

Business Innovation Guide for Inclusive Design and Accessibility (BIG IDeA)

Consortium Leader and Partners:

The BIG IDeA consortium is an open consortium led by the [Inclusive Design Research Centre](#) (IDRC) and hosted by the [Inclusive Design Institute](#). Membership includes organizations of persons with disabilities, businesses, business organizations and any entity wishing to support the mission and vision of the consortium.

Objectives and Outcomes of the Model Prototype:

Objectives:

The BIG IDeA consortium objectives are to:

1. Establish and foster a co-design process between customers and businesses to continuously advance innovation in inclusive design – thereby improving the customer experience and the business processes.
2. Provide an online platform that supports customers in finding and reviewing accessible businesses (similar to Trip Advisor, but for accessibility); businesses in finding accessibility tools and resources; and a mechanism for developing and showcasing innovative approaches to accessibility challenges.
3. Initiate a virtuous cycle that benefits customers, businesses, and communities --- leading to greater prosperity for all members (refer to figure 1 for illustration of points below):
 - support businesses in continuously improving the customer experience for all customers;
 - leverage inclusive design and inclusive participation to improve planning, prediction and innovation in services, business processes and customer experiences;
 - find innovative approaches to address existing barriers;
 - proactively ensure that emerging products and services are inclusively designed;
 - showcase leadership in inclusive design; and
 - create a resource bank of openly available resources, tools, lessons and strategies that support inclusive design and accessibility.

Outcomes:

Among the outcomes are:

- Ontario recognized as a global leader in the growing field of inclusive design and inclusive design as a business driver for Ontario businesses;
- increased human capacity for inclusive design paving the way for higher standards;
- more inclusive participation of individuals with disabilities in Ontario society; and
- a more prosperous, age-friendly and equitable community that benefits from the systemic impacts of inclusive design on the health, wealth and happiness of a society.

Executive Summary of the Model Prototype:

The Inclusive Design Research Centre proposes to lead a consortium that will develop a platform to support businesses in Ontario in adopting accessible and inclusive practices. The platform will also support a process whereby businesses that achieve or exceed a level of inclusive design will be awarded with certification and their accomplishment will be showcased online and through live events. Business innovation in inclusive design will be assessed through a dual process of continuous customer reviews combined with verification by an expert panel.

