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Sustainable Accessible Future Environments

T 2.4

Developing an accessibility tool package for businesses



SAFE

SUSTAINABLE, ACCESSIBLE FUTURE ENVIRONMENTS

The course is a collaboration between five European Universities

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T2.4 Developing an accessibility tool package for businesses

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Module 1. SAFE Urban Access & Safety Navigator (SUASN)

1.1. Introduction

Unlock new possibilities for your business with the TOOL Package – a suite of resources inspired by the Sustainable Accessible Future Environments (SAFE) Project Handbook. This comprehensive collection empowers Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to assess, improve, and effectively communicate the accessibility and safety of their premises and services. By leveraging innovative tools and strategies, the TOOL Package not only fosters inclusive urban environments, aligning with EU standards, but also benefits your business and enhances your connection with customers and communities. Dive in and discover how you can contribute to a more accessible future!

1.2. SAFE Urban Access & Safety Navigator (SUASN)

Are you wondering if your competitors are taking accessibility seriously? Research from Deloitte shows that accessibility awareness is growing, becoming more important than ever for businesses. So, how can your SME keep up and stay ahead? The SAFE Urban Access & Safety Navigator (SUASN) is your answer! Drawing from the successful SAFE Project Handbook, this innovative tool is specifically designed for SMEs like yours. It's not just about ticking boxes; SUASN empowers you to thoroughly assess your current accessibility, implement improvements tailored to your specific needs using digital mapping, get feedback from your community, and then proudly share your progress with a badge of certification. This means more satisfied customers, a broader reach, and a stronger commitment to sustainability – all while aligning with EU standards. Plus, with resources like guides and case studies, and a supportive online learning community, you'll be well-equipped to become a leader in accessibility, bridging the gap between high-level strategies and on-the-ground action. Ultimately, SUASN provides a cost-effective, customizable, and impactful way to make your business more welcoming and successful.

1.2.1 How many of your competitors think about accessibility?

Deloitte published the research on accessibility awareness. Starting from data from 2012, now, it is now clear that this is a rapidly growing new trend. Asked question: Were you familiar with the concept of accessibility as outlined in the introduction before reading the survey? (n=180).

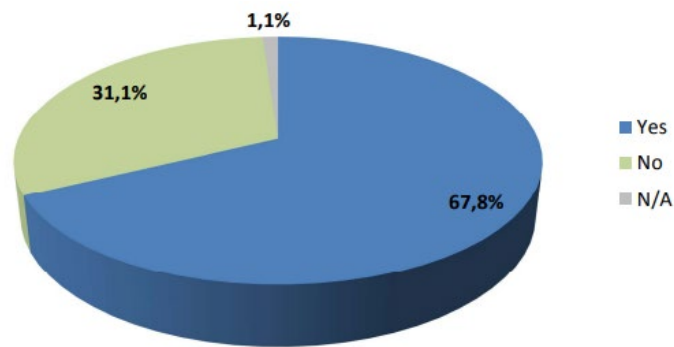


Figure 1. Were you familiar with the concept of accessibility as outlined in the introduction before reading the survey? (n=180).

Source: Deloitte, Report, Analysis of the results of the SME Panel consultation on the socio-economic impact of new measures to improve the accessibility of goods and services for people with disabilities,

The survey focused on mainstream accessible goods and services used by most people, not the so-called assistive devices, but it is high time to look around and implement this approach to SME's surrounding in architecture!

1.2.2 Where are your SME in this urgent need?

Drawing on the comprehensive methodologies, participatory approaches, and digital strategies outlined in the SAFE Project Handbook, we propose an innovative tool designed specifically for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs): the **SAFE Urban Access & Safety Navigator (SUASN)**. This tool empowers SMEs to assess, improve, and communicate the accessibility and safety of their premises and services, aligning with EU standards and fostering inclusiveness.

1. Digital Accessibility & Safety Mapping Module

- **Interactive Mapping:** SMEs can map their premises and immediate urban surroundings using a user-friendly interface based on the SAFE Project's seven mapping aspects: morphology, traffic connectivity, open/public spaces, programmes/services, accessibility assessment, behavior observation, and urban safety.
- **Automated Assessment:** The tool guides users through a structured self-assessment, prompting for details (e.g., entrance accessibility, lighting, signage, nearby public transport, safety measures) and generating a visual accessibility and safety map.
- **Benchmarking:** SMEs can compare their status against local and EU accessibility/safety standards and best practices, receiving tailored recommendations for improvement.

Mapping SME tools across a spectrum of community engagement.



Figure 2. Mapping SME Tool.

Source: prepared by the author with usage napkin.ai

2. Participatory Walks & Community Feedback Engine

- **Virtual Participatory Walks:** Inspired by the SAFE Project’s “Jane’s Walk” and “Safety Walk” methods, the tool enables SMEs to organize digital or in-person participatory walks with employees, customers (especially from vulnerable groups), and community stakeholders to identify barriers and safety concerns.

- **Feedback Collection:** The tool aggregates feedback (text, images, ratings) and generates actionable reports, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement in accessibility and perceived safety.

3. Scenario Planning & Improvement Toolkit

- **Scenario Builder:** SMEs can simulate the impact of various interventions (e.g., adding ramps, improving lighting, enhancing signage) on accessibility and safety, using scenario planning techniques from the SAFE Project's Intensive Study Programs (ISPs).
- **Resource Library:** Access to guides, case studies (e.g., Bryant Park, OSS), and policy templates for implementing effective social policies and tactical urbanism at the SME level.

