PDF ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the PDF Accessibility Checklist is to support Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) PDF document developers ensure that accessibility compliance meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 standards. Please note that the checklist only contains WCAG criteria that are related to the most common errors identified in PDF documents.

We established a list of tools and resources to help developers verify their document accessibility, as well as the PDF Accessibility Checklist that identifies 24 success criteria that are pertinent to PDFs.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- Foxit PhantomPDF: ESDC recommended tool to create accessible PDFs. ESDC employees can obtain the software by filling out the Foxit PhantomPDF Business Request Form and opening a ticket with the National Service Desk.
- Colour Contrast Analyzer tool: ESDC recommended tool to verify colour contrast, ESDC employees can obtain the software by opening a ticket with the National Service Desk.

RESOURCES TO MAKE ACCESSIBLE PDFS

- PDF Techniques for WCAG 2.0
- Foxit PhatomPDF Accessibility
- Foxit PhantomPDF Instructional Tutorials
- Foxit: Use Action Wizard to automatically make PDFs 508 compliant
- WebAIM: Foxit and PDF Accessibility

PDF ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete the **PDF Accessibility Checklist**, by selecting Yes, No, or Not Applicable (N/A) for all criteria. This is to ensure common accessibility errors are resolved. Answer N/A if a criterion is not relevant to your document.

Please note for ESDC employees, you will need to fill out this checklist prior to requesting an accessibility audit from the IT Accessibility Office.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For any further questions or comments regarding the PDF Accessibility Checklist, or to request an accessibility audit, please submit a new request.

#	CRITERIA	YES	NO	N/A
	CHECKLIST			
1	The PDF title is clearly specified and entered correctly using the title entry. This can be found in the PDF internal directory.			
2	The language of the PDF is set in the Lang entry field (English / French).			
3	The language of a passage, phrase, or word that differs from the language of the PDF is specified as the correct language.			
4	Pages are appropriately bookmarked for easier navigation.			
5	There are running headers and footers as needed so users know where they are in the PDF at all times.			
6	Pages are clearly marked. Eg. 1 – 2 – 3 / A – B – C etc.			
7	The reading order of the PDF is correct. Screen readers read the contents in the logical order.			
8	Using the tab key, the user is able to navigate through the PDF for all input fields, and links, in the correct order.			
9	Page headings with subheadings are included as needed.			
10	Tables are correctly tagged so that they are recognized by assistive technology.			
11	Lists of various related items are tagged as lists and list items correctly.			
12	Visuals that do not add any additional value to the content, and contain no text are marked as decorative and ignored by screen readers.			
13	Images always have an alternative text. Complex images have a long description in the body of the document.			
14	When using colours, shapes, or visual aids to convey a message, there are other written descriptors to get the message across.			
15	Text, and images of text have a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1; except for large text (above size 14 bold, or above size 18) which requires a contrast ratio of 3:1. This will ensure the colour scheme is optimal for the visually impaired and/or colour blind.			
16	Links are clearly marked and contain descriptive text.			

#	CRITERIA	YES	NO	N/A
17	Form input options and links are clearly marked and described. Eg. • Radio buttons allow for one selection – these are clearly marked as circles. • Checkboxes allow for multiple selections – these are clearly marked as squares. • Links are clearly marked with blue, underlined text.			
18	Form controls are properly displayed and indicated on the form for users to easily access and identify.			
19	All fields have a proper name, role, and value attached for users.			
20	All text fields have associated descriptive text. This allows assistive technology to recognize and understand the different form fields.			
21	When a user has failed to input information correctly in a field, there is a clear error indicator that visually and auditorily informs the user of the error, how to correct the error, and properly fill out the field.			
22	The submit button is clearly marked so that users know how to submit the form they are filling out.			
23	Best Practice: when using an acronym ensure that the first time it is mentioned in the PDF that it is fully defined. Eg. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)			
24	Best Practice: the font is sans serif and commonly used. (for enhanced visual legibility)			

GLOSSARY

Alternative Text: Text associated with an image that conveys the same essential information as the image.

Assistive Technology: Any light-, mid-, or high-tech tool or device which helps people with disabilities perform tasks with greater ease or independence.

Bookmark: A type of link with representative text that makes it easier to navigate through documents.

Descriptive Text: The text that describes a form field's contents to a screen reader user. This is also called a "label".

Reading Order: This is the order in which assistive technologies, like screen readers, present the content in a PDF. The tags in the Tags Tree determine this order.

Running Headers/Footers: Information that is repeated at the top/bottom of pages in a document. They often contain information such as page number, the name of the document, etc.

Screen Reader: A software program used to allow reading of content and navigation of the screen using speech or Braille output. Used primarily by persons who are blind or have low vision.

Tags: The structured, textual representation of the PDF content that is accessed by screen readers, to read the document out-loud.