



# THE BUILD-FOR-ALL TOOLKIT

Practical approach for contracting authorities to include certain procedures and technical requirements in procurement, so as to ensure that accessibility criteria are met in design and construction work.

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## 9. Toolkit Introduction

This **Toolkit** concentrates on delivering the means by which Contracting Authorities can ensure that, in their procurement procedures, they take adequate account of accessibility, which is a fundamentally important issue.

If you are unfamiliar with the concepts of accessibility and Design for All, or with the content and objectives of the Public Procurement Directives, you are advised to read the Handbook, which is Part 1 of this Reference Manual. If these matters are familiar to you, then you should find the tools in this short Toolkit useful when planning and carrying out public Calls for Tender.

The Toolkit is specifically aimed at the procurement officers who work, on a daily basis, to write calls for tender for public works and who are familiar with the provisions of the European Union Directives on Public Procurement Procedures and/or the equivalent national legislation. It will also be informative to those who respond to calls for tender, as it gives an insight into how such calls are structured, at least as far as the inclusion of accessibility criteria is concerned.

As the Public Procurement Directives do not oblige Contracting Authorities to include accessibility criteria in calls for tender, it is worth noting that there are significant benefits to be gained from the adoption of this practice. National Legislation may, in certain countries, require this obligation and this is strongly welcomed by the Build-for-All partners. However, the aim of the work of the project is to encourage the adoption of such inclusions in all European Union Member States and in all designs for, and construction of, the built environment.

## 10. The Benefits and Advantages of Design for All

As stated in the Handbook, there are significant benefits and advantages to be gained by the adoption of a Design for All approach in the preparation of calls for tender for public works. These benefits and advantages can affect many actors in the process. Not least of these is the Contracting Authority itself, whose standing in the community is certain to be improved and whose overall budget will benefit as the advantages of accessible, friendly environments pay dividends in encouraging more involvement by more people in the use of public facilities.

## 11. Technical Guidance

### Introduction

This chapter does not contain the full description of the process of preparing the tender documents, a process that is familiar to all those who regularly prepare calls for tender.



Rather it shows only the moments where the inclusion of accessibility issues makes a difference in the specific steps undertaken. Most of the text in the Toolkit is also relevant for service contracts at the early stages of the planning and constructing process.

It should be noted that the accessibility rules (cf Appendix 3) are only part of the “big picture”. The other parts consist of employment issues as well as transportation, customer services and communications. These are addressed in a general way in the chapters of the Handbook.

The description of the step-by-step procedure is set out in accordance with the relevant phases of preparing the tender documents by procurement officers for the purposes of preparing tenders for buildings and outdoor environment facilities, funded with the use of public financing and procured by the public sector. The relevant items are described in the light of EU Directive on Public Procurement, Directive 2004/18/EC, and all references to Articles below are from that Directive.

### General Conditions on Scope of Application

In principle the whole procedure applies in cases where the value of the contract exceeds EUR 5,278,000 (amended Article 7 § (c)). For public works contracts of lower value the tender procedure described in this Toolkit can refer to the national Public Procurement legislation in force in each Member State of the European Union. However, in all cases the basic principles of the European Treaties have to be respected, namely transparency, equal treatment/non-discrimination and best value for money. Consequently, the guidance provided by this Toolkit is equally useful for projects below the thresholds.

For projects below the thresholds, the Commission will publish some guidance in the near future, in order to tackle the erroneous idea that there are no rules to respect. In any case, below or above the thresholds, accessibility criteria should be used without infringing the law. Respecting the (more precisely formulated) "above" rules will always also satisfy the (more general) "below" rules.

In Article 1. § (2/b) a “work” is defined as “the outcome of building or civil engineering works taken as a whole to fulfil an economic or technical function...”.

This means that buildings and outdoor environment facilities belong to the term “works” in the meaning of the Directive.

The simplest method to get the desired result is to realise the differences in the approach of making a given facility and built environment accessible right at the beginning of both the design stage and the procurement procedures. The three main areas of concern to make the environment accessible to all can be considered as, firstly, eliminating barriers in existing facilities, secondly, issues associated with alterations and, thirdly issues associated with new construction.

Therefore it is helpful to consider the following division of the works, all of which are relevant to the guidance in this Reference Manual:



- New public buildings for general use (with the exclusions contained in the legislation of the Member States such as, for example, military facilities)
- New residential buildings (single-family houses excluded)
- Alterations and additions in existing buildings of any functional use including historical buildings, which are not classified as historical monuments, on the occasion of every renovation, modernisation adaptation or revitalisation works
- Alterations and additions in existing buildings of any functional use, classified as historical monuments on the occasion of every renovation, modernisation, adaptation or revitalisation works
- New outdoor facilities
- Alterations to existing outdoor facilities and existing outdoor spaces, not classified as historical monuments on the occasion of every renovation, modernisation, adaptation or revitalisation works
- Alterations to existing outdoor facilities, classified as historical monuments on the occasion of every renovation, modernisation, adaptation or revitalisation works
- For buildings, facilities and outdoor spaces classified as historical monuments the relevant legislation concerning historical heritage and culture protection in force in every Member State shall be applied.