4. Communication & Certification Platform

- **Accessibility & Safety Badge:** Upon completing the assessment and implementing recommended improvements, SMEs can display a digital badge/certificate, signaling their commitment to inclusion and safety - valuable for reputation and compliance.
- **Public Sharing:** SMEs can publish their accessibility/safety map and improvement journey, fostering transparency and encouraging peer learning.

5. Integration with Local Authorities and Networks

- **Reporting to Municipalities:** The tool can generate standardized reports for local authorities, supporting city-wide efforts to map and enhance accessible, safe open spaces and services.
- **Online Learning Community:** SMEs are invited to join the SAFE Project's accessible online learning community, sharing experiences, challenges, and solutions with peers, experts, and city representatives.

1.2.3 How SUASN Addresses SME Needs?



Figure 3. Empowering SMEs' inclusion.

Source: prepared by the author with usage napkin.ai

- **Cost-Effective:** Designed for ease of use and minimal resource investment, leveraging digital tools and participatory methods rather than costly audits.
- **Customizable:** Adaptable to diverse sectors (retail, hospitality, tourism, services) and urban contexts.
- **Empowering:** Moves SMEs from compliance to leadership in urban inclusion, safety, and community engagement.
- **Impactful:** Enhances customer satisfaction, widens market reach (including people with disabilities, seniors, families), and contributes to broader urban sustainability goals.

1.2.4 Example

Example Workflow:

1. **SME Registration:** The SME creates a profile and maps its location.
2. **Self-Assessment:** Guided mapping and questionnaire on accessibility and safety features.
3. **Community Engagement:** Organize a participatory walk (digital or in-person), inviting feedback from diverse users.

4. **Scenario Planning:** Use the toolkit to model and prioritize improvements.
5. **Implementation & Certification:** Make changes, document progress, and earn the SAFE badge.
6. **Continuous Improvement:** Participate in the online community, update assessments annually, and share best practices.

1.2.5 Innovation Highlights

The SAFE approach is genuinely innovative because it's not just about ticking boxes on a checklist. It's a holistic view that tackles accessibility and safety by focusing on genuine inclusion, considering everyone's needs, and promoting a sense of belonging. It smartly encourages co-design, bringing together diverse voices to create solutions that really work for the people who use them. Plus, it's highly practical, offering customizable tools to adapt to local contexts, and, crucially, it's all about real-world application - insights are gained through direct experiences. Ultimately, this leads to a value of skills and increasing awareness and economic growth by promoting these inclusive strategies.

Selected features:

- Combines digital mapping, participatory design, and scenario planning in one SME-friendly platform.
- Bridges the gap between high-level EU strategies and practical, local SME action.
- Fosters a culture of inclusion, safety, and co-creation in urban environments, in line with the SAFE Project's vision.

By leveraging the proven methodologies and participatory approaches of the SAFE Project, SUASN offers SMEs a practical, scalable, and innovative way to contribute to more accessible and safer urban spaces - benefiting their businesses, their customers, and their communities.

1.2.6 Methodology and Alignment with SAFE Handbook

SUASN is built on the interdisciplinary and participatory methodologies detailed in the SAFE handbook:

- **Mapping Method:** Uses the seven-aspect mapping approach for comprehensive spatial assessment, involving fieldwork, digital data, and participatory observation.
- **Participatory Walks:** Employs Jane's Walk and Safety Walk as tools for community engagement and real-world assessment of accessibility and safety.
- **Scenario Planning:** Integrates future scenario methodologies for strategic improvement planning, as practiced in the SAFE Project's Intensive Study Programs.
- **Social Policy Framework:** Encourages SMEs to adopt tactical urbanism and stakeholder engagement, ensuring interventions are inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven.
- **Gender and Diversity Lens:** Promotes analysis and improvement from a gender and diversity perspective, ensuring that interventions benefit all user groups.

1.2.7. Executive Summary

- **Tool**

The SAFE Urban Access & Safety Navigator (SUASN) is a digital and participatory tool designed for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to assess, improve, and communicate the accessibility and safety of their premises and services. Drawing on the methodologies and principles of the SAFE Project, SUASN enables SMEs to become leaders in urban inclusion, safety, and community engagement, while aligning with EU standards and local policy objectives.

- **Purpose and Rationale**

European cities face significant challenges in ensuring full inclusion, accessibility, and safety for all citizens, particularly for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, the elderly, and families. SMEs are key actors in urban life but often lack resources and guidance to systematically address accessibility and safety in their operations. SUASN responds to this need by providing a practical, cost-effective, and participatory solution based on the SAFE Project's evidence-based approaches.

- **Conclusion**

The SAFE Urban Access & Safety Navigator (SUASN) empowers SMEs to become active contributors to accessible, safe, and inclusive urban environments. By leveraging the proven methodologies and participatory approaches of the SAFE Project, SUASN offers a practical, scalable, and innovative pathway for SMEs to enhance their business, serve their communities, and support the EU's vision for sustainable, accessible, and safe cities for all.

Module 2. TOOL Guide

2.1. Tool for SMEs: Making Urban Spaces More Accessible and Safe

Below is a set of visualisations and practical, innovative tools for SMEs, directly inspired by the methodologies and recommendations outlined in the SAFE Project Handbook^[3]. These tools are designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises assess, apply, improve, and communicate the accessibility and safety of their premises and services, fostering more inclusive and vibrant urban environments.

