



WIDE framework



Widening Inclusion of Disability in Employment

Tender for the development of an accessible web platform to support employers to hire, retain and promote more people with disabilities, and to create inclusive workplaces



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1.0 Introduction

[AHEAD](#), in partnership with [Employers for Change](#), invite proposals from qualified companies for the design, development and ongoing hosting/maintenance of an accessible website/platform as part of the development of the [WIDE Framework](#).

The aim of the WIDE Framework is to support employers in reducing barriers to hiring, retaining, and promoting more people with disabilities, and to create more inclusive working environments.

We envisage the finished website/platform to have:

1. A front-end website for the WIDE framework, viewable by anyone without a requirement to log in. Most of the framework content will be viewable by all.
2. A user/employer login, with additional functionality/interface laid on top of the framework to allow employers to engage with the framework, and self-review their company practices against the framework's recommended actions.
3. A WIDE project team member login section via a content management system, enabling editing/update of content in the framework directly by WIDE project team members, and management of framework users.

1.1 Scope of work

The platform must be fully accessible and align with AHEAD/Employers for Change's style and ethos. The successful bidder will be expected to:

- Design and develop an accessible Web platform ensuring adherence to a min of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2 AA standards, and high standards of cyber security.
- Ensure a seamless and intuitive user experience for platform users and smooth integration of required features.
- Develop back-end tools that provide data analytics for WIDE project team members to get reports on engagement with the framework.
- Provide ongoing hosting/technical support services post platform design, contracted on an annual basis.

1.2 Draft project timeline

- Apr/early May: Initiate platform development

- July: Advanced draft of the website/platform completed and ready for the testing phase
- July-Aug: Testing phase for accessibility and usability (testing groups provided by AHEAD)
- Aug-Sept: Update of platform based on testing feedback
- Sept/Oct: Launch of the Framework Platform

1.3 Budget range

Our allocated budget for this project is as follows:

- Web platform design phase (Apr - Sept) = €15,000-€26,000
- Ongoing hosting fees and general technical support/maintenance costs (Annually) – a range of budgets will be considered as required, please provide details on anticipated ongoing support costs.

AHEAD reserves the right to select the proposal that best meets our needs and quality expectations.

1.4 Tendering process stages

The tendering process involves three stages:

1. Application window:

The application window is open between Mar 10th and Apr 7th, 2025. Questions and initial expressions of interest can be forwarded by Mar 24th. For fairness and transparency, all companies who have asked a question or submitted an expression of interest will receive anonymised responses to questions asked by any tenderer by Mar 26th.

2. Assessment of proposals:

Proposals will be initially assessed based on the following weightings:

- **Relevant Programming Skills/Experience (25%):** Demonstrated relevant experience of the team members assigned to the project, including evidence of successful completion of similar projects with similar platform functionality requirements. This will include demonstrated proficiency in relevant

programming languages required to meet the specifications, development content management systems (CMS) etc.

- **Relevant User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI) Design (25%):** Demonstrated expertise and track record in meeting WCAG 2 AA standards, applying a universal design approach, and developing user-friendly platforms.
- **Service and Support (15%):** Demonstrated ability to provide quality customer service to clients, to constructively and openly communicate with clients, to provide appropriate ongoing support post-development:
- **Vision (15%):** Overall thoroughness and appeal of the vision presented.
- **Value (20%):** Value for money (balance between cost and quality of vision proposed within the budget range) the proposal represents for the project partners.

2-3 organisations will be shortlisted for an online interview to discuss their proposals in the week of Apr 14th.

3. Interview

The procurement panel will meet 2-3 shortlisted companies who will be provided with opportunities to present their ideas and answer questions on their proposal in the week of Apr 14th and the contract will be awarded by Apr 22nd. The selected business will be expected to begin work as soon as is feasible following the awarding of the contract.

1.5 Submission details

What to include in your proposal:

A more complete outline of the functionality required to be built into the platform is contained in section 3 of this document. Interested companies should submit a detailed proposal outlining their proposed approach to the development which meets these requirements, relevant experience and skills required to meet the specification, examples of previous similar work, specific information addressing their expertise/experience in UX/UI design and WCAG compliance, timeline, and pricing. Companies may also propose additional functionality or alternative approaches to development which they believe would enhance the finished product based on their experience and expertise if they wish.

Where to send your proposal and or any enquiries:

Please [send your application and or enquiries via email to Catherine.murray@ahead.ie](mailto:Catherine.murray@ahead.ie).

Note that anonymised responses to all relevant tender enquires will be shared with all applicants who express an interest to promote fairness in the process.

Submission deadline:

The final deadline to submit a proposal is 23:59 on Apr 7th, 2025. See section 1.4 for more information on tendering timelines.

2.0 Organisation overview

The WIDE Framework development is a partnership between AHEAD and Employers for Change.

2.1 About AHEAD

[AHEAD](#) is an independent non-profit organisation working with and for disabled people to shape inclusive and empowering environments in tertiary education and employment. The focus of our work is access and participation in further education and training (FET), higher education (HE) and graduate employment.

