

FRAMEWORK FOR THE NATIONAL ACCESS TO WORK SCHEME FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NIGERIA

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Table of Contents

Foreword	i
Acknowledgment	ii
List of Abbreviations.....	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Preamble.....	1
1.2 Definition Of Terms.....	2
1.3 Background	3
1.4 Rationale.....	5
2. Policy Commitment And Supportive Legal Frameworks.....	6
2.1 Policy Commitment.....	6
2.2 Supportive Legal Frameworks.....	6
3. Program Strategies.....	9
3.1 What The National Access To Work Scheme Is.....	9
3.2 What The National Access To Work Scheme Will Not Support.....	10
3.3 Guiding Principles.....	10
3.4 Goal.....	11
3.5 Objectives.....	11
3.6 Program Outcome.....	12
3.7 Performance Indicators.....	12
4. Guidelines For Implementation Of The National Access To Work Scheme for Persons With persons With Disabilities.....	13
4.1 Eligibility.....	13
4.2 Application And Assessment Processes.....	13
4.3 Provision Of Reasonable Accommodation.....	15
5. Miscellaneous.....	18
5.1 Data Collection, Management And Privacy.....	18
5.2 Training And Awareness.....	19
5.3 Governance Structure.....	20
5.4 Funding Mechanism.....	20
5.5 Monitoring, Evaluation And Learning.....	20

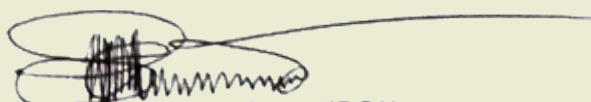
FOREWARD

This Framework for the National Access to Work Scheme is one of the strategic approaches through which the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) operationalizes provisions of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018. The Act, in Sections (28 and 29) had recognized the rights of persons with disabilities to equal employment opportunities without discrimination on the grounds of disability; and had also recommended the reservation of a quota of "5%" for persons with disabilities in all public organizations. These provisions are intended to enable persons with disabilities to overcome barriers that hinder their access to employment, especially in the formal sector.

To ensure that persons with disabilities gain equal access to employment opportunities like their counterparts without disabilities, public and private sector employers are required to design and implement recruitment procedures and create a work environment that guaranty safety, inclusiveness, access, reasonable accommodation and participation for all employees including those with disabilities. Besides the obligation placed by the Disability Act on owners of all public buildings and spaces (including employers) to make the same physically accessible to persons with disabilities in line with Persons with Disabilities (Accessibility) Regulations 2023, employers are also required to ensure that their employees with disabilities are provided with appropriate assistive work tools, work processes, and work environment which will allow them to perform their work tasks in line with quality standards set by the employers. However, the additional high costs of providing assistive work tools and adapting work processes and spaces to guarantee access and reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities have over the years posed as major barriers that discourage private sector employers from employing persons with disabilities despite qualifying for such employment.

The National Access to Work Scheme is designed to provide work-assistive devices and technologies to persons with disabilities employed by private sector organizations. The Scheme adopts a "shared responsibility" approach between the Federal Government (through the NCPWD) and private sector employers. The NCPWD will collaborate with stakeholders to mobilize resources to cover most of the additional costs of providing work assistive devices and technologies to persons with disabilities employed by the private sector thereby reducing the cost of employing a person with disability. This is expected to encourage such employers to increase the number of persons with disabilities employed by them.

I am pleased that the inclusive approach adopted in developing this Framework has helped secure the support of critical stakeholders including the organized private sector and community of persons with disabilities for the Scheme. This offers the NCPWD a strong pedestal upon which to kickstart this very innovative economic empowerment program for the huge population of unemployed persons with disabilities in Nigeria. I'm therefore convinced that this Scheme will make an appreciable contribution towards the strengthening of Nigeria's economy through the reduction of the unemployment rate at least by 15% while also raising the country's tax revenues and her overall GDP.



James David Lalu Ph. D. NPOM

Executive Secretary,
National Commission for Persons with Disabilities July, 2024.