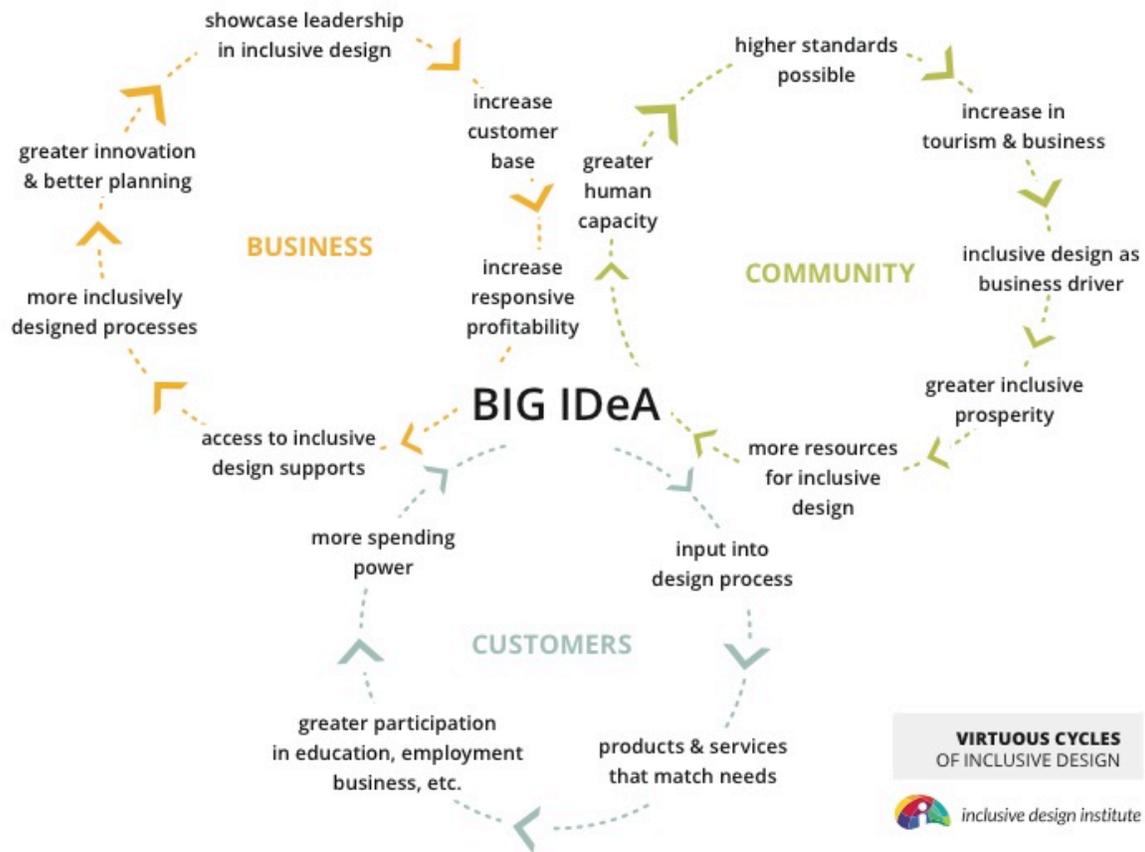


Figure 1: Illustration of virtuous cycle of inclusive design benefitting customers, businesses and the larger community, described above.

The platform will support:

Resources, Tools and Training to Achieve Accessibility

The platform will provide a repository and referral system for tools, toolkits and component libraries that businesses can use to achieve accessibility and inclusive design. These will include tools such as captioning tools, component toolkits for accessible websites, accessibility evaluation and repair tools, accessible design patterns and exemplars of accessible design. An online forum will be hosted to share knowledge in accessible design. The platform will also offer open education resources, courses and training programs for accessibility skills.

Customer Reviews of Businesses

The consortium will partner with existing accessibility mapping applications (e.g., [AccessNow](#), [AXS Map](#), [Wheelmap](#) and [Planat](#)) to aggregate accessibility reviews of “bricks and mortar” businesses and add inclusive customer service rankings and feedback to the reviews. The consortium will ensure that the customer review interface and resulting accessibility guides are accessible.

Customer Reviews of Online Businesses

There is a growing set of businesses that exist online or combine a significant presence online with offices or storefronts. The platform will provide mechanisms for customers to review the online customer service and accessibility of these businesses. These review processes will also be linked to online business platforms such as [Shopify](#).

Online and Mobile Searchable Guide to Accessible Businesses

An inclusively designed searchable guide to accessible businesses will support customers in exploring, discovering and searching for businesses that meet their personal accessibility requirements. The interface to the guide will implement the [AccessForAll personalization strategy](#). Both a map view and a text view will be offered.

