stage of the evaluation.

- Each UN organization has a different setup for their procurement framework, i.e. where and how the above clauses need to be incorporated will be specific for each UN organization. Most frequently, the Procurement Manual or Handbook (sections/chapters on solicitation and/or evaluation) will be the most appropriate place where the above policy recommendations can be incorporated. Alternatively, the documents which establish the UN organization's

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[1] RFQ/ITB used here only for ease of reference. This bullet point refers to any solicitation method that uses either technically acceptable or substantially compliant evaluation methodology, i.e. any evaluation methodology based on pass/fail criteria.

[2] RFP used here only for ease of reference. This bullet point refers to any solicitation method that uses cumulative analysis evaluation methodology, i.e. an evaluation based on the assigning points or scores for each offer.

Procurement Review Committee could also be an appropriate place for the inclusion of a respective policy clause.

4.3.1 Limitations

- Evaluating whether a supplier is indeed disability-inclusive requires time and effort during the evaluation process due to the validation of the evidence provided by the supplier in response to the questions in the table below. Due to this additional workload and in order to not unduly make the procurement process more cumbersome (and hence also lengthier), it is recommended to adopt the above policy clauses only for procurements over a certain monetary threshold. The monetary threshold recommended for the above is the UN organization's procurement review committee threshold. This threshold varies from one organization to another but linking it to the threshold will keep the provision simple and easier to incorporate into the procurement frameworks of the UN organizations. Naturally, each UN organization may decide to request suppliers to show that they are disability-inclusive even for lower value procurements or may decide that for certain categories of goods and services suppliers need to show that they are generally disability-inclusive irrespective of the value of purchase. Therefore, this recommendation should be understood as a minimum, i.e. above the procurement review committee threshold, all procurements should include questions on the disability-inclusiveness of a supplier and each UN organization may decide to adjust it to ask even more suppliers, i.e. for lower value purchases to be disability-inclusive.

- The second limitation to the promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers as described above could include particularly small companies. In order to show that a supplier is disability-inclusive, the supplier will need to provide evidence in response to the questions in the table below. Producing and providing this evidence does require certain qualifications within the staff of the supplier as well as entails administrative burden for supplier. For very small suppliers as well as suppliers from developing countries it may be particularly difficult to produce the evidence requested. Therefore, each UN organization may decide whether they want to foresee in their procurement policy exemptions for micro business, e.g. for business with fewer than 10 employees or fewer than 2m USD turnover. If they decide to grant an exemption to micro enterprises, if such a business participates in a procurement process where bidders are requested to provide evidence of their disability-inclusiveness as per the questions in the next section, those suppliers would be granted the "pass" mark or the foreseen points without the need to provide the evidence.

4.4 Determining disability-inclusiveness

The above provides guidance on how to integrate the promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers into the UN organizations' procurement policies. Naturally, it needs to be defined what a disability-inclusive supplier is, which is discussed in this section.

As per the definition suggested above, a disability-inclusive supplier is a supplier which implements disability-inclusive practices. Suppliers can show that they are disability-inclusive through a variety of means such as having an organizational policy on disability-inclusion, recruiting and hiring people with disabilities, offering reasonable accommodation to candidates and personnel with disabilities, providing accessible premises, ensuring that their supply chains are disability-inclusive, manufacturing accessible products following Universal Design principles or others.

The following table contains several sample questions which can be included in the solicitation documents for the procurement of goods, works or services and which can help identify disability-inclusive suppliers. Depending on the nature of the requirement, some questions may be more relevant or less relevant. In response to the questions, suppliers will need to provide appropriate evidence to show that they are indeed disability inclusive.

Table 9: Questions to determine whether a supplier is disability-inclusive

#	QUESTION
1	Do you have a general disability-inclusion policy? If yes, please provide details.
2	Do you have a policy that promotes the employment of persons with disabilities (this does not need to be specific and could be part of the general human resources policy)? If yes, please provide details.
3	Do you employ persons with disabilities? If yes, please provide details.[1]
4	Do you have a policy that foresees the provision of reasonable adjustments to persons with disabilities (e.g. applicants, employees, suppliers, visitors) who so require? If yes, please provide details such as, for instance, a registry of requests for adjustments made and their status.
5	Do you require your suppliers to be disability-inclusive? If yes, please provide details such as a respective policy or written agreements you may have.
6	Do you engage or consult persons with disabilities in the development of your products or services? If yes, how?

4.5 Monitoring and reporting

4.5.1 Sustainable Procurement indicators in UNGM

The HLCM Procurement Network has developed eleven Sustainable Procurement (SP) indicators that allow for the systematic monitoring, measuring and reporting on sustainable procurement within the UN system, partitioned into the pillars environmental, social and economic. These indicators have created a common framework among UN agencies on how to benchmark and measure Sustainable Procurement implementation based on quantifiable indicators.