AHEAD provides information to students and graduates with disabilities, teachers, guidance counsellors and parents on disability issues in education. We undertake national research relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities, contribute to national policy forums and provide professional development opportunities to develop the capacity of staff in FET and HE to be more inclusive.

AHEAD works with graduates and employers through the [GET AHEAD](#) Graduate Forum and the [WAM](#) Mentored Work Placement Programme. [View AHEAD's Strategic Plan Here](#).

2.2 About Employers for Change.

The aim of [Employers for Change](#) is to provide an employer disability information service.

The service empowers employers with all the information and advice needed to hire, employ, manage and retain staff with disabilities.

Employers for Change is a programme of the [Open Doors Initiative](#), funded by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

3.0 WIDE Framework Website/Platform Specifications

3.1 Aim of the WIDE Framework

The aim of the WIDE Framework is to support employers in reducing barriers to hiring, retaining, and promoting more people with disabilities, and to create more inclusive working environments.

3.2 The development of the WIDE Framework

The project commenced in August 2023 and is funded by the Department of Social Protection through [AHEAD's WAM Programme](#). A Core Advisory Group of key sectoral stakeholders was established to provide advice and guidance throughout the project's lifecycle. [Employers for Change](#) are collaborators on the project with the role of Co-Chair of the Core Advisory Group alongside AHEAD. The Advisory Group contains a range of disabled persons organisations, disability NGOs, national agencies, employer representative groups and unions.

The WIDE framework contains a set of structured actions with guidance notes and resources to support employers. All actions contained within the WIDE Framework are supported by evidence arising from legislative and national policy obligations, an extensive academic literature review, and good practice published by disability and human rights organisations. It is also informed by extensive consultation and engagement with key stakeholders during the development process, including disabled people, employers, relevant disabled persons organisations and representative bodies.

Currently, the WIDE team are nearing completion of a text-based version of the framework and are now moving into the platform design phase, which will enable employers to engage with its suggested actions more interactively. It is expected that the WIDE Framework platform will launch in Sept/Oct 2025.

3.3 Target users of the framework

The framework is being developed for use by employers in all sectors and all sizes in Ireland who seek to hire, retain and promote more disabled employees, and create workplaces where they can thrive. Aligning with national and European legislative/regulatory responsibilities pertaining to equality and social sustainability, the WIDE Framework will support these employers to meet and exceed these obligations and create workplaces that attract and nurture a diverse talent base, boosting both compliance and productivity.

Employers in the consultation process have emphasised that the functionality and usability of the web platform are vital to ensure sustained use of the framework and are paramount to the uptake and success of it.

3.4 Structure of the framework

The framework is organised into two overarching themes, with each theme having three Domains:

Theme: Organisational Culture

- **Domain 1: Policy and Strategy** (covering organisational policies and procedures around EDI, the role of leaders, how universal design is embedded across the organisation, and disability support processes)
- **Domain 2: Environment** (covering actions around accessibility of the digital and physical environment)
- **Domain 3: Training** (covering the variety of training topics and the levels of training required around universal design, digital accessibility and disability inclusion)

Theme: Organisational Practice

- **Domain 4:** Recruitment and Selection (covering actions to ensure accessible job specifications, equitable recruitment processes and opportunities for disclosure, support with process, and alternative recruitment paths are in place)
- **Domain 5:** Workplace Supports (covering clear communication of general employee supports, clear practices around creating a safe environment for disclosure of disability and a confidential process around needs assessment, and development of implementation plans with clear responsibilities assigned).
- **Domain 6:** Performance and Progression (covering how organisations create transparent and inclusive performance/team management approaches, equity of opportunity for career development, supportive promotional opportunities for all).

Each Domain features 'areas of effort' containing a range of 'actions' to work towards. Each clickable action has an associated guidance note to guide employers to implement it, along with useful resources that can help them and information on legislative obligations this action can help them to meet.

3.5 Functionality requirements and anticipated platform layout

We envisage the finished website/platform to have:

- A front-end website for the WIDE framework, viewable by anyone without a requirement to log in. Most of the framework content will be viewable by all.
- A user/employer login, with additional functionality/interface laid on top of the framework to allow users attached to company profiles to engage with the framework, and self-review their company practices against its recommended actions.
- A WIDE project team member login section via a content management system, enabling editing/update of content in the framework directly by WIDE project team members, management of platform users/company profiles, and viewing of analytics on engagement with the framework.

3.5.1 Proposed concept of the user experience

The framework itself (6 domains, areas of effort under each, actions) will be viewable by anybody, with no requirement for an account to be set up. However, by setting up an account on the WIDE platform, individuals will be able to:

- Set up one or more organisational/company profiles for organisations they are part of to engage with the framework. Once in an Organisation profile, they will be able to:
- Invite others to be part of the organisational review via different permission levels e.g. owner (full capability to edit profile, invite others to join company profile and assign users to actions), reviewer (can edit text and score in the self-review process) and view only (no editing capability). This would be a similar concept to how a LinkedIn company profile is managed by users with different permissions.
- Assign/associate one or more members of the company profile to review/'lead' particular actions (only owners can do this assignment) to make it easy for organisations to understand responsibilities of individuals in the collective review. Ability to add due dates for completion of the review and a way to opt to get an email reminder sent to assigned users a month, week or day before the due date.
- Self-review their organisation against each action, based on a maturity rubric provided, or add an N/A mark if they deem this action not relevant/out of scope for their organisation. This rubric and self-score piece would likely sit under the action itself.
- Add notes, evidence/rationale for their self-score against the rubric in one editable field, and enter improvement plans to boost their score in another field provided under each action, with ability to add due dates assigned to

improvement plans and a way to opt to get an email reminder sent to user a month, week or day before the due date.