The principal aim of the Directive coordinating the award procedures of Public Procurement is to ensure that taxpayers' money is spent in a way to have "best value for money", respecting, at the same time, the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and transparency.

Accessibility criteria can be introduced as technical specifications or as contract performance conditions in both, the "lowest-price" and the "most economically advantageous" tender procedures. However, accessibility issues, as award criteria, can only be considered in the case of the most economically advantageous tender and this fact needs to be signalled at the time of the publishing the contract notice.

**The text that follows gives a series of guidance notes set out in accordance with the phases described in the Handbook.**

#### **PHASE 1 Identification of the needs, preparation of the tender notice**

The public client has to identify its needs. This consists of defining the subject matter of the contract, as well as drafting the tender notice, including technical specifications and contract performance conditions. Only if all of these have been published can tenderers be expected to correctly respond to a call for tender.

Accessibility criteria of a technical nature can be included in the technical specifications, where appropriate, with references to technical standards. These define the characteristics of the building or goods to be purchased.



The need to take Design for All into account at the early stages of planning should be reflecting in the planning guidelines from building authorities, in the strategies of the various bodies who organise and pay for the construction work etc.

If the work is tendered, this should also be reflected in the tender documents and the tender strategies.

This needs to be done regardless of how the project may be divided into lots.

- If the early stages are tendered separately Design for All should be included in the service contracts for this work.
- If there is one tender for the whole work, the needs of taking Design for All into account may be met by introducing checkpoints at various milestones in the agreed work process for the whole work (the sequences in the planning and construction work are present regardless of how the tendering may be formally divided into lots). Thus the focus on the early stages can also be handled if the tenders are not divided into lots.

Comment from Mr. Finn Aslaksen, Vista Utredning AS

Public Authorities are advised not to forget **maintenance and the cost of maintenance**, when writing calls for tender in order to avoid seeing equipment that does not function because there is no budget for it!

Comment from Mr. Luc Rivet, European Elevators Association

### 11.01 Tender Notice and Notice of Invitation to pre-qualify

The contracting authority in preparing the Tender Notice and the Invitation to pre-qualify should state that **accessibility and Design for All criteria will be included in the selection and award criteria**. The Notice must indicate the relative weighting that will be assigned to each of the award criteria (refer to Article 23).

### 11.02 Issue and Submission of Pre-qualification Documents

The tenderers will have to respond to the published requirements. To this extent Art. 23 states that: *“...The technical specifications, as defined in point 1 of Annex VI, shall be set out in the contract documentation, such as contract notice, contract documents or additional documents. Whenever possible these technical specifications should be defined so as to take into account accessibility criteria for people with disabilities or Design for All users.”*

**PHASE 2 Selection of the qualified contractors**

The selection phase serves to exclude those tenderers who are not qualified for the job. Tenderers who do not satisfy the so-called "selection criteria", will be excluded from the subsequent stages of the procedure.

The "classical" Directive (2004/18/EC) deals with the "criteria for qualitative selection" in Articles 45 to 52. Tenderers that have been convicted ("final judgment") for organised crime, corruption, fraud or money laundering shall be excluded from participation in the procedure.

Tenderers having been convicted ("final judgment") for a list of other things may be excluded. In this list, there is reference to offences concerning professional conduct<sup>16</sup> and not fulfilling obligations relating to payment of social security or taxes.

At the selection stage, accessibility criteria can be introduced under the heading of "technical and/or professional ability" (see Art. 48). For example, a list of accessible Works carried out over the past five years, an indication of the specialised accessibility technicians or technical bodies involved, a description of the technical facilities and measures for ensuring quality and respect of accessibility criteria, the educational and professional qualifications of the persons who will be chosen to deliver the expertise required in the execution of the contract.

**11.03**

The contracting authorities must establish the selection and award criteria, respecting the provisions of the Directives, and they can indicate which proof of (pre-) qualification they will accept in selecting the Economic Operator to take part in the tender. This can be done according to the following steps (11.04 to 11.08).

**11.04 The team**

The procurement officer should point to the fact that the composition of the technical staff of the Economic Operator should be composed so that:

- the role of every member of the staff is specified, especially showing the technical experience related to accessibility and Design for All
- a staff organisation chart is included, specifying the role of every staff member
- their educational and professional qualifications, their technical experience related to the accessibility and Design for All, shall be included.

<sup>16</sup> Recital 43: Non-observance of national provisions implementing the Council Directives 2000/78/EC (1) and 76/207/EEC (2) concerning equal treatment of workers, which has been the subject of a final judgment or a decision having equivalent effect may be considered an offence concerning the professional conduct of the economic operator concerned or grave misconduct.

**11.05**

There should be a **clause** that the tenderers (Economic Operators) will be asked to describe their own - or their adviser's - entrepreneurial history with special regard to the correspondence of the described works to accessibility and Design for All criteria. Also there should be a statement that a declaration that the tenderer is not the subject of a judgement, of bankruptcy procedures or a judgement which has the force of res judicata (see Article 45), for example that they are not subject to an exclusion.