The eleven SP indicators, which are also referred to as Level 1 indicators are:

1. Prevention of pollution
2. Sustainable resource use
3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation
4. Protection of the environment, biodiversity and restoration of natural habitats
5. **Human rights and Labour issues**
6. Gender issues
7. Social health and well-being
8. Whole life cycle cost
9. Local communities and SMEs
10. Promoting sustainability throughout the supply chain
11. Generic additional indicators

Specifically, Indicator 5 "Human rights and Labour issues" contains the following sub indicators (Level 2 indicators):

- Requirement to adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fundamental principles and rights at work as referred to in ILO's core conventions (freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation)
- Requirement to abide by relevant industry's collective labour agreements
- Requirement of a health and safety management system (e.g. ISO 18001 or equivalent)
- Requirement for certifications that verify adherence to socially acceptable working conditions (e.g. SA8000 certification or equivalent)
- Requirement for ethically or fairly traded goods (e.g. Fairtrade certification or equivalent)

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[1] Some countries have established national laws requiring companies to hire a certain percentage of persons with disabilities. While the UN organizations are not subject to national laws, the UN General Conditions of Contract, for instance, require that suppliers respect local laws and customs. Therefore, UN organization should monitor that bidders at a minimum respect the national laws or quotas imposed on them in terms of hiring persons with disabilities.
Please also note that in some please note that in some countries the provision of detailed data on this will not be possible due to privacy and confidentiality issues.

- **Requirement for vendors to employ a certain % of people with disabilities or people coming from other disadvantaged groups**

- **Requirements for accessibility considerations in product design and production**

- Other

SP Indicator 5 thus specifically foresees already certain notions from disability-inclusive procurement, i.e. one element of the definition of disability-inclusive suppliers as well as the procurement of accessible products and services.

The Level 1 SP Indicators have been fully integrated into UNGM under a new tab called "Sustainability". This enables procurement staff to report on the type of sustainability consideration they incorporated into their tenders by selecting the corresponding SP indicator. In order to facilitate the correct selection, each SP indicator comes with an informational popup box containing a description of the indicator itself and tangible examples. If at least three SP criteria – one in each pillar of sustainable development: environmental, social and economic – were selected, the respective tender is highlighted on the external website with a Sustainable Procurement logo. The full set of the SP indicators as well as additional background information are available on the UNGM.

4.5.2 Immediate monitoring and reporting

While this framework does not at this moment optimally reflect the requirements from the UNDIS Indicator 8, it can already be used to support reporting against this indicator. It is recommended that the monitoring and reporting of the promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers is achieved through the UNGM and the use of the developed SP indicators. This will mean accepting certain shortcomings of the framework (e.g. a potential over-reporting or inability to report actual procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers vs. just the promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive procurement) in the short-term and working towards suitably adapting the framework to enhance its alignment with UNDIS Indicator 8 I in the mid-term (see Section 4.5.2).

Therefore, in the short term, it is recommended that UN organizations use SP Indicator 5 when they have included requirements for suppliers to be disability-inclusive in their specific procurement. Naturally, such a reporting will also lead to over-reporting on the promotion of procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers since all the other cases will be reported where another sub indicator of SP Indicator 5 has been incorporated into the procurement. However, even though there will be over-reporting, this method of reporting is preferred in the short-term due to its simplicity (reporting can start immediately), its reliance on an established system of indicators (which could be suitably developed further), and its integration with reporting on Sustainable Procurement.

4.5.3 Mid-term adaptation of SP indicators

In the mid-term, it is recommended to work with the HLCM Procurement Network and the UNGM membership organizations to further develop the SP indicator framework to enable specific reporting on disability-inclusive procurement. Specifically, it is recommended to remove the disability-inclusive procurement sub indicators from Indicator 5 and instead, introduce two new Indicators at Level 1, i.e. "Disability-inclusive suppliers" and "Accessibility of goods and services". These two new indicators at Level 1 correspond to specific elements of UNDIS Indicator 8 and would facilitate the reporting against the targets UN organizations have set themselves in response to UNDIS Indicator 8.b.iii/8.c.iii and would enable them to see if they are indeed promoting the procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers as required by UNDIS Indicator 8.c.iv.

4.6 Further options to promote sourcing from disability-inclusive suppliers

The above sections lay out the main recommendations of how UN organizations can promote purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers through their procurement policy. Additionally, UN organization may consider the following option:

- Some UN organization's procurement policies allow for the establishment for reserved lots within projects / programmes or single procurements. This means that certain parts of the budget of the project / programme or a certain part of a specific procurement would be restricted for competition by a selected group of bidders only. These could be, for instance, women-owned business or businesses owned by a minority or disadvantaged group. The European Union's procurement framework also uses this type of modality to restrict certain procurement cases to companies whose staff are comprised of a large percentage of persons with disabilities.