Now you will be introduced to the 7 components of the TOOL that help you prepare all your activities according to practical methods worked out during the SAFE Project. Everything in one package and step by step. Figure 3 presents a sequence of 7 steps.

For any small or medium-sized business (SME), making improvements to accessibility and safety can seem daunting. But what if you had a clear, step-by-step roadmap that not only helped you do good for your community but also boosted your bottom line?

That's exactly what this scheme offers. Think of it as a guided journey, starting with understanding your current situation using a simple mapping tool and tapping into your customers' real-world experiences through community walks. Then, it's about trying out different ideas virtually to see what works best before you invest, and making sure those changes align with community needs and local regulations. It has great support that increases the number of new customers. Finally, it's about proudly showcasing your achievements with a certification badge and connecting with other like-minded businesses on the same path for ongoing support and idea sharing. In summary, you are demonstrating and engaging with the business to create value that attracts different targets. This isn't just about compliance; it's about creating a welcoming and thriving environment for everyone and making your business more successful in the process.

Tool	Methodology/Steps	Benefits
 SAFE Mapping Tool	Seven-Dimensional Mapping; Digital/Paper App; Benchmarking	Clear insights; Targeted improvements; Compliance
 Participatory Walks Toolkit	Planning & Execution Steps	User involvement; Hidden issue identification; Trust building
 Observation & Walkability Audit	Observation Sessions; Data Recording & Checklists	Data-driven insights; Inclusive practice support
 Scenario Planning & Improvement Simulator	Scenario Builder; Impact Assessment; Prioritization Matrix	Informed decisions; Strategic improvements; Stakeholder communication
 Social Policy & Stakeholder Engagement Guide	Stakeholder Mapping; Consultation Templates; Policy Checklist; Tactical Urbanism Ideas	Community support; Policy alignment; Sustainable change
 Accessibility & Safety Certification Badge	Complete Assessments; Document Improvements; Apply; Display Badge	Enhanced reputation; Wider clientele; Social responsibility
 Online Learning and Exchange Community	Joining Online Community; Sharing Experiences	Support; Resources; Network building

Figure 4. TOOL Guide

Source: Author's compilation, the napkin App used for drawing

2.2. Before and After: Visualisations of Changes

A key objective in contemporary urban renewal projects is prioritizing pedestrian safe spaces within cities. By thoughtfully incorporating elements like expanded sidewalks, dedicated bicycle lanes, tree plantings, facilities for disabled people and families with children, as well as for people on the autism spectrum, and also designated seating areas, businesses can help create more inviting and environmentally responsible urban environments. These enhancements aim to reduce traffic congestion, promote safe and sustainable transportation options such as walking and cycling, and foster a more engaging atmosphere for residents and visitors alike. A couple of visualisations help to better understand this idea (Figures 5, 6, and 7).



Figure 5. Designed changes

Source: ArchDaily. (2016, May 16). Before & After: 30 Photos that prove the power of designing with pedestrians in mind. ArchDaily. Retrieved from <https://www.archdaily.com/773139/before-and-after-30-photos-that-prove-the-power-of-designing-with-pedestrians-in-mind>

The image shows a before-and-after view, highlighting a significant transformation of a city street. The top half (2012) depicts a fairly typical, car-centric street, while the bottom half (2014) showcases pedestrian-focused improvements. From an SME business perspective, this street transformation is a game-changer. The expanded pedestrian space, coupled with attractive landscaping and outdoor seating, translates into a more inviting and customer-friendly environment right outside their doors. More foot traffic means more potential customers discovering their business, while the outdoor seating encourages patrons to linger, boosting sales for restaurants and cafes. Beyond immediate sales, the enhanced visibility and improved community image create a positive association with their brand, fostering customer loyalty and potentially attracting new clients from a wider area. This transformation represents a strategic investment in the local business environment, creating a more appealing and profitable space for SMEs to thrive.



Figure 6. Designed changes

Source: Business Insider. (2015, August). These before-and-after photos show how cities can dramatically improve their streets. Business Insider. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/urbi-before-after-gallery-2015-8?IR=T#they-keep-tabs-on-urban-transformation-blogs-and-architectural-projects-so-they-know-where-to-check-on-google-street-view-9>

From an SME business perspective, the streetscape redesign represents a significant boost. The "before" image (2011) presented a challenge: a car-centric street with limited pedestrian appeal and potential safety concerns. The transformation evident in the 2014 image directly addresses this. Wider, level sidewalks not only enhance accessibility for customers of all abilities, ensuring compliance with building codes and opening up a larger potential market, but also prioritize pedestrian safety. Moreover, the addition of outdoor seating extends the businesses' service area, creating a more inviting and customer-friendly atmosphere that can lead to increased foot traffic and revenue. By embracing accessible architecture and prioritizing safety, the SMEs benefit from a more vibrant commercial environment and a positive brand image that resonates with a diverse customer base, creating a more sustainable and resilient business model.



Figure 7. Accessible solution

Source: Butler, S. (2018, February 14). What does a disability-accessible city actually look like?. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/feb/14/what-disability-accessible-city-look-like>

For an SME, implementing an accessible reception desk like in Figure 5 is more than just following guidelines. It's a smart business move. It instantly welcomes a wider range of customers, showing them that you value their business and prioritize their comfort. This creates a positive brand image and fosters customer loyalty, leading to strong word-of-mouth referrals.

Moreover, it's a simple way to make sure you comply with accessibility laws. In competitive markets, going the extra mile with accessibility can attract customers who value inclusive businesses, a happy staff, a great service, and attract new demographics.