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ACRONYMS

- CRPD Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- FCDO Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- IAP Individualized Assessment Plan/Procedure
- NCPWD National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
- NBDN Nigeria Business Disability Network
- OPDs Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
- WHO World Health Organization



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Despite the global upsurge in the development of new approaches to improve access of persons with disabilities to formal employment, developing countries including Nigeria have not done much to adopt incentivizing employers rather than the punitive approaches thereby leaving most of the employable populations of Persons with disabilities outside of the labour market. One of these incentivising approaches is the “Access to Work” support schemes which is designed to facilitate strategic collaboration between government and employers for the purpose of providing programmed direct support to Persons with disabilities in order to help them find and remain in jobs. The Access to Work Scheme has been implemented in the UK since 1994 and it comprises two main components: the provision of assistive aids and support to job-seeking or already employed Persons with disabilities, and support for the modification of work protocols and workplace environment.

Notwithstanding the country's enactment of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018 which recognizes the rights of Persons with disabilities to equal employment opportunities, there has been little or no initiative to support access to work for Persons with disabilities.

This Framework for a National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with Disabilities is a policy measure of the Federal Government of Nigeria, developed and implemented by the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) in line with provisions of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018. The Framework consists of 5 main sections including—

1. This introductory section;
2. the second section presents the NCPWD's policy commitment to the Access to Work Scheme as well as the relevant supportive legal frameworks;
3. The third section details the strategies for implementing the Framework;
4. The fourth section presents guidelines for implementing the Access to Work
5. Scheme;
6. The fifth and final section of the Framework contains some miscellaneous issues including management of data protection and privacy; training and awareness; governance structure; funding mechanism; as well as monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

TOESLAND F. (2017). Embracing the disabled workforce in Africa. African Business Magazine. Retrieved from: <https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/sectors/development/embracing-disabled-workforce-africa/>
Powell A. (2020). Access to Work scheme for disabled people. BRIEFING PAPER Number 0666, HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY



1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

These terms are defined strictly within the context of employment for Persons with disabilities. This is without any prejudice to any other meanings or interpretations they may be given in other contexts.

1. **Persons with Disabilities:** include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
 - i. A person who has received a temporary or permanent certificate of disability confirming that they have a condition that is expected to continue permanently or for a considerable length of time that can reasonably be expected to limit their functional ability substantially, not limited to seeing, hearing, thinking, ambulating, climbing, descending, lifting, grasping, or rising, and includes any related function or any limitation due to weakness or significant lack of endurance so that they cannot perform their everyday routine without significant hardship and vulnerability to everyday obstacles and hazards.
 - ii. A person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
 - iii. A person with any form of disability but who has competed and can compete on an equal basis with a person without a disability if given appropriate support.
2. **Accessibility:** This is the practice of adapting work environments, communication tools, and job duties to accommodate persons with disabilities.
3. **Reasonable Accommodation:** Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable an applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that an individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities.
4. **Assistive technologies:** This is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.
5. **Disability Cost:** Disability costs are the additional expense a person with a disability would need to incur to achieve the same standard of life as a person without a disability.
6. **Employee:** includes applicant or prospective employee, contract worker, independent contractor, contract worker, or independent contractor.
7. **Employer:** includes prospective employer, principal, or person who engages or proposes to engage an employee, commission agent, contract worker, or independent contractor.



1.3 BACKGROUND

2.1 Situation Analysis

Nigeria is estimated to be home to over 30 million Persons with disabilities considering the current national population estimate of over 200 million. Up to 90% of the population of Persons with disabilities in Nigeria is projected to live in conditions of extreme poverty. Despite being described as the largest minority group in Nigeria, Persons with disabilities continue to experience worsening conditions of vulnerability due to their inability to access gainful employment. Using the 15% disability prevalence rate, While only about 5% of children with disabilities in the country are able to access education, adult literacy among Persons with disabilities is assumed to be only 5% or less., The low access of Persons with disabilities to qualitative and functional inclusive education and other social services is said to be responsible for their poor capacity to uptake gainful employment and other economic empowerment opportunities.