**11.06 Certifications - Internal Experts**

The procurement officer should point to the fact that the possession of quality certifications and membership of qualification lists (assessed by certification bodies established under national public or private law) of approved Economic Operators undertaking public works, is needed. This includes certifications in the field of accessibility. If, in a given Member State, the figure of an Accessibility Expert is not recognised or identified then the Procurement Officer should ask the bidders to show the personal training and professional experience which could be referred to as the basis to assess the knowledge and competencies pertaining to accessible design (see Art. 48).

**11.07 Certifications - External Experts**

There is a possibility of using an external expert on accessibility - The Procurement Officer should point to the fact that the Economic Operator may rely on the economical and technical capabilities of other external operators - this guarantees that at least one of the Economic Operators involved in the Public Procurement, can prove possession of the required accessibility certifications (see Art. 48 § 3).

**11.08 Exclusions**

The Procurement Officer should point out the reasons for exclusion from participation in a Public Procurement process which include: involvement in criminal organisations, the re-use of revenues from illegal acts, corruption, fraud/tax evasion and failure to comply with non-discrimination legislation. (See Art. 45)

**PHASE 3 Evaluation of the tenders, award of the contract**

Once the unqualified tenderers are eliminated from the procedure, the public client invites the qualified tenderers to submit their offers and it then proceeds to the material evaluation of the tenders. This evaluation is based on the "award criteria" set out in Article 53.

In the case of the award being made to the most economically advantageous tender, from the point of view of the Contracting Authority, the award criteria must be linked to the subject matter of the public contract in question. The Directive gives the following examples: quality, price, technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, environmental characteristics, running costs, cost effectiveness, after sales service and technical assistance, delivery date and delivery period or period to completion.

Based on the examples given, it is also possible to specifically mention accessibility criteria in the award criteria.

**11.09**

In this phase of the tender procedure, in the part concerning the **technical specifications** the Procurement Officer should again point to the fact that the **relevant special conditions** taking into account accessibility criteria for people with disabilities and Design for All users will be imposed. **The special conditions will be described in Technical Specifications part of the tender documentation** (see Article 23).

**11.10**

It is recommended that contracting authorities should always decide to use the most economically advantageous tender procedure so that accessibility criteria can be a **part of the Contract Award Criteria**. The fact must be signalled from the outset of the procedure and the relative weighting that will be given to the criteria published. The objective should be that the proposals prepared with Design for All solutions in mind will be given a high weighting and therefore a high importance in the awarding of the contract.

**Explanation:** The first part of Art. 53 is relevant: "...*Contract award criteria: Without prejudice to national laws, regulations or administrative provisions concerning the remuneration of certain services, the criteria on which the contracting authorities shall base the award of public contracts shall be either:*

*...when the award is made to the most economically advantageous tender from the point of view of the contracting authority, various criteria linked to the subject-matter of the public contract in question, for example, quality, price, technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, environmental characteristics, running costs, cost-effectiveness, after-sales service and technical assistance, delivery date and delivery period or period of completion, or..."*

**11.11**

As the call for tender should describe the scope of the works, the quality of the materials and the standards of workmanship that the successful tenderer will be called upon to provide in carrying out the works it should also convey other essential information having a bearing on the performance of the works. Therefore it should be clearly stated that:

The building legislation mandatory in every Member State is obligatory for every tenderer (Economic Operator) in the given Member State and it is not the intention of the document to make any kind of compilation of legislation in order to get specific standards. All the provisions described above are to comply with the Member State legislation in force with regard to the superiority of European Union law.

**PHASE 4 Execution and performance of the contract**

Once the public client has awarded and signed the contract, it should monitor the correct implementation of the contract and all obligations deriving there from, including the "contract performance clauses" mentioned above and described at the Contract Notice stage of the procedure.

It should be noted that the Public Procurement Directives do not set out procedures or conditions for this stage of the procurement of a work. This is because the procedures set out in the Directives will have been fulfilled at this point.

**11.12**

The Procurement Officer can prescribe, as contract performance conditions, the test, inspection and acceptance conditions of the finished works. Any such conditions must be clearly set out in the contract notice and the invitation to tender and may include items such as:

- **audit** of the finished works undertaken by independent experts from professional associations and public or private accessibility centres, if available in a given Member State
- **the end users' involvement** in prototypes analysis, virtual use, interviews etc. in a way complying with the legislation in force in a given Member State.

In case of alterations and/or additions to existing buildings and outdoor spaces, historically classified or not classified, the Procurement Officer can additionally require the preparation of a survey identifying existing accessibility barriers.



## 12. Examples of Good Procedural Practice in Public Procurement

The project partners were invited to submit examples of good procedural practice in Public Procurement projects. These have been compiled and are presented below without critical appraisal, for the information of the reader.

The following are examples of projects where good procedural approaches were adopted to the procurement of works or services by Contracting Authorities. They are given so as to encourage the uptake of similar good and best practices across Europe.

It is essential that the accessibility issues to be solved are defined as early as possible in the process.

A primary school for 500 pupils aged between 4 and 11 (case A) needs to accommodate pupils with permanent and temporary disabilities. A pupil with a broken leg requiring weeks or months using wheelchair or crutches is only too frequent.