- View an organisational dashboard, with a radar chart on average performance in each of the domains based on a completed self-review. Ability to save snapshots of scoring at a given time and recall and compare them with current status in the dashboard, and ability to automate capturing of snapshots on a quarterly/annual basis if desired. Dashboard would also show a maturity indicator for each action based on self-review and clearly show which actions have not yet been reviewed/scored.
- Export an accessible summary report in word or excel with the organisational radar chart and quick view on scoring across the actions, or an accessible comprehensive report with the full scoring, rationale/evidence notes and improvement plans listed, alongside those assigned to review each action.
- Opt-in for their organisation to be listed as 'Open for Collaboration' and a further two options indicating whether they are "looking for support" or "happy to advise", to be posted on a WIDE collaborator directory with contact details for organisations interested in exchanging ideas and practice in this space. This list could ideally be viewable via a country map, and filterable by industry, business name, or business size.
- Access a directory of service providers and suppliers relevant to the delivery of the WIDE Framework e.g. AT suppliers, ISL interpreting organisations, Needs Assessors. Framework could also have a space where organisations could apply to be considered for this directory.

3.5.2 Proposed front-end layout

The front end will likely be broken into the following sections.

- **Home** (the framework) showing the high-level framework in its entirety, a touch like what you see when you [click on the UDL guidelines icon on this page](#). Framework is broken down into:
 - 6 Domains (see 3.4), each which includes:
 - Small number of 'Areas of Effort', each which has...

- Small number of related actions. When you click on an action, each action page features:
 - A guidance note explaining the action and a quote from a research participant which relates to the development of the action
 - Where relevant, links to useful templates, resources or case studies to help you implement the action
 - Where relevant, specific links to regulatory/legal requirements that completing this action can help you with e.g. ESRS Standard S3
 - The Rubric for organisations to self-review and if not logged in, a button saying 'log in and select a company to self-review your organisation'.
 - Where logged in and connected to an organisational profile, you would also be able to score yourself against the rubric, add evidence/rationale to support the score, upload related docs (e.g. relevant policy or process docs that relate to the action) and enter self-improvement plans. Additionally, owners would be able to assign company users to an action.

- **About the Framework**
- **WIDE News/Events**
- **User Guide and FAQ**
- **Research and Framework Development**
- **Alignment with Legislation/Regulation**

- **Directory of Service Providers**
- **(If logged in) Networking with Other Companies (see 3.5.1)**
- **(If logged in) Your Profile (see 3.5.1)**
- **(If logged in) View/Change Organisation (Dashboard) (see 3.5.1)**

3.5.3 Proposed CMS layout/features

WIDE team CMS would likely feature:

- CMS user setup/control
- General user backend management
- Company profile backend management
- Service provider backend management (view/approve/edit suppliers in directory)
- Add/edit platform page content
 - Pages (general content/news items)
 - Domains
 - Areas of Effort
 - Actions
 - Resources (which can then be added to one or more actions to support implementation, of linked to in general/news pages)
 - Legislation (which can then be added to one or more actions, denoting that completing the action helps you comply with said legislation)
- WIDE analytics section with data on framework usage

3.5.4 Proposed user profile page layout

'My profile' page would likely feature:

- Profile Info – password, preferences etc

- Create a Company
- My Companies (showing company profiles account is associated with and level of access to them – enabling them to switch through companies, remove themselves from them etc). Clicking a company would bring you to the Company Profile.

3.5.5 Proposed company profile page layout

Company profile page would likely feature:

- Company Dashboard – showing radar chart summarising average review scores in each domain, plus a list view of all actions with a review score bar visually showing the score assigned to each or clearly showing where actions remain unscored/reviewed. This list view of actions would also allow owners to assign users associated to the company profile to actions.
- Company User Management – with ability to invite/edit/remove other users as owners, reviewers or viewers of the company profile.
- Reports – with ability to export a summary report or complete report of the WIDE Framework self-review in a word format.
- Company profile – edit company details, preferences.
- Open for Collaboration – ability to 'opt in' for company details be published in the 'Connecting with Other Companies' map.

3.6 Other considerations

- This is aimed at businesses, so interface will have to be employer friendly, slick and intuitive – appealing GUI is important.
- Strong standards of cyber security must be applied to protect employer data stored in the back end.
- Must be mobile responsive for most functionality.
- WCAG AA standards of accessibility will have to be met for all/vast majority of functionality.
- We intend to form small employer testing and accessibility testing groups, so plan for an iterative process which involves taking on their feedback.