

This document provides guidance for creating a checklist that can be used to determine accessibility of a planned or implemented project. You have likely entered this document thinking about planning for or monitoring a particular outcome (e.g. recreational fishing), however the method may be relevant for additional outcomes as well (e.g. environmental education, subsistence fishing, mental health). Make sure to consider additional outcomes relevant to your project context before creating a checklist so you can think about as many relevant accessibility elements as possible.

## Background

Checklists can allow a direct and efficient, though simplified, assessment of the accessibility of project sites where members of the public may visit or directly interact with the site for recreation, work, or education. Project checklists, as opposed to [surveys](#), [workshops](#), or [participatory mapping](#), will represent a project's assessment of its own accessibility, rather than accessibility as perceived by stakeholders and community members in the project service area.<sup>1</sup> Accessibility to both the site and its outcomes are important considerations. For example, disabled persons or non-English speakers may not be able to engage with on-site facilities or benefit from outcomes related to site engagement, such as environmental learning or employment, if on-site facilities or signage are inaccessible. Checklists can assess whether and to what extent these resources are available.

Checklists can be easily integrated into any sort of internal project evaluation process to make sure that the project meets requirements for public accessibility. It can also be useful for the project for setting future goals or making amendments to their project.

### **If you are applying these methods at the planning stage of your project:**

Using an accessibility checklist at the project design stage is useful for considering different elements of accessibility so you can adjust your project plan to increase accessibility.

### **If you are applying these methods for monitoring a particular outcome:**

Using an accessibility checklist at the monitoring stage is useful for identifying the ways in which your project is accessible (or not). Using such a checklist could prompt project adjustments that would make the project more accessible, and can be used to help contextualize information gathered through other stakeholder engagement methods to help you understand why certain stakeholder groups may not be accessing project resources.

## Creating a Checklist

Each individual [GEMS metric measurement protocol](#) that suggests the use of a project checklist offers additional tailored adjustments to the example checklist provided below.

### **Basic accessibility checklist:**

- Is there at least one well-maintained (preferably paved) road to the site?
- Is there at least one well-maintained (preferably paved) parking lot at the site?
- [If the site is accessible by boat] Is there at least one well-maintained boat docking site?

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<sup>1</sup> The geographic boundary containing those stakeholders for whom a particular project outcome is relevant

- Are there facilities / restrooms at the parking lot or site entrance?
- Are all facilities and infrastructure ADA accessible?
- If there are walking trails, are they ADA accessible? If they are not, and it is not possible to make them ADA accessible, is there a sign at the trail entrance stating inaccessibility?
- Is there a covered / sheltered area at the site?
- Is there at least one form of public transportation, such as a bus stop, at or near the project site?
- Are roads into the project site bicycle-friendly?
- Is there at least one bicycle rack available at the parking lot or site entrance?

### **Additional checklist items for sites with on-site signage, educational resources, or marketing materials:**

- Do signs include clear illustrations and visual aids?
- Are there Spanish or other language versions of all signs and other information resources?
- Do signs and other information sources include Braille, audio, or other resources for non-sighted people?
- Do interpretive resources feature local history and community leaders?
- Do marketing materials for this site feature BIPOC or historically under-represented communities?

Most but not all of these checklist components can also be assessed for quality using a scoring system. You will need to develop a rating system that makes sense for your checklist questions. For example, questions about the quality of facilities at the site can be assigned a score of 0 to 4, with the following classifications:

**0** – nonexistent

**1** – exists, but is in poor condition or is hazardous

**2** – exists and is maintained but does not incorporate many accessibility concerns

**3** – exists, is maintained, and has some accessibility related adjustments

**4** – exists, is well maintained in good condition, is fully ADA accessible, and is fully accessible to non-English speakers or readers

Comments and photos documenting poor conditions related to site accessibility are useful to include in project evaluation checklists and can guide future action to address them.

For more information on project checklists, refer to [Development of an Evaluation Checklist for Communicating about Environmental Education](#)

For more information on the GEMS project metrics and protocols, visit [this page](#).