2.3 SAFE Mapping Tool

Purpose:

To provide a structured, visual, and participatory assessment of the accessibility and safety of an SME's premises and immediate urban environment.

How Does it Work?

- **Seven-Dimensional Mapping:** Assess your location using the seven aspects from the SAFE handbook:
 - Morphology (physical form and structure);
 - Traffic connectivity (access by foot, car, bike, public transport);
 - Public open spaces (quality and proximity);
 - Programmes and services (offered and nearby);
 - Accessibility assessment (physical, sensory, cognitive);
 - Behavior observation (how people use the space);
 - Urban safety (lighting, surveillance, perceived safety).
- **Digital or Paper-Based:** Use a digital platform or printable templates to record observations, photos, and notes.
- **Benchmarking:** Compare your results to local and EU accessibility/safety standards.

Benefits:

- Clear visual overview of strengths and barriers.
- Informs targeted improvements.
- Supports compliance with regulations and best practices.

2.4 Participatory Walks Toolkit

Purpose:

To engage staff, customers, and community members—especially those from vulnerable groups—in identifying real-world accessibility and safety issues.

How Does it Work?

- **Plan it in the following steps:**
 - **Organize Walks:** Plan a route through your premises and surroundings;
 - **Invite Participants:** Include people with disabilities, seniors, parents with strollers, etc.;
 - **Use Guiding Questions:** Are entrances step-free? Is signage clear? Is the area well-lit at night?;
 - **Document Findings:** Take notes, photos, and collect participant feedback;
 - **Reflect Together:** Hold a debrief to discuss experiences and prioritize improvements.

Benefits:

- Directly involves users in the improvement process.
- Uncovers issues that may not be visible to management alone.
- Builds trust and community engagement.

2.5. Behavioral Observation & Walkability Audit

Purpose:

To objectively assess how people use your space and identify barriers to movement and comfort.

How Does it Work?

- **Focus on:**
 - **Observation Sessions:** At different times of day, discreetly observe how people enter, move through, and use your premises and adjacent spaces;
 - **Record Data:** Note obstacles, bottlenecks, unsafe areas, and underused spaces;

- **Walkability Checklist:** Use a checklist to evaluate sidewalk conditions, crossings, signage, and amenities.

Benefits:

- Data-driven insights for practical improvements.
- Supports universal design and inclusive business practices.

2.6 Scenario Planning and Improvement Simulator

Purpose:

To help SMEs visualize the impact of potential changes and prioritize actions.

How Does it Work?

- **Think about:**
 - **Scenario Builder:** Use templates or digital tools to model interventions (e.g., adding a ramp, improving lighting, creating clearer signage);
 - **Impact Assessment:** Predict how each change will affect accessibility, safety, and customer experience;
 - **Prioritization Matrix:** Weigh cost, impact, and feasibility to create a phased action plan.

Benefits:

- Informs investment decisions.
- Enables strategic, stepwise improvements.
- Facilitates communication with stakeholders and authorities.

2.7 . Social Policy & Stakeholder Engagement Guide

Purpose:

To ensure improvements are supported by effective policies and broad stakeholder input.

How Does it Work?

- **Implement also:**
 - **Stakeholder Mapping:** Identify key actors (staff, customers, local authorities, advocacy groups);
 - **Consultation Templates:** Use surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather input;
 - **Policy Checklist:** Ensure your business policies address inclusion, non-discrimination, and safety;
 - **Tactical Urbanism Ideas:** Implement small-scale, quick-win projects (e.g., pop-up seating, temporary art) to test changes before permanent investment.

Benefits:

- Builds community support.
- Aligns business practices with EU and local policy goals.
- Drives sustainable, long-term change.

2.8 Accessibility & Safety Certification Badge

Purpose:

To recognize and communicate your SME's commitment to accessibility and safety.

How Does it Work?

- **Take benefits from those steps:**
 - **Complete Assessments:** Use the above tools to identify and address key barriers;
 - **Document Improvements:** Keep records of actions taken and outcomes achieved;
 - **Apply for Certification:** Submit your documentation for review (internally or via a local authority/partner organization);

- **Display Badge:** Use digital and physical badges to signal your commitment to customers and partners.

Benefits:

- Enhances reputation and customer trust.
- Attracts a wider, more diverse clientele.
- Demonstrates leadership in social responsibility.

2.9 Online Learning and Exchange Community

Purpose:

To support continuous improvement through shared learning and peer support.

How Does it Work?

- **Benefit from those next steps:**
 - **Join the SAFE Online Community:** Access training modules, case studies, and discussion forums.
 - **Share Experiences:** Post your challenges, solutions, and success stories.
 - **Learn from Others:** Engage with experts, city representatives, and fellow SMEs.

Benefits:

- Ongoing support and inspiration.
- Access to up-to-date resources and best practices.
- Builds a network of like-minded businesses.

2.10 Summary Table

Tool Name	Main Function	Key Benefit
SAFE Mapping Tool	Visual, structured assessment	Informs targeted improvements
Participatory Walks Toolkit	User-centered feedback	Builds trust, uncovers hidden issues
Behavioral Observation & Walkability	Objective usage and barrier analysis	Data-driven improvements
Scenario Planning Simulator	Model and prioritize interventions	Strategic investment
Social Policy & Stakeholder Guide	Policy alignment, stakeholder engagement	Sustainable, inclusive change
Certification Badge	Recognition and communication	Enhanced reputation
Online Learning Community	Continuous learning and peer support	Ongoing improvement

Figure 8. Summary Table

Source: Author's compilation

These tools, grounded in the SAFE Project's interdisciplinary and participatory approach, provide SMEs with a practical roadmap for making their spaces more accessible, safe, and welcoming for all.