  Where UN organization's procurement policies already allow using reserved lots, these could also be used to promote procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers, e.g. by restricting a fraction of the budget or a part of a given procurement to be provided only by suppliers which are disability-inclusive.

- Additionally, UN organizations may consider promoting procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers by making a public statement to that regard on the UN organization's website, in the UN Supplier Code of Conduct, or on the UN organization's solicitation documents.

4.7 Summary

The following is a list of selected key actions which are recommended in this section. This list can be used to do a quick check to identify the current status of implementation of Indicator 8.i and 8.iii and to help prioritize actions

Indicator 8.iv

- ☐ Definition of disability-inclusive suppliers incorporated into procurement framework

- ☐ Policy mechanism (e.g. as suggested in in this section) incorporated into procurement framework

- ☐ First RFP/ITB issued with promotes procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers

- ☐ RFPs/ITBs regularly promote procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers

- ☐ Monitoring mechanism (e.g. from UNGM) established and used for reporting

5. CONCLUSION AND ROAD AHEAD

This guideline provide a short introduction to disability-inclusive procurement and are intended to help jump-start the journey of integrating disability inclusiveness into the procurement frameworks and operations of the organizations participating in the UNDIS. Disability-inclusive procurement is a complex and far-reaching topic which touches on a wide range of processes within an organization. Procurement of accessible or universally designed products and services is technically challenging. Procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers poses significant challenges in terms of assessing and validating qualified suppliers. This guideline does not have the objective to address all these topics comprehensively.

Yet, this guideline does try and provide starting points on those activities which will commonly have the biggest impact on most people with disabilities – be them beneficiary, staff members, suppliers or other stakeholders. This guideline necessarily generalizes but it is important to remember that for any specific UN organization other measures may have bigger impacts and will let them progress faster against the UNDIS. Therefore, this guideline may not claim to provide the only way to make progress but rather serve as an inspiration and support for organizations to progress against the UNDIS Indicator 8.

Naturally, there are many areas which this guideline could not touch upon but for which further guidance would be particularly useful for UN organizations. These include:

- **Category-specific guidance:**
  One of the most challenging aspects of disability-inclusive procurement lies in assessing whether products or services procured are accessible or even universally designed. For certain categories such, for instance, IT equipment, international standards such as ISO or EN norms already exist. For others, there or no standards or norms. Category-specific guidance on accessibility and specific recommendations regarding universal design for the most commonly procured goods and services of the UN organizations would help many UN organizations. This kind of category-specific guidance should be holistically integrated with existing guidance on sustainable procurement of specific categories.

- **Training on universal design, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation for UN personnel:**
  UNIDS Indicator 8 also asks that procurement staff have access to training and learning resources on universal design, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation. Such training enables procurement staff to acquire a good understanding of inclusive and accessible procurement that complies with a human rights-based approach to disability. This guideline is a first step of providing a learning resource but cannot replace an appropriate training. As a next step, a UN-wide training could be developed on universal design, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation for which this guideline could be a basis and from which all UN procurement staff could benefit.

- **General accessibility training for suppliers:**
  All UN organizations have committed to meeting the requirements of UNDIS Indicator 8 and, over time, also exceed requirements. Therefore, all UN organizations will promote the procurement from disability-inclusive suppliers. Supplier as well as people with disabilities could benefit from a general Procurement Network endorsed training course for suppliers on this topic, i.e. how a supplier can become more disability inclusive.

- **UNGM review and adaptation:**
  Almost all UN organizations use the United Nations Global Marketplace as a vendor registration and sourcing portal. Many UN organizations also use e-tendering applications (e.g. In-Tend, SAP Ariba and others) to support their procurement processes. An inter-agency team could work with UNGM to ensure that accessibility of the UNGM is reviewed and where there are gaps identified, these are addressed and eventually closed. Additionally, this task team could work with the vendors of the most frequently used e-tendering applications to ensure that those systems are equally reviewed and where there are gaps in terms of accessibility, those are addressed.