In the much larger and further-reaching examples of the metropolitan transport organisation in Barcelona - Spain (cases B and C), the ambition to transport millions of people per year from door to door, required an extensive study of passenger traffic flows, of commuting walking distances, of smooth levelling between all interconnecting areas and means of transport, of accessibility of all levels by lifts, escalators and moving walkways. Buses, trams and trains need to provide full accessibility to all, without any discrimination. Platforms for buses, trams and trains should be at the exact level of the carriage. In the case of buses, a projecting platform and partial lowering of the bus are available solutions which are widely used around the world - but only where these requirements are specified. In other words, it means a clear understanding of the needs of the visually impaired, the persons with limited mobility, limited hearing and users with other disabilities. Technological solutions exist and their relative need should be identified early on in the Public Procurement process by experts in the field. All types of public buildings must be easily accessible to all.

In some cases, the social commitment of the administrative bodies involved, guarantees a good analysis of the needs and the level of accessibility requested, but in most cases, it is highly recommended to consult experts in the field of disabilities, who will clearly identify the accessibility issues to be covered by the project. In all cases, Design for All is an excellent tool for the companies to improve their business opportunities and their reputation.

All cases presented are related to a geographical region, showing that a local snowball effect can appear, through which more actors wish to be involved in the bettering of the built environment and improvement of social relations.



## Case A

### **Bleak Hill Primary School, St Helens, Lancashire**

The Bleak Hill project, a partnering contract between St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council and contractors Willmott Dixon, was the first example of a local authority awarding a partnering contract for a building based purely on the basis of quality with no mention of price. Full accessibility was systematically discussed during the evaluation phase.

### **Context**

Bleak Hill is a 500-pupil county primary school for 4-11 year olds. Existing buildings occupied about 25% of the school grounds. The new school with infants and junior playgrounds was built in the playing fields, giving complete segregation of construction from school activity. The main 40-week construction period was followed by one week to transfer pupils and staff and a further 12 weeks for demolition of the old school and creation of a new multi-use sports field and running track, new main entrance and car park.

The school is completely step-free, with parking space for people with disabilities at the rear and easy access.

### **Key Achievements**

- The production of a bigger school for a smaller budget
- Some aspects, such as the mechanical and electrical services (IT, lighting control, energy saving) are above average quality
- Higher level of cost certainty than normal for the Council
- 11% cost savings against traditional approaches
- 32% faster construction than the original programme.

### **Key Drivers**

The People Factor - Key officers at St. Helens believed that partnering could help them break out of the 'worst value' scenario often produced by traditional contracting.

Central Government - Began linking adoption of 'Rethinking Construction' and Asset Management to local authority cash allocations. Treasury looking for annual savings of 2% under Best Value as a whole.

### **Essential Success Factors**

Corporate Commitment - St Helens ensured that it had its contracts sub-committee buy in and because the change was driven from the top they did not have the difficulties with their standing orders that are sometimes encountered in local authority partnering.

Involvement of Stakeholders - As well as the authority's building professionals and senior management, all stakeholders attended the final interviews. Local councillors, head teacher, school governors, political leaders, education, audit and legal officers - some 30 people in all.

Trust - In each other as well as in themselves to be able to deliver something different. The team had a totally open book approach.



### **The Process**

Following its initial advertisement, St. Helens issued 52 copies of its comprehensive information pack on the project. This explained the partnering ethos and requested method statements for eight quality assessment criteria (not including price). The 26 responses were scored and the four best performing firms were invited for interview.

The decision at the interview to appoint Willmott Dixon was unanimous and at this stage they had not mentioned figures. Their proposal was based around experience in partnering and in schools, management team and added value they thought that they could bring to the project. The first of the key subcontractors, mechanical and electrical contractor Drake & Scull, was then jointly appointed by both parties, using a scoring system weighted 70% quality and 30% price. Other subcontractors and suppliers were then brought into the partnership on a similar basis.

### **Shared Savings and Risk**

The form of contract used was the ACA Standard Form of Contract for Project.

Partnering, written by Trowers & Hamblins, with the cost plan figure used as both a target price and a guaranteed maximum price (GMP). The contractors agreed to include profit and on-cost recovery within the cost plan, however if savings during construction were achieved they were shared 50:50. There was a 5% cap on extras over the GMP which meant that the Council's risk was identified in the agreement at 2.5%, half of the 5%, as was Willmott Dixon's. Beyond that shared risk, except for pre-defined areas, Willmott Dixon picked up all the risk.

### **Cost Plan within Budget**

This was done through a series of Value Engineering (VE) Workshops over an eight month period. The cost plan was revised 12 times to identify approximately £300,000 - worth of savings and efficiency gains. The school was fully involved and everything was done on a completely open-book basis. Each item identified in the VE Workshops as a potential saving was championed by one or more members of the team, who took responsibility for bringing forward a workable solution to the next meeting.