Module 3. Practical Checklists

3.1 Accessibility and Safety General Checklist for SMEs

(Based on SAFE Project Handbook and experience gathered during the SAFE Project)

This checklist helps SMEs systematically assess and improve the accessibility and safety of their premises, surrounding spaces, and services, following the methodologies and principles highlighted in the SAFE Project handbook.



Figure 8. SME Tool Checklist.

Source: prepared by the author with usage napkin.ai

How to Use This Checklist?

- ☐ **Review** each section with your team and stakeholders.
- ☐ **Mark** items as “Yes -Y”, “No - N,” or “Needs Improvement - NI.”
- ☐ **Prioritize** actions based on urgency, impact, and feasibility.
- ☐ **Repeat the assessment** regularly and after any major changes.

Secret of the success:

ALWAYS START FROM THE PRE-QUESTIONS:

- **Who are my customers? Not always people with disabilities, but maybe families with children, seniors, with Asperger syndrome?**
 - **FOCUS ON THEM**
 - **What are their needs for places accessible?**
 - **What can I do to improve their accessibility?**

Then go through 10 general sections:

Question Area / Item	Yes (Y)	No (N)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Priority Notes
1. Morphology (Physical Structure & Layout)				
- Are entrances step-free, wide, and accessible for all users (wheelchair, stroller)?				
- Are corridors, doorways, and aisles wide and obstruction-free?				
- Is the layout intuitive and easy to navigate?				
- Are there clear sightlines for orientation?				

2. Traffic Connectivity				
- Is the location easily reachable by public transport, bicycle, and on foot?				
- Are pedestrian crossings safe and well-marked?				
- Is accessible parking provided close to the entrance?				
- Are bicycle racks/storage available and accessible?				
3. Public Open Spaces (POS)				
- Are nearby public spaces accessible and welcoming?				
- Are POS well-lit, clean, and maintained?				
- Are shaded areas, greenery, or water features present?				
- Do POS offer amenities (benches, toilets, drinking fountains)?				
4. Programmes and Services				
- Are services/info available in multiple accessible formats?				
- Are staff trained to assist customers with diverse needs?				
- Is there a process for collecting/responding to accessibility and safety feedback?				
- Are inclusive activities/events offered?				

5. Accessibility Assessment				
- Are all areas accessible to people with mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments?				
- Is signage clear, high contrast, and multilingual/formatted?				
- Are elevators, ramps, and accessible toilets marked and available?				
- Are emergency exits and evacuation routes accessible?				
- Has a reality check been conducted (e.g., simulations/role play)?				
6. Behaviour Observation				
- Has observation been made on how people move, wait, and interact?				
- Are there areas where people hesitate, avoid, or encounter bottlenecks?				
- Are there safety concerns or discomfort reported?				
7. Urban Safety				
- Is the area well-lit inside and outside?				
- Are security measures visible (cameras, staff, emergency call points)?				
- Is the environment regularly maintained and clean?				
- Are procedures in place for reporting/responding to safety concerns?				
- Do stakeholders feel safe at all times?				
8. Social Policy and Community Engagement				
- Are key stakeholders engaged in accessibility and safety planning?				
- Is there regular consultation with a diverse community?				

- Are feedback and improvement mechanisms active?				
- Are tactical, quick-win projects considered/tested?				
9. Gender and Diversity Perspective				
- Are the needs of all genders and diverse groups considered?				
- Are spaces and services inclusive and safe across demographics?				
- Are private spaces (nursing rooms, gender-neutral toilets) available?				
10. Communication and Certification				
- Is accessibility and safety information clearly communicated publicly and internally?				
- Are relevant certifications or badges obtained and displayed?				
- Is there a regular update/sharing of the accessibility journey?				
Post-Question:				
- Does the company know if improvements can be made internally or require external assistance?				
- Are contacts with national/local authorities or institutions established for support?				

Source: Author's compilation

This checklist is designed to be practical and actionable, supporting SMEs in creating more accessible, inclusive, and safe spaces for everyone.

This is a general overview.



If you want more tailored tools, choose one of the options as follows:

3.2 Tailored SME Tool – Hotels and Accommodation

3.3 Tailored SME Tool – Tour Operators

3.4 Tailored SME Tool – Transportation

3.5 Tailored SME Tool - Food & Beverage

or MIX then as you wish. It is a very flexible TOOL!

3.2. Tailored SME Tool – Hotels and Accommodation

Question Area (Section)	Yes (Y)	No (N)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Priority Notes
1. Morphology (Physical Structure & Layout)				
- Are the main entrance and all key access points step-free and wide enough for wheelchairs and strollers?				
- Are reception, lobby, elevator, and common areas easily navigable by people with mobility aids?				
- Do corridors and doorways provide enough clearance for guests with assistive devices?				

- Are there accessible guest rooms on accessible floors, with appropriate signage to direct guests?				
2. Room Accessibility				
- Do accessible rooms have wide entrance doors, open space for wheelchair maneuvering, and easy reach to all controls (lights, thermostat, etc.)?				
- Are bathrooms in accessible rooms fitted with roll-in showers or transfer seats, grab rails, emergency call buttons, and fixtures at the correct height?				
- Are visual and auditory emergency alarms installed and working in accessible rooms?				
- Is accessible furniture available (e.g., beds at an appropriate height, adjustable desk space)?				
3. Traffic Connectivity				
- Is the hotel easily reachable by public transport, and is information about accessible transport options provided to guests in advance?				
- Are there safe, accessible parking spaces near the entrance (with signage and marked spaces for people with disabilities)?				
- Is there safe access from drop-off points, parking, and public transportation stops to the hotel entrance?				
4. Public and Shared Spaces				
- Are restaurants, bars, lounges, and meeting facilities accessible to all guests?				