The existence of relevant legal and policy frameworks on disability rights, employment, and social protection, etc at national and state levels has not made an appreciable impact on the access of Persons with disabilities to formal employment opportunities. The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 and its equivalents in many states make clear provisions for employment quotas for Persons with disabilities especially in the employment of public organizations. While these laws fail to include the organized private sector in these provisions, Agencies of government charged with the implementation of these laws are yet to put in place appropriate frameworks to realize the objectives of such provisions.

The Report of a recently conducted Labour Market Assessment by the Sightsavers FCDO funded -Inclusion Works program in Nigeria indicated that while there is no credible national data on actively employed Persons with disabilities, "Persons with disabilities participation in formal employment in the organized private and public sectors in Nigeria is very low." This situation is largely attributed to the low literacy rate among Persons with disabilities on one hand, and the absence of relevant frameworks to implement the various provisions on the rights of Persons with disabilities to employment as enshrined in the national and state level Disability Laws, the National Employment Policy and the various public employment schemes of the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) on the other hand. In addition, it is also observed that there are no collaborative efforts between the organized private sector and relevant line ministries, departments, and agencies of government at national and state levels to drive job access for Persons with disabilities. As a result of this, most formal employers have not put in place appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of barriers that prevent Persons with disabilities from accessing and remaining in employment.



Since 2017, International Development Partners including the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the UK Government, Sightsavers, Ford Foundation, Disability Rights Fund, among others have been collaborating with stakeholders including Federal and State Governments, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), private sector employers, business management organizations, professional bodies, among others to promote job access for Persons with disabilities. Through strategic sensitization, capacity-building, and policy strengthening, these interventions have supported public and private sector employers to develop the appropriate competencies and systems to employ up to 1000 Persons with disabilities in the last 4 years. The private sector employers have demonstrated an evident commitment to drive job access for Persons with disabilities by establishing the Nigeria Business Disability Network (NBDN). However, the gains of these interventions are threatened by the absence of any direct government commitment and support to encourage private sector employers and Persons with disabilities, particularly in the cushioning of the cost associated with the employment and job retention of Persons with disabilities.

1.4 RATIONALE

Persons with disabilities have the right to gainful employment just as their counterparts without disabilities and it is the responsibility of state and non-state actors to ensure that Persons with disabilities can enjoy these rights without any hindrances. Protecting the rights of Persons with disabilities to gainful employment is thus a fulfilment of their fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as Amended), the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, other relevant national and sub-national legal and policy frameworks, and relevant international statutes to which Nigeria is signatory. This Framework therefore serves as one strategic meaningful step by the Federal government of Nigeria to activate and implement appropriate provisions of relevant legal and policy frameworks

with regard to employment rights of Persons with disabilities.

Through this Framework, The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), as well as state governments and their relevant disability agencies will be able to provide direct support to Persons with disabilities and their prospective employers with a view to removing all barriers which limit job access for Persons with disabilities. This support will cover all aspects of job access including job searching, job application, job interview, on boarding, delivery of job tasks, job retention, and other aspects of career development. The support will also help employers to build capacity on the creation and maintenance of disability-sensitive, accessible and safe job protocols and workplace environment.



2. POLICY COMMITMENT AND SUPPORTIVE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 POLICY COMMITMENT

The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities reiterates its strong commitment to pursuing a vision of an inclusive Nigerian society where the rights, aspirations, privileges, advancement, and equality of opportunities for Persons with disabilities are guaranteed in line with the provisions of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018.

One of how the NCPWD hopes to achieve this vision is to create an enabling environment for Persons with disabilities to gain unhindered access to meaningful employment and other economic opportunities on an equal basis with their counterparts without disabilities

The NCPWD is therefore, more than ever, determined to implement this Framework in strong collaboration with other stakeholders to remove all barriers which hinder access of Persons with disabilities to gainful formal employment in Nigeria.