### **Open Book**

Open book means that the actual accounts are the balance sheet for that project, and can therefore be inspected by the client. They include the fee structures for the design teams, the contractor and subcontractors on that particular scheme. The actual contract price is built up in a joint manner, so that the contractor's team is satisfied that the prices in it are correct, and the Quantity Surveyors are likewise satisfied that everything is correct. Adjustments are made in the Value Engineering process, by the team together. Once the GMP is agreed and the work proceeds on site, the open-book approach means that if the client's representatives want to make sure that there is not a huge profit being generated from the scheme, or if, say, there are some extras and they want to justify them, the books are there to be examined, and to reveal how the calculations have been arrived at.

"We've been listened to and we've argued sensibly for the good of the pupils. We think we've got the best deal possible because of the expertise of the Partnership."

- Peter Isaac, Headmaster, Bleak Hill School.

**Case B**

In 2005 the Entitat Metropolitana del Transport (transport authority of the metropolitan area of Barcelona-Spain) distributed among related administrative bodies and NGOs a draft of a call for tenders aiming to procure the service provision of door to door transport in Barcelona.

The Design for All Foundation answered to the invitation to comment on the draft and it proposed several suggestions. The majority of these suggestions focused on the need to guarantee the quality of the service provision, such as adjusting the number of vehicles to match the demand, to inform potential users about public accessible transport (including foreigners), including interviews with the users in the quality assessment method, etc.

Another suggestion, also accepted by the Transport Authority was to include CSR aspects in the awarding criteria. That is, it was suggested that 5% of the total score be related to social policies like employment of people with disabilities, gender balance among employees, involvement in the community NGOs, etc.

**Comments**

It is innovative and a good tool for administrations not experienced in the inclusion of Design for All and disability issues in calls for tenders to distribute a draft of the call to related administrative bodies and NGOs that will help to improve the contents of the calls in these aspects. It is also remarkable that this led to the inclusion of social aspects in the award criteria. A cheaper offer of a company lacking social responsibility would be more costly for society.

**Case C**

Since 1992, with the collaboration of experts and user organisations, Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona (Barcelona's public transport company) has been updating and improving throughout the years the technical description in the calls for tenders that they launch when purchasing buses. The technical requirements include detailed definitions, technical drawings and all the necessary elements (including the accessibility ones) to avoid mistakes in the construction process.

**Comments**

To produce well defined technical requirements not only helps to prevent mistakes and to purchase exactly what is intended but to facilitate the comparison between offers.

**Case D**

Applus Corporation is a multinational company with more than 6000 employees and present in 25 countries in three continents. The main business is certification, testing and audit in fields like automotive, safety, food, building, electronics, chemistry, quality assurance, etc.

In 2004 the company, due to the fact that their business guarantees the quality of



products and services for the consumers, decided to enlarge the concept of consumers to include children, the elderly and people with activity limitations.

As a consequence, the company developed a Corporate Social Responsibility policy based on Design for All criteria. In practise this drove them to develop a plan to make their facilities accessible, to offer their clients a system to certify the accessibility of their premises, means of transport, and services and to use the income generated to disseminate the Design for All concepts through publications, conferences, etc.

### **Comments**

The ethical approach of Applus has increased the reputation of the company among clients, companies, administrations and users facilitating their relationship with them.

But another unexpected outcome is that the employees realized in a very tangible way that the company is not only seeking for profit but also pursuing social ends.

Bearing in mind that, in Europe, one family out of four has a member with disability (and that also happens among the company's employees), the human resources of the corporation feel more involved with the philosophy of the company.

### **Case E**

According to Spanish law, at least 2% of the workforce in companies with more than 50 employees has to be people with disabilities.

This law exists since 1982 but companies didn't paid attention to it and the administrative bodies didn't check up on this process.

In recent years, thanks to the pressure of NGOs, this question has been put in the social agenda. Nowadays, to be candidate to be selected for any kind of administration's economical support (including Research & Development (R+D)) a company must demonstrate compliance with this law.

### **Comments**

Although it was hard for the companies in the beginning, throughout this process many companies realised that they already had employees with a disability and, not being aware of the advantages in taxes, discovered that the company was losing and, on the other hand, by contracting new employees with disabilities, the attitudes of the human resources also improved regarding respect for diversity.

Regarding research and development initiatives it should be said that, since the 4th R+D Framework Program of the European Commission, when the projects associated with the improvement of quality of life, sustainable growth and information technologies included aspects related to Design for All, the elderly and people with disability tend to have more opportunities to achieve a better score in the calls for proposals.

### **Case F**

In 2000, the Government of the Autonomous Region of Extremadura (Spain) passed the 202 Decree offering SMEs based in the region subsidies to cover up to 50% of the investments made by the companies implementing Design for All in their products and services.

This initiative supported by the regional Chamber of Commerce caused several



companies from the food, transport and building sectors to develop plans in that respect.

### Comments

In the past the belief was that the only way for administrative bodies to promote changes was through legislation, nowadays, both the Public Procurement considering social issues and economic support have become important tools for bringing about changes.