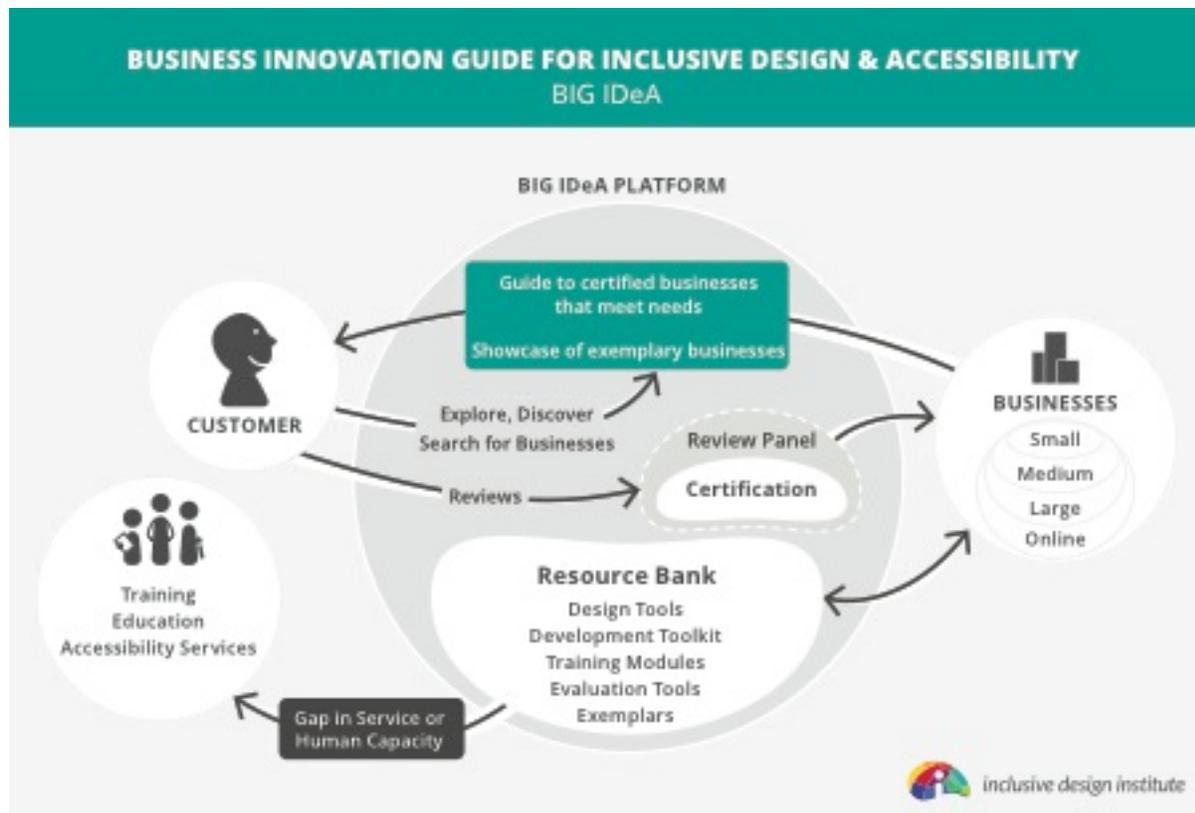


Figure 2: Illustration of BIG IDeA Platform described above

Verification Through Certification

Certification will be granted by an advisory panel with majority representation from individuals with lived experience of disability and expertise in accessibility. Businesses will be eligible for certification once they have reached a threshold of positive customer reviews. (The qualifying threshold will be determined by the BIG IDeA Board.)

Certification will be determined using the three dimensions of inclusive design (figure 3):

1. **Serving Personal Diversity:** Does the customer experience address the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities? Is there a mechanism for customers to express their personal requirements? Is the inclusively designed experience integrated and not segregated from standard business processes?
2. **Inclusive Process:** Do the business's design and planning processes include the participation and perspectives of persons with disabilities? Are the business processes and tools themselves inclusively designed?
3. **Context and System:** Has the business created the systemic conditions to promote accessibility and inclusive design internally and externally? Are the hiring, planning, procurement, evaluation, training, leadership and communication processes inclusively designed?