- Are there step-free routes and clear signage to all amenities (spa, fitness center, pool, etc.)?				
- Are accessible toilets available and easy to find in all public areas?				
- Are leisure areas (terraces, gardens, common rooms) accessible and offer appropriate seating for all guests?				
5. Programmes & Services				
- Is information about accessibility and safety features clear and available on the hotel's website and booking platforms?				
- Are staff trained in assisting guests with diverse needs and able to provide information about local accessible attractions and services?				
- Is there a process for collecting feedback from guests about accessibility and safety?				
6. Accessibility Assessment				
- Are signage and room numbers presented in Braille, tactile, or large high-contrast print?				
- Are lifts/elevators accessible (manual controls at the correct height, auditory/visual signals, enough space for wheelchairs)?				
- Are ramps and pathways slip-resistant and well-maintained?				
- Have you conducted a "reality check" (e.g., inviting a guest with a disability to test the experience and provide feedback)?				
7. Behavior Observation				
- Have you observed how guests enter, move around, and use different areas, looking for points where confusion or barriers arise?				

- Are there informal gathering points that tend to exclude certain groups (due to steps, narrow spaces, or lack of seating)?				
- Do guests feel comfortable and safe moving throughout the hotel at all hours?				
8. Urban Safety				
- Are all entrances, parking areas, and walkways well-lit and monitored?				
- Are emergency evacuation routes and refuge areas accessible to all guests?				
- Is there a clear process for reporting and addressing safety concerns, including accessibility-related incidents?				
9. Social Policy & Community Engagement				
- Have you engaged with local disability advocacy groups, guest organizations, or tourism boards to review and improve accessibility?				
- Are guest communications (confirmation, check-in instructions, emergency info) available in accessible formats upon request?				
- Have you featured your accessibility improvements in marketing and communication to encourage a diverse clientele?				
10. Gender and Diversity Perspective				
- Are there family rooms, nursing rooms, and gender-neutral toilets for diverse needs?				
- Are front desk and guest service protocols inclusive of all genders, ages, and backgrounds?				
11. Certification & Communication				

- Have you sought or obtained an accessibility or safety certification specifically for hospitality services (local or EU badge)?				
- Is your commitment to accessibility and safety clearly displayed on your premises and online?				
- Do you share regular updates about your accessibility journey with customers and staff?				

Source: Author's compilation

3.3. Tailored SME Tool – Tour Operators

Question Area (Section)	Yes (Y)	No (N)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Priority Notes
1. Morphology (Tour Structure & Access Points)				
- Are tour meeting points, offices, and departure locations step-free and accessible?				
- Are tour routes and stops selected with accessible paths, entrances, and transitions?				
- Are all vehicles or means of transport used during tours accessible, or alternative transport offered?				
2. Traffic Connectivity and Transportation				
- Are accessible options for reaching meeting points provided and clearly communicated?				
- Is parking for people with disabilities available near key pickup and departure locations?				

- Are adapted vehicles and trained drivers available?				
3. Tour Programmes & Activities				
- Are all tour activities accessible to people with various disabilities and special needs?				
- Is accessibility information provided for each activity?				
- Are optional alternative experiences available?				
- Are tour materials available in accessible formats?				
4. Accessibility Assessment & Customer Feedback				
- Are regular accessibility assessments conducted?				
- Is there a feedback mechanism for accessibility or safety issues?				
- Are accommodations made based on customer feedback?				
5. Staff Training & Behavioural Observation				
- Are guides trained in disability awareness and emergency procedures?				
- Are staff attentive and adaptive to group needs?				
- Are staff able to assist with boarding and orientation?				
6. Health, Safety & Emergency Preparedness				
- Are emergency plans adapted for people with impairments?				
- Are emergency contacts and protocols inclusive?				

- Is risk management regularly reviewed?				
7. Communication & Pre-Tour Information				
- Is accessibility information clearly communicated before the tour?				
- Are accessible contact channels provided?				
- Are booking and payment methods barrier-free?				
8. Community Engagement & Stakeholder Policy				
- Is there engagement with disability advocacy and inclusive tourism networks?				
- Are partnerships with accessible providers established?				
- Is ongoing training and consultation ensured?				
9. Gender, Age, and Diversity Considerations				
- Are tours safe and enjoyable for all genders, ages, and backgrounds?				
- Are special provisions made for family groups, children, or seniors?				
10. Certification, Public Reporting & Continuous Improvement				
- Are certifications or recognitions regarding accessibility displayed?				
- Are inclusion policies publicized?				
- Is accessibility regularly reviewed and shared?				