2.2 SUPPORTIVE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

There are relevant national, regional, and international laws and policies which currently operate in Nigeria which serve as the legal basis for the implementation of this Framework.

i. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as Amended). As with all persons, the rights and privileges of Persons with disabilities are guaranteed in Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

ii. Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018
This is a national legislation and applies throughout the country. The Act established the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWDs) as the regulatory agency of the Government responsible for matters relating to Persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

The relevant sections of the Act concerning the employment of Persons with disabilities include:

- a. Part II: Accessibility to physical structure, which highlights amongst other things that Persons with disabilities have the right to access physical environment and buildings on an equal basis with others” (S. 3).
- b. Part V: Liberty, rights to education, health and first consideration in queues, accommodation and in emergencies protect the rights of Persons with disabilities from being used for pecuniary gains (S. 16)
- c. Part VI: Opportunity for employment and participation in politics and public life emphasizes the right of Persons with disabilities to acceptability in the labour market and work environment (S. 28), and also mandates that organisations should allocate at least 5% quota opportunity for employment to Persons with disabilities.

iii. National Employment Policy: This policy was issued in 2017. The relevant part for Persons with disabilities is section 4.7: Job Creation for Youth, Women and Disabled Persons, and specifically subsection 4.7.4: Employing Persons with Disabilities, focusing on increasing the labour market participation of Persons with disabilities as well as fostering non-discriminatory principles.

iv. Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa

a. Article 18: Habilitation and Rehabilitation towards organising, strengthening, and extending comprehensive services within employments.

b. Article 19: Right to Work highlights the right of Persons with disabilities to decent work and protection against all forms of discrimination and exploitation.

v. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Nigeria signed and ratified the UNCRPD and its Optional Protocol in 2010 making it enforceable within its jurisdictions.

a. Article 9: Accessibility covers issues relating to identifying and eliminating obstacles and barriers to accessibility for Persons with disabilities.

b. Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation towards ensuring that employers make adequate provisions for Persons with disabilities to participate in all aspects of life.

c. Article 27: Work and employment highlight the right of Persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, including the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities (S. 1).

vi. International Labour Organisation (ILO) "Managing disability in the workplace: ILO code of practice"

The ILO published "Managing Disability in the Workplace: ILO Code of Practice", which covers all issues relating to the employment of Persons with disabilities, including their safety, workplace culture to forestall discrimination, and provision of support systems to help Persons with disabilities navigate employment issues.

vii. Sustainability Development Goals

The interests of Persons with disabilities are captured in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 8, 10, 11, and 17. It is significant to mention that "Persons with disabilities" or "disability" are specifically mentioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development eleven (11) times, while persons in vulnerable situations are specifically mentioned six (6) times.

3.0 PROGRAM STRATEGIES

3.1 WHAT THE NATIONAL ACCESS TO WORK SCHEME IS

The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities is a blend of disability-specific social assistance and labour market intervention tailored towards improving access of Persons with disabilities to formal employment in Nigeria. It is a programme that provides direct financial, material, and technical support to help Persons with disabilities get or stay in work. The program provides non-refundable grants to cover what is regarded as “disability Costs” incurred by Persons with disabilities and employers of Persons with disabilities in the process of seeking formal employment, specifically attending job interviews (virtual and nonvirtual), being able to perform job tasks, and/or retaining their jobs. Award of an Access to Work support grant does not consider how much an applicant earns and does not prevent applicants from getting any other social protection benefits.