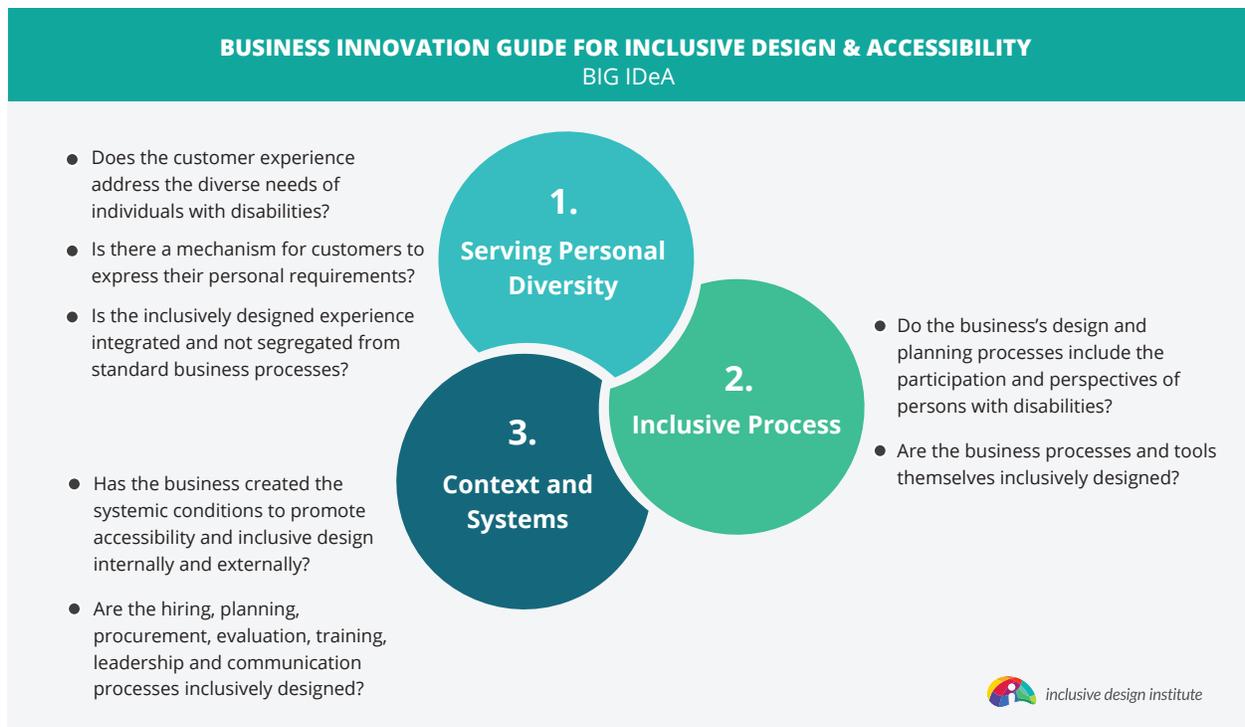


Figure 3: Three dimensions of inclusive design used to verify certification, described above.

Inclusive Design Challenges

Customers and consumer organizations will be provided an opportunity to identify gaps in accessibility solutions. These will be posted as challenges. Responses will be recruited from businesses and through [Hackathons](#) or [Sprints](#), engaging youth in developing innovative new solutions. Businesses will be recognized for innovative responses to challenges on the BIG IDeA platform website and at events such as the [DEEP](#) conference.

Inclusively Designed BIG IDeA Platform

The platform itself will be inclusively designed, adhering to the [3 dimensions of inclusive design](#). The platform will:

1. Offer a personalized user interface that responds to a full range of accessibility needs using the [AccessForAll](#) and Fluid project personal needs and preference functionality.
2. Engage a diversity of perspectives in its governance and operation. The tools and processes will be inclusively designed.
3. Be integrated into the business ecosystem and take into account the context of businesses. The platform will respond to the quickly changing business environment (including the rising online presence of most businesses). The platform will also take into account the global context: to enable the implementation of Ontario innovations, but also to leverage innovations and relevant initiatives globally.

BIG IDeA Governance

The consortium will be open to membership from businesses, organizations and any entity wishing to support the vision and mission of BIG IDeA. The Board of Directors will balance representation from business and consumer organizations and will be elected to staggered terms by the membership. The Board will appoint a qualified Review Panel to certify businesses. The IDRC will manage the BIG IDeA platform, hosted by the infrastructure of the Inclusive Design Institute.

Fit with Working Group Recommendations:

The model aligns with all working group principles and recommendations. Inclusive Design Certification will be judged using a framework that covers the full spectrum of disabilities, goals and contexts. Any prioritization would inevitably disadvantage persons with an excluded disability. The importance of any goal or function and any context is relative to the individual and cannot be ranked or prioritized. The platform will be open to the full range of accessibility requirements and the full range of contexts, including unanticipated and uncategorized accessibility needs and combinations of needs.