Source: Author's compilation

3.4. Tailored SME Tool – Transportation

Question Area (Section)	Yes (Y)	No (N)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Priority Notes
1. Morphology (Fleet & Infrastructure)				
- Are vehicles step-free or equipped with ramps/lifts?				
- Are aisles, doors, and seating accessible?				
- Are low-floor features and priority seating marked and maintained?				
- Are waiting areas and platforms accessible and sheltered?				
2. Traffic Connectivity and Access				
- Are pick-up/drop-off points accessible from sidewalks, parking, and public transport?				
- Is accessible parking near terminals available and signposted?				
- Is information on accessible travel connections provided?				
3. Public Open Spaces & Waiting Areas				
- Are waiting areas, platforms, and terminals well-lit, clean, and hazard-free?				
- Are accessible toilets, benches, and information desks available?				
- Are pathways and crossings clear and safe for all users?				
4. Services, Booking & Information				
- Are booking systems accessible to people with disabilities?				
- Is accessibility information clear and available in multiple formats?				

- Can passengers request and confirm assistance during booking?				
- Are real-time updates and notifications accessible?				
5. Accessibility Assessment & Feedback				
- Are regular audits of vehicles/infrastructure conducted?				
- Is there a mechanism for reporting accessibility or safety concerns?				
- Are repairs made and communicated following reports?				
6. Staff Training & Behaviour Observation				
- Are staff trained in disability awareness, communication, and emergency procedures?				
- Are staff proactive in assisting passengers who need help?				
- Do staff observe and log accessibility or safety challenges?				
7. Health, Safety & Emergency Procedures				
- Are emergency exits, instructions, and evacuation plans accessible?				
- Are alerts and guides provided in accessible formats?				
- Are inclusive procedures in place for breakdowns or delays?				
8. Community Engagement & Social Policy				
- Do you consult with advocacy groups, municipalities, and passengers to improve accessibility?				

- Are partnerships established with other accessible transport or support services?				
- Are efforts made to engage all customer groups in policy?				
9. Gender, Age, and Diversity Considerations				
- Are safety and protocols inclusive of the needs of all genders, ages, and backgrounds?				
- Are facilities such as family compartments or accessible restrooms provided?				
10. Certification, Communication & Continuous Improvement				
- Are accessibility and safety certifications displayed?				
- Is accessibility commitment communicated pre-journey?				
- Are practices reviewed and progress reported regularly?				

Source: Author's compilation

3.5. Tailored SME Tool - Food & Beverage

Question Area (Section)	Yes (Y)	No (N)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Priority Notes
1. Morphology (Physical Structure & Layout)				
- Are the main entrance and dining/reception areas step-free and wide for wheelchair or stroller access?				
- Are tables, seating, and aisles arranged for easy movement and marked accessible seating?				
- Are counters, service points, and displays at accessible heights?				
- Are restrooms accessible and on the same level?				
2. Traffic Connectivity and Access				
- Is the venue reachable by public transport or on foot with clear accessible entrance directions?				
- Are accessible parking spaces near the entrance with signage and space for wheelchair vans?				
- Is there a safe, illuminated route from parking/public transport to the entrance?				
3. Public Spaces & Waiting Areas				
- Are waiting, lobby, or queueing areas designed to minimize congestion and allow space for wheelchairs/service animals?				
- Are accessible outdoor seating and shaded waiting areas provided?				

- Are amenities like child seats, nursing rooms, and accessible toilets available?				
4. Services, Communication & Menus				
- Are menus and key info available in accessible formats?				
- Are staff trained in inclusive communication and assistance?				
- Are accessible payment options available at the point of sale?				
5. Accessibility & Safety Assessment				
- Are indoor/outdoor spaces trip hazard-free, well-lit, and clearly marked?				
- Are exits, emergency routes, and safety equipment accessible to all?				
- Are processes in place to audit/address accessibility gaps or hazards?				
6. Staff Training & Observation				
- Are staff trained in disability etiquette, inclusive service, and emergency assistance?				
- Is there a system for staff to identify/support customers needing assistance?				
- Do staff document issues or bottlenecks affecting customer flow?				
7. Health, Hygiene & Emergency Preparedness				
- Are handwashing, food service, and allergen info accessible?				
- Are emergency alarms, instructions, and assembly points accessible?				
- Is there a plan to assist customers with disabilities during emergencies?				

8. Community & Social Policy				
- Do you consult customers, disability groups, and advocates regularly?				
- Are you actively involved in community events or campaigns for inclusiveness?				
- Is there a process for collecting/addressing accessibility and safety feedback?				
9. Gender, Age & Diversity Inclusion				
- Are spaces, restrooms, and services welcoming and accessible for all genders, ages, and backgrounds?				
- Are marketing and service policies inclusive in imagery, language, and staff training?				
10. Certification, Communication & Continuous Improvement				
- Do you display accessibility and safety badges or awards visibly?				
- Is accessible feature information communicated before arrival and onsite?				
- Are improvements to accessibility and safety documented and communicated publicly?				

Source: Author's compilation

3.6. What to do NEXT? – Quick Guide

This is a unified guide for SMEs on what to do after completing the Accessibility & Safety Tool. You may easily and structuredly go through this process in 8 steps that are presented in Figure 9, and then you may find a short explanation for each stage.



Figure 9. Achieving Accessibility and Safety Improvements.

Source: prepared by the author with usage napkin.ai

Go step by step:

1. Comprehensive Review and Reflection

- Convene your team and stakeholders to carefully **review the completed questionnaires** across all relevant sectors.
- Examine all responses, focusing especially on items marked “**No (N)**” or “**Needs Improvement (NI)**.”
- Use the **Priority Notes** column to capture insights about urgency, customer impact, feasibility, and available resources.

2. Identify and Categorize Key Gaps

- Categorize gaps into:
 - **Critical Issues:** Affect safety, legal compliance, or cause significant exclusion.
 - **Operational Challenges:** Affect customer experience or staff efficiency.
 - **Enhancement Opportunities:** Provide added value or improved inclusiveness.