The program does not offer generic support to every job-seeking or employed Persons with disabilities. Rather, the support provided is based on the specific needs of the individual Awardee. The support to be provided by the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities include but not limited to the following

- i. Managing mental health at work.
- ii. Communication support (such as, but not limited to sign language interpreter at job interviews and assessments (virtual and non-virtual) as well as in the course of performing special job tasks (such as but not limited to meetings, outdoor events etc.) that cannot be done with the support of assistive technologies.
- iii. Specialist equipment and assistive software such as portable computers and laptops, screen readers for the blind, zoom or magnifying software or lens for persons with low vision or persons with albinism, assistive technology (like teletypewriters, video relay services, real-time transcription services, etc. for the deaf)], voice recognition software or adaptive keyboards for persons with physical disabilities, spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy and other mobility/movement disorders
- iv. Mobility aids including wheelchairs and Scooters for persons with physical disabilities, spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and hydrocephalus among other mobility/movement disorders; and White cane for blind persons.



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- v. gripping aids including but not limited to catcher, joy sticks, Pencil / pens grip, etc for persons with mobility/movement disorders.
 - vi. Paramedical assistive aids including but not limited to pressure relief cushions, cushioned Stools to raise feet, portable table fan, etc.
 - vii. a job coach which could include engaging job coaches and supporting jobseeking Persons with disabilities to attend coaching sessions.
 - viii. a travel buddy such as payments to provide mobility assistance, sighted guide, sign language interpreter, etc especially when attending job interviews.
 - ix. a percentage of the cost of traveling to work where it is completely impossible to use public transport.
 - x. adaptations to staff buses, and personal or official vehicles used by an employee with a disability for getting to work.
 - xi. physical and digital adaptations to the workplace to provide accessibility. This can include the employee's home if work activities are conducted from there some or all of the time.

3.2 WHAT THE NATIONAL ACCESS TO WORK SCHEME WILL NOT SUPPORT

The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will not cover the following—

- i. any reasonable adjustments (such as physical, digital, and other major adjustments to buildings and facilities) that employers must legally make in order to provide physical, digital, and other forms of accessibility and reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. However, the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will advise employers if changes should be made as reasonable adjustments.
- ii. The Access to Work Scheme will not support Persons with disabilities who work in the civil service. MDAs are to make provisions to support their employees with disabilities. MDAs should seek advice from the NCPWD on this.
- iii. This Scheme will not support Persons with disabilities who are providing voluntary work. Volunteering is any form of work offered by a Person with disability for community development or social service rendered without any form of obligatory remuneration from the employer or recipient of the service.

3.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Implementation of the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will be guided by the following principles:

- i. Human rights: It is the right of Persons with disabilities to gain unhindered access to employment just as their - counterparts without disabilities. It is therefore the responsibility of government and other stakeholders to ensure that these rights are protected and promoted.
- ii. Equal opportunities: Persons with disabilities should be accorded all necessary support to gain equal access to employment opportunities without any form of discrimination based on their disabilities. This means that all measures will be taken to eliminate any disadvantage which their disabilities may impose and which may reduce their chances of equal access to employment.
- iii. Accessibility and reasonable accommodation: Ensuring all forms of accessibility and reasonable accommodations for Persons with disabilities is one of the major pillars of this Framework. Accordingly, government and other stakeholders shall take steps to provide appropriate forms of accessibility and reasonable accommodations for job seekers and employees with disabilities.
- iv. Shared Responsibility: The delivery of Access to Work support to Persons with disabilities will be based on a process of shared responsibility between the government (at all levels) and employers in the public and private sectors. This implies that the government and employers will jointly mobilize all needed resources to ensure that Persons with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities to access formal jobs without any form of discrimination and are supported to remain on their jobs through the provision of accessibility and reasonable accommodations in the workplace.
- v. Meaningful participation: Fundamentally, Persons with disabilities are consulted in the design, planning, and implementation of all components of the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities. As such, the government and stakeholders should ensure effective consultation with Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in this respect.



3.4 GOAL

The goal of this Framework is to improve the socio-economic well-being of Persons with disabilities in Nigeria through access to gainful and sustainable formal employment in public and private sector organizations.