If a priority were to be highlighted it would be: community-guided innovation in inclusive design that significantly advances accessibility and inclusive design beyond the requirements of the AODA and the human rights code. This will be of mutual benefit to businesses, persons with disabilities and the Ontario community as a whole. This will place Ontario as a world leader in inclusive design.

Organizational Capacity to Deliver and Sustain the Prototype:

The [Inclusive Design Research Centre](#) has a twenty-three year history of advancing the theory and practice of inclusive design. The vision and mission of the IDRC is to ensure that emerging systems and practices are designed inclusively from the start. The innovations of the IDRC permeate products and services around the globe. The centre at OCAD University is only the “tip of the iceberg” of a diverse, open and global community of individuals and organizations advancing inclusive design.

Community: The IDRC is founded on a deep and fundamental respect for the lived experience of disability and the essential need to be inclusive of the perspectives of people with experience of disability. The IDRC partners with and is guided by organizations of people with disabilities, as well as team members, experts and co-designers with experience of disability. The IDRC focus is cross-disability. The projects and initiatives of the IDRC are run as open source communities with transparent processes and multiple open and inclusively designed channels for participation. The IDRC is committed to continuous improvement and invites constructive critique from the community.

Business: The IDRC has partnered with businesses of all sizes globally to promote innovation in inclusive design. As an example Microsoft is applying the [inclusive design processes of the IDRC to transform its enterprise](#). The IDRC has pioneered research into the economic and business opportunity of inclusive design, partnering with economic think tanks such as the [Martin Prosperity Institute](#), [JIBs](#) and the [London School of Economics](#).

Global Networks: The IDRC leads several global open source communities focused on inclusive design and research networks with more than 300 multi-sector collaborators globally.

Technical Resources: The IDRC leads the multi-university research hub of the Inclusive Design Institute (IDI). The infrastructure of the IDI includes a large cloud server and network that supports inclusive design initiatives in Canada, [Europe](#) and the [USA](#).

Thought Leaders: The IDRC and its director [Jutta Treviranus](#) have become global thought leaders in inclusive design for a connected and digitally transformed society. The IDRC is the vibrant and responsive hub of a diverse global community, continuously advancing and testing the theory and practice of inclusive design.

Education and Training: The IDRC has initiated a pioneering [graduate program in inclusive design](#) at OCAD University. The program is recruiting its 6th cohort. The graduates are leaders in the application of inclusive design in all sectors.

The IDRC has created a [training platform in inclusive design](#) that engages and trains youth with disabilities and refugee youth in remediating accessibility barriers. Youth gain progressive portable skills toward a service entrepreneurship in inclusive design.

Proposed Partners and Resources to Support Delivery and Sustainability:

The consortium will strive to continuously add new members. The IDRC will leverage the global network of more than 300 collaborators, established relationships with consumer organizations and world-class inclusive design infrastructure to support the platform and consortium.

Benefits and Costs to Organizations:

Benefits to business:

Businesses will have access to a growing pool of resources and training in inclusive design. Innovative practices and achievements in inclusive design will be showcased through the guide, website and events; leading to a larger customer base. Businesses will be supported in continuous innovation and improvement through reviews and closer ties to the community.

Cost to business:

A nominal membership fee will be charged for consortium membership (pro-rated to the size of the business and subsidized for not-for-profit organizations).

Piloting strategy:

Rather than a staged release, the basic functionality of the BIG IDeA platform will be made openly available across Ontario and promoted through community events. The platform will grow from small successes and continuously respond to feedback from the community and consortium members. Businesses that achieve a threshold of positive customer reviews will be eligible to be evaluated for inclusive design certification by the BIG IDeA expert review panel using the three dimensions of inclusive design.

Five Year Vision:

The consortium and platform will “grow from small successes”, incorporating mechanisms to evaluate the functioning of the platform itself, thereby guiding continuous improvement. The consortium and platform will be leveraged to garner Ontario leadership in inclusive design and respond to the increasing demand for inclusively designed products, services and environments. The platform will be networked to initiatives globally and integrated into mainstream services (e.g., Google, Bing, and IOS maps, Trip Advisor, Yelp, etc.).