### Case G

Besides the regular competitions in Vorarlberg, which are operated by the **Institute for Social Services (IfS)** and the local media - **Vorarlberger Nachrichten**, some communities and cities have issued special directions. One example is the **city of Feldkirch** who decided upon **Guidelines for Inclusive Urban Development** as early as **1994**. This decision is still effective to this very day. The city of Feldkirch supports a consultation site and important support and services for its citizens. Simultaneously, the city gives financial support for improvement measures up to 15 % of the total cost of renovation.

The 5 main articles of this agreement are groundbreaking:

- Integration of all people in society through the reduction of social and building (environmental?) barriers,
- Raising awareness of the population as well as groups and institutions who have the responsibility for inclusive town development,
- In all cases of new buildings and essential renovation measures of communal facilities special considerations have to be made on child-friendly, senior-friendly and accessible design for people with disabilities,
- Assurance of independent lifestyle for the people concerned (children, disabled persons, seniors) in their familiar surroundings
- Consultation and support of the people concerned and their relatives.

### This means for the housing area:

In social dwelling projects provisions have to be made for sufficient dwellings for old and disabled persons. For each project this means: level entrances, adaptable sanitary rooms and all inner doors with a clear width of more than 800 mm.

All lifts have to be executed according to the accessible design guidelines. All dwellings must be designed to be child-friendly, senior-friendly and accessible for people with disabilities. A high value will be set on motivation and support for accessible design in private housing. Additional financial support and incentives will be set for child and senior friendly pilot projects which also meet the requirements for accessible design.

### Mobility in traffic is important:

All pavement edges which are difficult to use for persons in a wheelchair, parents with prams or people with walking aids should be lowered to a maximum step of 30 - 50 mm, especially at regulated and unregulated pedestrian crossings, gateways etc. No free standing barriers on public walkways. All regulated pedestrian crossings have to be equipped with tactile and acoustic aids for blind people and people with impaired vision (two sense principle). Phases of the green light has to be adapted for the weakest road



users (children, older people and people with disabilities). Underground crossings should be avoided. User friendly design, especially for parents with prams and persons in a wheelchair has to be taken into consideration. The design of paths and bicycle paths has to take into account the requirements of children, older people and people with disabilities. All public buildings and railway and bus stations have to be designed according to the “design for all” requirements. Kneeling buses should be equipped with mobile ramps. Buses should have acoustic announcement. For 30 parking spaces, one parking space for disabled people has to be provided.

**Different measures in the public, communal and semi-public built environment:**

- All public buildings (new build, renovation or extension) should be designed according to the “design for all” principles (for persons in a wheelchair and for persons with impaired vision or blind people with additional technical aids).
- The city of Feldkirch undertakes to adapt all other public buildings (within the confederation and region) to the same “design for all” requirements. Increased attention is paid to child-friendly furnishing and equipment of public buildings. All public telephone boxes should be easily accessible for all (especially for children and persons using wheelchairs).
- In all public toilets at least one toilet has to be accessible for persons using wheelchairs.
- All cultural and education buildings, entertainment buildings etc. should be accessible and usable for all.
- The city of Feldkirch advocates accessible adaptation for semi-public buildings or institutions that have to be accessible for all (medical practices, banks, pharmacies, post offices, health care insurances, mother consultation offices etc.). Additionally, Feldkirch supports accessibility to churches and other religious facilities. Especially for older persons and persons with disabilities accessible shops for everyday requirements (food, cosmetics etc.) should be guaranteed in the immediate vicinity of their living environment. Integrated, accessible public spaces and environments for communication and encounter will be established in the communities.

**Conclusion:**

Since 1994, a great deal of the requirements of these guidelines for inclusive urban development have been realised and have become standard, which, years ago, would have been an utopian vision. For this reason the city of Feldkirch has received eleven awards from the Vorarlberg competition “Buildings for all to use”. Measures for people with disabilities are co-financed by the city to a considerable extent. A round table of people with disabilities together with decision makers has been established and consistently demands further measures for inclusive urban development.

15 years of forming public opinion has led to the result that the most frequently used railway station in Vorarlberg with more than a thousand visitors daily has been reconstructed according to “design for all” criteria. After a complete renovation - supported by pressure from the city of Feldkirch - this railway station is now completely barrier free and accessible for all users.



### Case H

In Vorarlberg a lot of communities and cities have accessible public buildings such as the town halls in Dornbirn, Götzis, Rankweil, Altach, Feldkirch, Sattens and Bludenz, which were renovated to accessibility standards for lifts and sanitary facilities.

Especially the community of **Rankweil** should be mentioned here. For more than 10 years “barrier free building design” has been permanently on the agenda of the community. It started with a complete analysis of the public places and buildings, and since then every year special priority is given to measures improving the accessibility of the built environment e.g. lowering of pavements at pedestrian crossings, accessible kindergarten, schools and other public buildings. Following this, also private companies like banks, pharmacies, shops etc. have become aware of the “design for all” requirements - caused by the public relation and media work of the community - and followed the positive example by improving their own existing buildings.

But also young people and families get in touch with “design for all” requirements and think about whether this would be a good choice when designing a new home for their whole life cycle, where they could also remain in old age. Especially in an area where many single family houses are built, this is an important effect caused by the community activities for accessibility. This is supported by advanced financial housing grants for energy saving measures together with barrier free design as mentioned previously.