- **UNGM flag "Disability-inclusive supplier":**
  Another UNGM improvement could include adding a checkbox or flag to the registration process of suppliers, where companies registering with the UNGM could self-report as being disability-inclusive as per the definition provided in this guideline. This would be a simple checkbox and not require the supplier to upload or provide any evidence. Such a flag would raise the awareness of supplier of the desire of the UN organizations to do business with disability-inclusive suppliers and could thus have a promotional effect without excluding any supplier at the registration stage. The way this could work is like how women-owned business currently self-identify during the UNGM registration process. This change in the registration process will require a separate decision by the UNGM membership and will entail development efforts at the UNGM.
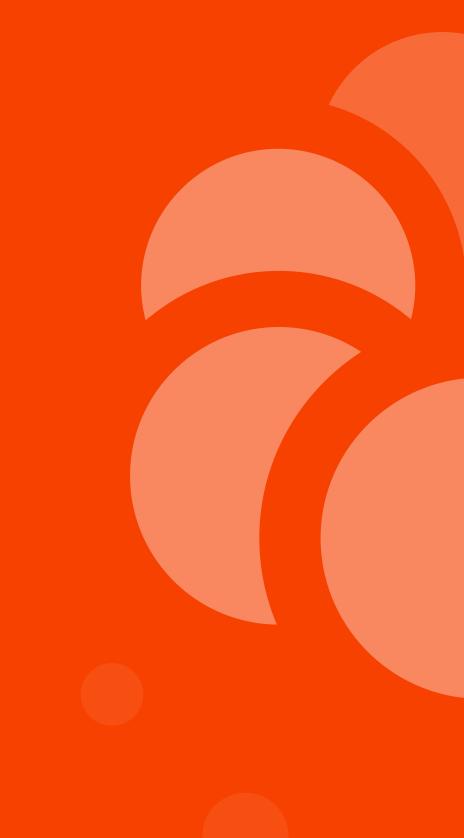
This guideline has been endorsed by the Procurement Network in October 2020. As the UN organizations progress on the journey of disability-inclusive procurement, the lessons learnt will be used to update this guideline with the support of the UNDIS team at the Executive Office of the Secretary General. This guideline will be reviewed latest two years after its issuance.

6. RESOURCES

This section contains a wide range of additional and further resources which are helpful tools when promoting disability-inclusive procurement and procuring accessible and universally designed products and services. For updates and additional guidance and reference material, please visit the UNGM site on disability-inclusive procurement.

#	TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	LINK
1	**Disability-Inclusive Public Procurement: Promoting Universal Design and Accessibility:** A policy paper developed by UN ESCAP which presents how disability-inclusive procurement can be incorporated into public procurement. The two main public procurement schemes which are compared are the EU and US.	https://www.unescap.org/resources/disability-inclusive-public-procurement-promoting-universal-design-and-accessibility
2	**Standards in the Procurement of Accessible ICT Products and Services (DRAFT):** These documents provide guidance for the specific case of procurement of accessible ICT products and services.	https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/20190325/Documents/Draft%20Standards%20in%20the%20Procurement%20of%20Accessible%20ICT%20Products%20and%20Services.pdf https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Documents/ICT%20Accessibility%20standards%20procurement%20FINAL.pdf
3	**Model ICT Accessibility Report:** Chapter 6 covers useful clauses and standards when procuring accessible ICT equipment.	https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Persons-with-Disabilities/Documents/ICT%20Accessibility%20Policy%20Report.pdf
4	**CEN/CLC/JTC 12 (EN 17161:2019, universal design for all products and services):** This document specifies requirements that enable an organization to design, develop and provide products, goods and services so that they can be accessed, understood and used by the widest range of users, including persons with disabilities	https://standards.cen.eu/dyn/www/f?p=204:110:0::::FSP_PROJECT,FSP_ORG_ID:62323,2301962&cs=1D28CFDC66E7CEF3CE441294CAA9FEABE
5	**ITU - ICT / Digital Accessibility:** This ITU website collates a broad range of resources on digital inclusion, in order to ensure that "no one is left behind" in the digital world. This website is a great starting point for any procurement project involving accessible IT as it includes relevant standards as well as training courses on ICT accessibility.	https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Persons-with-Disabilities/Pages/Persons-with-Disabilities.aspx https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Pages/Reports_and_Resources.aspx
7	**IASC Guidelines: Inclusion of persons with disabilities in Humanitarian Action:** These comprehensive guidelines lay out how to include persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. They also have a focus on different programmes, e.g. education, food security and nutrition, camp management, etc. They also cover a range of topics of general interest on disability inclusion and hence can serve as a good resource handbook.	https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2019-11/IASC%20Guidelines%20on%20the%20Inclusion%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20in%20Humanitarian%20Action%2C%202019.pdf
8	**cbm Digital Accessibility Toolkit:** The purpose of this toolkit is to share a selection of tools and recommendations pertaining to the accessibility of Information and Communication Technologies. Based on international standards and a scan of available technologies, these tools and recommendations are intended to contribute to the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities by ensuring that information is equitably accessible.	https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/CBM-Digital-Accessibility-Toolkit.pdf