This categorization helps to clarify what requires urgent attention versus what can be phased in over time.

3. Prioritize Actions Strategically

Evaluate each gap systematically based on these criteria:

- **Urgency:** Safety hazards and legal requirements take top priority.
- **Customer Impact:** Prioritize barriers affecting vulnerable groups and overall experience.
- **Feasibility and Cost:** Balance quick wins against longer-term investments.
- **Business Impact:** Consider improvements that enhance reputation, customer base, and revenue.

Create a prioritization matrix or use a simple scale (High / Medium / Low) for focused action planning.

4. Develop a Phased Improvement Roadmap

- Begin by planning to resolve **High Priority** gaps first, ensuring safety and compliance.
- Schedule **Medium Priority** improvements to elevate customer service and operational effectiveness.
- Plan **Low Priority** or enhancement projects as part of continuous improvement efforts.
- Allocate budgets and assign responsibilities for each phase with clear timelines.

5. Engage Experts and Stakeholders

- For complex or technical improvements (e.g., structural adjustments, technology integration), consult accessibility specialists, architects, or compliance officers.
- Engage customers, especially persons with disabilities, and community organizations to validate findings, co-design solutions, and gather ongoing feedback.
- Foster collaboration with local authorities and networks to leverage support and resources.

6. Communicate and Demonstrate Commitment

- Transparently communicate your accessibility and safety efforts internally and externally.
- Use signage, websites, marketing, and social media to highlight your commitment and improvements.
- Consider certification or third-party recognition for credibility and customer confidence.

7. Implement and Monitor Progress

- Execute improvements according to your roadmap, tracking deadlines and milestones.
- Monitor effectiveness through customer feedback, staff observations, and re-assessments.
- Adjust plans dynamically as new requirements or opportunities arise.

8. Institutionalize Continuous Improvement

- Schedule regular re-assessments (e.g., annually or after major changes) to maintain compliance and adapt to evolving needs.

- Invest in ongoing staff training on accessibility, inclusive service, emergency readiness, and diversity awareness.
- Maintain active community engagement to uncover hidden barriers and innovative solutions.

This intentional, phased, and stakeholder-inclusive approach helps SMEs transform assessment insights into tangible actions that improve accessibility, safety, and customer satisfaction. It drives compliance with EU standards and local policies while creating welcoming, inclusive environments that support business resilience and growth.

GOOD LUCK!

3.7 Summary

The TOOL Package is designed specifically to help Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) unlock new opportunities by making their businesses more accessible, safe, and welcoming for everyone. Inspired by the Sustainable Accessible Future Environments (SAFE) Project Handbook, this package offers practical and innovative resources that enable SMEs to evaluate their current accessibility status, identify areas for improvement, and effectively communicate their commitment to inclusion and safety.

In today's competitive market, accessibility is more than just a legal requirement or social responsibility. It is a strategic business advantage! Research from Deloitte shows that awareness of accessibility is growing rapidly, and customers increasingly expect businesses to prioritize inclusiveness. The TOOL Package empowers SMEs to not only meet these expectations but become leaders in their sectors by embracing inclusive practices that reach a broader and more diverse audience, including people with disabilities, seniors, families, and other vulnerable groups.

The core of the TOOL Package is the SAFE Urban Access & Safety Navigator (SUASN), a user-friendly digital tool that guides businesses through a structured self-assessment based on seven key aspects: physical structure (morphology), traffic connectivity, public spaces, available programs and services, accessibility evaluation, behavior observation, and urban safety. This

comprehensive approach ensures that SMEs get a well-rounded understanding of how accessible and safe their premises really are.

Moreover, the TOOL Package goes beyond assessments. It encourages active community engagement through participatory walks and feedback mechanisms, allowing businesses to hear firsthand from customers and stakeholders about real-world challenges and opportunities. Using scenario planning tools, SMEs can visualize the impact of potential improvements, whether adding ramps, enhancing lighting, or improving signage, and prioritize actions that offer the greatest benefits for accessibility and customer experience.

Importantly, the package provides resources to build sustained momentum. From access to a rich library of guides and case studies to opportunities for certification and public recognition, SMEs can demonstrate their commitment transparently and proudly. This not only builds trust with current customers but attracts new ones, driving business growth. Plus, by joining an online learning community, SMEs can share experiences, gather insights, and stay updated on best practices and emerging strategies in accessibility and urban inclusion.

What makes the TOOL Package truly effective is its adaptability and practicality. Rather than offering generic checklists, it tailors recommendations to diverse sectors such as retail, hospitality, tourism, transportation, and food service, ensuring that solutions fit specific business realities, but not only! It could be mixed and tailored to individual SME needs. Its participatory, co-design ethos brings together voices from different backgrounds, including those of people with disabilities, so that improvements are meaningful and impactful.

Ultimately, the TOOL Package is not just a set of tools but a comprehensive, step-by-step roadmap for SMEs. It moves companies from simple compliance to becoming champions of accessible, safe, and inclusive environments that benefit everyone. By embracing this approach, SMEs contribute to broader urban sustainability goals, enhance their brand reputation, and secure a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving marketplace focused on diversity and inclusion.

For any SME ready to transform its business and community, the TOOL Package offers a clear, actionable, and empowering path forward, combining innovation, engagement, and impact to foster thriving, accessible, and resilient enterprises of the future.

DO NOT WAIT – GO FOR IT!

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T2.4 Developing an accessibility tool package for businesses