### Case I

**Cooperation of the Institute of Social Services “Buildings for all to use” (IfS) in Vorarlberg with the Federal Social Services Office (Bundessozialamt) of Austria concerning specialist consultation from IfS for medical practices, hospital out-patients departments, pharmacies and cure and wellness facilities to support barrier free building design of these facilities.** First of all, the accessibility of these facilities should be improved and the Federal Social Services Office supports these improvement actions with a financial grant (small grant up to €5,000,- / extended grant up to €50,000,-). Last year (2005), 31 consultations have been carried out and accompanied by IfS.

With the **implementation of the Austrian Disability Antidiscrimination Law**, since January 2006, an increasing number of consultations are required.

### Case J

**Institute of Social Services “Buildings for all to use” (IfS) in Götzis, Vorarlberg, supports awareness raising through the implementation of “barrier free design” seminars in technical high schools (HTL) for structural engineering in Rankweil, in schools for sanitary and heating technology and vocational schools in Bregenz, in nursery schools in Götzis, Feldkirch and Bregenz, in courses for elderly care nursing and for social professionals in Bregenz in Vorarlberg.** The main target of this awareness raising is that all graduates and diploma holders of these schools and courses have sufficient special knowledge on accessible building design.

Caused by all these positive measures the awareness of accessible building design in Vorarlberg is much higher than in any other of the nine federal counties in Austria.



### Case K

The **social health insurance company** of the region Vorarlberg (VGKK) **demands barrier free locations for all medical and therapeutic practices based on ÖNORM B 1600 “Barrier free building - Design guidelines”**. If a physician or therapist wants to enter a contract agreement with the social health insurance company, she or he has to fulfil this requirement. The **Institute of Social Services “Buildings for all to use” (IfS)** supports their partners with specialist consultations on accessible building design.

### Case L

Every two years a well known **competition “Buildings for all to use”** for different building types and classes is announced in Vorarlberg by the **Institute of Social Services “Buildings for all to use” (IfS) together with a well known local media - Vorarlberger Nachrichten**. The 7<sup>th</sup> competition was finalised in December 2004. The big award show for the next competition will be this year on 10 December 2006, on the official day of human rights. This successful concept dramatically increases the awareness for barrier free building design in the whole region of Vorarlberg. For every architect and builder the participation in this competition is fundamental at least once in his career. Asking architects in Vorarlberg about barrier free building design you will get the answer: this is a matter of course, it's part of every build project! Going further east in Austria the awareness of architects concerning barrier free building design decreases rapidly - unfortunately!

### Case M

Additional financial support based on the **Directives of Housing Grant** in the federal county of Vorarlberg, 2006, decided by the provincial government of Vorarlberg in Austria, 2005-11-22.

For new ecological housing (grant level ÖKO 2) advanced financial subsidies can be granted if special energy saving requirements **and** barrier free building design are implemented. These requirements are: a level entrance to the building (without threshold), all doors with minimum horizontal clear space of 800 mm, a combined sanitary room (toilet and level shower room or bathroom) on the first floor of living accommodation has to be provided with a movement circle of 1500 mm. According to adaptive housing design criteria a light partition wall between toilet and shower room or bathroom (with no sanitary appliances in this wall) with unbroken floor surface has to be provided, to make a later removal of this wall as easy as possible. If a bathtub is provided it should be possible to remove the bathtub to be replaced by a level shower and an additional movement circle of 1500 mm. The grant amounts to e.g. €460,- per m<sup>2</sup> useable area for barrier free design in a residential establishment. For energy saving measures and barrier free design the possible grant spans from €420,- up to €1,020,- for residential houses, depending on the energy consumption value and different “eco -points” (ÖKO-Points).

For adaptation work in existing housing for barrier free design, this directive offers loans



and benefits e.g. for lifts or other measures.

With this new Directive on Housing Grant an important step has been taken for better implementation of barrier free design in different life cycle situations. Hopefully, other federal countries in Austria will follow with revised Directives on housing grants in the same line.

## Case N

The project **“Living at home in old age”** took place between 1999 and 2001 and follow-up projects mainly in the areas of qualification and prevention are still continuing in the region of Walgau/Vorarlberg (14 communities from Bludenz to Feldkirch), the most western federal country of Austria. There, where local authorities are keen to promote maintenance and assurance of life quality for older people. The initiative comes from the provincial government of Vorarlberg with support from the social funds and the local authorities and further on from PROPTER HOMINES; Vaduz.

### Key achievements

To work on and improve the living situation of older people with the involvement of all relevant organisations and facilities under the aspects of quality of life, safety and independence. A 10 minute check for the living environment has been provided in the brochure **“more vital, independent, comfortable and safe living”** with a voucher for a free specialist consultation.

The process has been realized through:

- Information and public relations
- Awareness raising
- Training courses for multipliers

### Sub-targets:

- Information and awareness raising
- Encourage personal initiative and sustainability
- Training courses for multipliers
- Home improvement/housing consultation
- Decrease accidents and falls
- Extending the services offered
- Develop networking
- Constant evaluation and documentation

### 3 main experiences and final conclusions:

#### 1. Awareness:

- Information and awareness on the theme has to be a permanent action;
- Organisations and institutions in the local communities are very important for sustainable information and awareness;
- Reveal the immediate benefit of barrier free housing for the target groups and also for young people who are building their own house.