3.5 OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are set to achieve the goal of this Framework—

- i. To provide direct financial, material, and technical support to Persons with disabilities to enhance their access to formal employment.
- ii. To provide incentives and technical support to public and private sector employers on the creation, management, and sustenance of disability-sensitive, accessible, and safe workplaces.
- iii. To facilitate effective collaboration between all levels of government, development partners, and the organized private sector for the purpose of mobilizing resources and other necessary support for the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities.

3.6 PROGRAM OUTCOME

The key outcome to be generated by the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities is that collaboration between the government and the organized private sector through the scheme increases the labour force participation of Persons with disabilities and empowers them to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's tax revenue when gainfully employed or self-employed.

3.7 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The success of the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will be measured year-on-year by the following indicators—

- i. The year-on-year increase or decrease in the number of Persons with disabilities able to access formal employment as a result of the support/grant from the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities.
- ii. The year-on-year increase or decrease in the number of public and private sector employers that have employed Persons with disabilities as a result of the support from the National Access to Work Scheme.

- iii. The annual total value of income tax contributed by beneficiaries of the Scheme.
- iv. The year-on-year increase or decrease in the volume of funds put together by government, private sector employers, and international development partners available to the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with Disabilities.

4. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACCESS TO WORK SCHEME FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

4.1 ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1.1 To qualify for any of the listed support under the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with Disabilities, the following eligibility criteria must be met by individual applicant: —
- i. Applicants must possess a Disability Certificate issued by the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) for any of the recognized physical, sensory, and/or mental health disabilities.
 - ii. Applicant must be 18 years or above.
 - iii. Applicant must be a citizen of Nigeria or qualified to work in Nigeria.
 - iv. The employment status of an applicant must be any of the following:
 - a. A job applicant participating in a job interview
 - b. Have received and confirmed/accepted a paid job offer
 - c. Already in paid employment.
 - v. Eligible Persons with disabilities in full or part-time paid jobs can apply for the Scheme if such jobs fall under the following categories—
 - a. Third-party employment
 - b. self-employment
 - c. an apprenticeship
 - d. a work trial or work experience
 - e. an internship
 - f. a work placement
- 4.1.2 Employers intending to participate in the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with Disabilities should have registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and other relevant regulatory agencies.

4.2 APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

4.2.1 APPLICATION

- i. All applicants are to fill out a digital application form online on a dedicated website. Provision will be made for applicants who require application forms in alternative formats such as braille, large print, audio CD, or via telephone.
- ii. All Applicants will receive a follow-up call to provide additional information on their applications. However, Applicants will be supported to make choices of their preferred means of application follow-up such as Email or telephone.
- iii. All applicants will receive a Decision Letter for their applications within 60 days.
- iv. The NCPWD will set up an Access to Work helpline to support applicants.

4.2.2 KEY INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR APPLICATION

Key information required from eligible applicants includes—

- i. Biodata
- ii. Description of disability
- iii. Tax Identification Number (for waged and self-employed applicants)
- iv. Applicant's Contact address including telephone and email
- v. Contact address (including telephone and email) of employer/place of work
- vi. Detailed information to justify a request for Access to Work support. This should include how the applicant's condition affects their work and what type of support is needed.
- vii. Relevant documentation to show the current employment status of the applicant, such as an Invitation Letter to a job interview, Letter of Offer of job Appointment, etc.
- viii. Contact details of two Referees including full name, physical address, email, and telephone.

4.2.3 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Each application for Access to Work will be followed by a tailored needs assessment and accessibility audit. An Individualized Assessment Plan/Procedure (IAP) will be developed and administered to each applicant. The AIP Report will provide strict guidance for the Access to Work support that will be approved and provided for a successful applicant. These assessments will cover the following areas:

- i. Nature of disability.
- ii. Situation of mental health, if indicated by the applicant.
- iii. Nature and process of specific job tasks.
- iv. Personal and job-specific needs for assistive technologies, mobility aids, and human assistance.
- v. Preference of information formats and modes of communication.
- vi. Assessment of existing Human Resources Management and other relevant organizational policies.
- vii. Assessment of physical spaces, buildings, digital facilities, and infrastructures that are relevant to the applicant's work.
- viii. Assessment of organizational commitment to disability inclusion.