## 2. Consultation:

- It is extremely important that caregivers or people who have the personal trust of the older person who seeks advice are part of the home improvement/housing consultation;
- Privacy and self-determination of older people have to be respected;
- Though the necessity of change is obvious, older people tend to resist change and often have to fight an inner conflict to overcome this resistance.

## 3. Implementation of barrier free building design:

- For implementation two factors are important: specialist consultation and financial grants;
- Persistence and control is necessary to implement inclusive design proposals after the consultation;
- Highlight market chances for user friendly products for older people (demographic change of population) to commercialise, stimulate and initiate demand for these products.

### **Case O**

#### **Accessibility certification by the architect as part of the building regulations in Vienna:**

In the capital city of Vienna, a building code has been in force for many years with barrier free requirements. Since a revision in 2005 the architect has to certify during the construction permit procedure that she/he has taken into account the accessibility requirements according to the building regulations. These building regulations are partially based on ÖNORM B 1600 *“Barrier free building - Design guidelines”*. This is a new interesting approach that gives much more responsibility to the architects to take “design for all” criteria into account. Especially together with the new federal disability discrimination legislation since January 2006, this accessibility certificate makes architects in Vienna accountable and answerable to claims from people with disabilities who feel discriminated in the newly built environment.

### **Case P**

#### **Second time this year BEST summer course in Vienna “Universal Design - Architecture for all” - “A new awareness in planning and construction”**

For more details see <http://info.tuwien.ac.at/best/sc2006/participants/overview.php>:

*“Universal Design is architecture for everyone! Intelligent design - where the people are the most important part and not the building - is a new way of thinking among the architects of our environments. This BEST summer course gives the opportunity to become acquainted with Universal Design and its basic principles in a two-week seminar. Additionally you will get the chance to visit the beautiful city of Vienna, sit next to the blue Danube and spend a weekend in the Austrian mountains.”*



20 European students have the opportunity to learn a lot about “design for all” principles, see interesting sites of accessible buildings and environments and enjoy Vienna. This seminar already took place in 2005 with great success and was repeated in July 2006.

### Case Q

#### **Different political measures for better implementation of barrier free building design in Austria:**

1997 a new “**Antidiscrimination**”-clause was added to the Austrian Federal Constitution in article 7, clause 1:

*Nobody can be discriminated against on the basis of his/her disability. The republic (Confederation, countries and communities) undertakes to ensure the equal treatment of disabled and non disabled persons in all areas of daily life.*

In January 2006 the new **Austrian Federal Disability and Equal Treatment Law** was released and was followed in February with the national implementation of the **EC Public Procurement Directive** as the **Austrian Federal Law for Awarding of Contracts** (Bundesvergabegesetz) where a lot of references to “design for all” and “barrier free environments” are included.

In supporting this Austrian Federal Disability and Equal Treatment Law the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, Generations and Consumer Interests has arranged **government grants** with the **Federal Social Services Office (Bundessozialamt)** - small grants up to €5,000,- / extended grants up to €50,000,- for accessibility measures in refurbishment work (including planning and construction costs) based on ÖNORM B 1600 for persons with disabilities to increase the accessibility of the existing built environment. For employees with disabilities the special work place adaptation and barrier free access to this work place is completely financed by the government.

In late 2006 or 2007 a new **Agreement on Harmonised Building Regulations** for all federal Austrian counties (with 6 guidelines dealing with the essential requirements for a building) instead of nine different federal building regulations will be established. Therein **Guideline Nr. 4** dealing with **Safety in Use and Barrier Free Building Design** is included, which is also based on ÖNORM B 1600. This will improve the situation for the implementation of “design for all principles” in Austria on an equal basis.

**Education on accessible design criteria in technical high schools and technical universities** as demanded in the European Council Resolution “Universal Design”, 2001, are so far not very well implemented. Only in the Technical University of Vienna the lecture on “Universal Design” and “Barrier free build” has been implemented in the architectural department since 1996 but only as an optional subject. Students who are attending the module “building ecology” have the obligation to attend the lecture “Universal design” where the basic design requirements are included.

At the Technical University of Graz the barrier free building design course established a few years ago is also an optional subject.

The implementation of “*design for all*” requirements in higher technical schools are supported by standards such as ÖNORM B 1600 etc., but it depends on the responsibility of the teacher how much time he/she makes available for this important issue.



Next year, a seminar on “*design for all*” requirements will be offered for teachers at the Pedagogic Institute for Teachers on technical high schools in Austria to increase awareness of the subject.

Hopefully, in future, this lack of accessibility information can be solved, especially in technical high schools and technical universities. We are intensively working on this subject. An awareness raising letter will be sent to all responsible Austrian politicians dealing with technical education in the built environment to ask them for their implementation measures in this field.

This summary (cases G to Q inclusive) is dated 2006-06-21 and was elaborated by:

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