4.2.4 AWARD AND REVIEW OF NATIONAL ACCESS TO WORK SCHEME FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES GRANT/SUPPORT

- i. All Awardees of the Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities must receive a Grant/Support Confirmation Letter before they can receive any support from the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities.
- ii. Employers of an Awardee who receive a Confirmation Letter will be required to provide an Access to Work Support Acceptance Letter, especially if such Awardee has just been issued an Offer of Employment Letter, or is already working with such employer. Awardees who are just going through a recruitment process do not need to get an Acceptance Letter from their Employer. Such Awardees only need to show relevant documented evidence of their participation in such a recruitment process.
- iii. An Awardee may request a review of his/her Access to Work Support/Grant if:
 - a. There are changes in the Awardee's name, address, contact details, or workplace address.
 - b. The Awardee changes jobs.
 - c. The Awardee's disability, illness, or health condition changes.

4.2.5 RESOLUTION OF GRIEVANCES OVER APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- i. Applicants whose application for the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities is unsuccessful may request in writing to the NCPWD for a review of their applications.
- ii. A written request for application review must be presented to the NCPWD not later than 14 days after the applicant has received a Decision Letter on his/her application.

4.3 PROVISION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

The reasonable accommodations to be provided through the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities are based on a process of shared responsibility between the government and employers. This means that there are components of the cost that the government and employers will provide respectively.

However, to meet up with emergencies and avoid delays associated with processing grants, Awardees of the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities or their employers may need to pay some costs upfront to make necessary procurements for their reasonable accommodations and claim them back later.

The table below indicates who takes responsibility for the provision of the various reasonable accommodations. These reasonable accommodations are by no means exhaustive.

TABLE 1: PROVISION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

S/N	REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS	PROVIDER	SPECIAL NOTES
1.	Conduct and/or provide technical advice for job accessibility needs assessment, physical and digital accessibility audits, assessments for reasonable accommodations, and policy assessment	Government Employer and	Employers may also engage a disability inclusive expert to support them on this.
2.	Provide Assistive technologies such as devices and software: Computer screen filter, provide documents in accessible formats such as larger font sizes and higher contrast, Provision of and/or Adjustments to Mobility aids such as wheelchairs, work vehicles, etc., provision of accessible workstations, adjustable desks, chairs, and other equipment, as well as adjustable lighting.	Government Employer and	The Access to work support does not cover the provision of work vehicles



3.	Where applicable, provide regular maintenance/repairs of assistive technologies and mobility aids	Employer Government and	In most cases, Employers must support regular maintenance/repairs of equipment provided through the Access to Work Scheme. However, under very special circumstances, the Scheme may provide support to cover maintenance/repairs of equipment.
4.	Human assistance such as Sign language interpreters, sighted guides, or travel buddy	Government Employers and	Government and employers may share this cost especially once the applicant is already an employee
5.	Provide tests and training materials, and other information and communication materials in alternative formats	Employer	
6.	Provide reserved parking and access to reserved parking, an accessible route from parking into the facility	Employer	
7.	Provide physical and digital accessibility in the workplace by making changes to buildings and facilities	Employer	

8.	For the purpose of accessibility and reasonable accommodations, make changes to — Job tasks; work schedules; reassign to a more accessible vacant position, altering non -essential job functions and flexible scheduling.	Employer	
9.	Make changes to Human Resource Management and other relevant organizational policies	Employer	
10.	Sensitize/train staff and management of the organization on disability inclusion	Employer Government and	Government may provide additional technical support to employers on this.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

5.1 DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT AND PRIVACY

The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities is heavily dependent on the use of the personal data of applicants to determine Awardees of the Scheme. The Scheme relies on participants' voluntary disclosure of their disability and mental health status as this is very central to the eligibility of applicants for the Scheme. Nonetheless, the Scheme recognizes the rights of applicants to the security and privacy of their personal information and will put in place measures to guarantee these rights as indicated below—

All applicants for the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will be required to provide specific personal information as indicated in Section (4.2) of this Framework.

- Applicants' information will be collected digitally and stored in a secured dedicated website developed and managed by the NCPWD.
- Participants' data collected will be used only for application processing—
 - o Verifying identities of applicants;
 - o Verifying eligibility of applicants;
 - o Conducting needs assessment;
 - o Determining qualification for the Access to Work Support/grant;
 - o Conducting periodic monitoring and evaluation of the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities
- Only relevant officials of the NCPWD and/or any of the Commission's Agents with direct responsibility for the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will have access to applicants' information.
- Applicants' information will not be shared with any other staff and/or Agents of the NCPWD with no responsibility for the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities.
- In line with all relevant national and international data protection and privacy regulations, applicants will always be informed of their rights to withhold any personal information (including their disability and mental health status) that they feel uncomfortable disclosing.
- The consent of applicants will always be sought should there be a need to share and use their personal information for any other related development program.

5.2 TRAINING AND AWARENESS

The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities is a new approach to the economic inclusion and empowerment of Persons with disabilities in Nigeria. There is very little capacity and awareness among stakeholders on the implementation of the Scheme. A comprehensive and sustained training and awareness program will be implemented to address capacity and awareness gaps. The following actions will be taken:

- The NCPWD will collaborate with the organized private sector to hold an Annual Access to Work Sensitization Workshop with a view to strengthening the organizational capacity of public and private sector employers on strategies for creating and sustaining disability-sensitive, accessible, and safe workplaces for Persons with disabilities.
- The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will support the training of management and staff of public and private sector employers with Persons with disabilities in their workforce.
- The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities will support an Annual Career Fair, bringing together public and private sector employers, Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, service providers, and other relevant stakeholders to explore employment and career opportunities for Persons with disabilities.
- The NCPWD will conduct strategic media engagement to raise public awareness of the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities.

5.3 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with disabilities is an initiative of the NCPWD. The scheme is managed by the Commission through a Special Committee on Access to Work Scheme.
- The special Committee will be Chaired by the Executive Secretary of the NCPWD and composed of selected management staff of the Commission, representatives of the private sector (including National Employers Consultative Association (NECA), Nigeria Business Disability Network (NBDN) and Chattered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPMN), Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD), Federal Civil Service Commission, Federal Ministry of Labour, and other organizations of persons with disabilities, selected international development partners, service providers and other relevant stakeholders.

- The Committee will be responsible for the review of all applications and determination of Awardees for the Access to Work support/grant.
- The Department for Social Integration in the NCPWD will serve as the Secretariat for the Special Committee on Access to Work.

5.4 FUNDING MECHANISM

- The National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with Disabilities will be primarily funded through the annual budget of the NCPWD.
- The Scheme may also source funding through special contributions, voluntary contributions from individual organizations and international donors.
- The Scheme may also receive in-kind and technical support from strategic stakeholders.

5.5 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

- The National Access to Work Scheme shall create an online feedback mechanism to allow applicants, Awardees, and employers to share their experiences on engaging with the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with Disabilities. This feedback will be used to support the improvement of the Scheme.
- The Scheme will operate a Blog Series to share good practices and success stories achieved by Awardees and their employers. The blog content will serve the purpose of learning for operators, beneficiaries, and stakeholders engaged with the Scheme. It will also serve the purpose of strategic public sensitization aimed at improving public attitude towards Persons with disabilities in general.
- The Special Committee on Access to Work will hold quarterly meetings to track and review the progress of the Scheme and to take quick actions to address emerging issues.
- The NCPWD will publish a comprehensive annual program and financial report on the National Access to Work Scheme for Persons with Disabilities.

This revised policy was developed by the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities with support from SightSavers and TAF Africa in collaboration with other stakeholders in the Nigerian education sector.





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