



Building Employer Capacity for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

Panel 8 – Leading Canada's Economic Growth: Best Practices for Employers on Immigration, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

AI, Remote Work and Productivity: An International Conference

3:45-4:45, May 9, 2025

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Funding Acknowledgement

Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA) is supported by generous funding from the Government of Canada's New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF).

Le Vision Radicale Pour L'Accès Inclusif à l'Emploi (VRAIE) est financé par le fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche du gouvernement du Canada.



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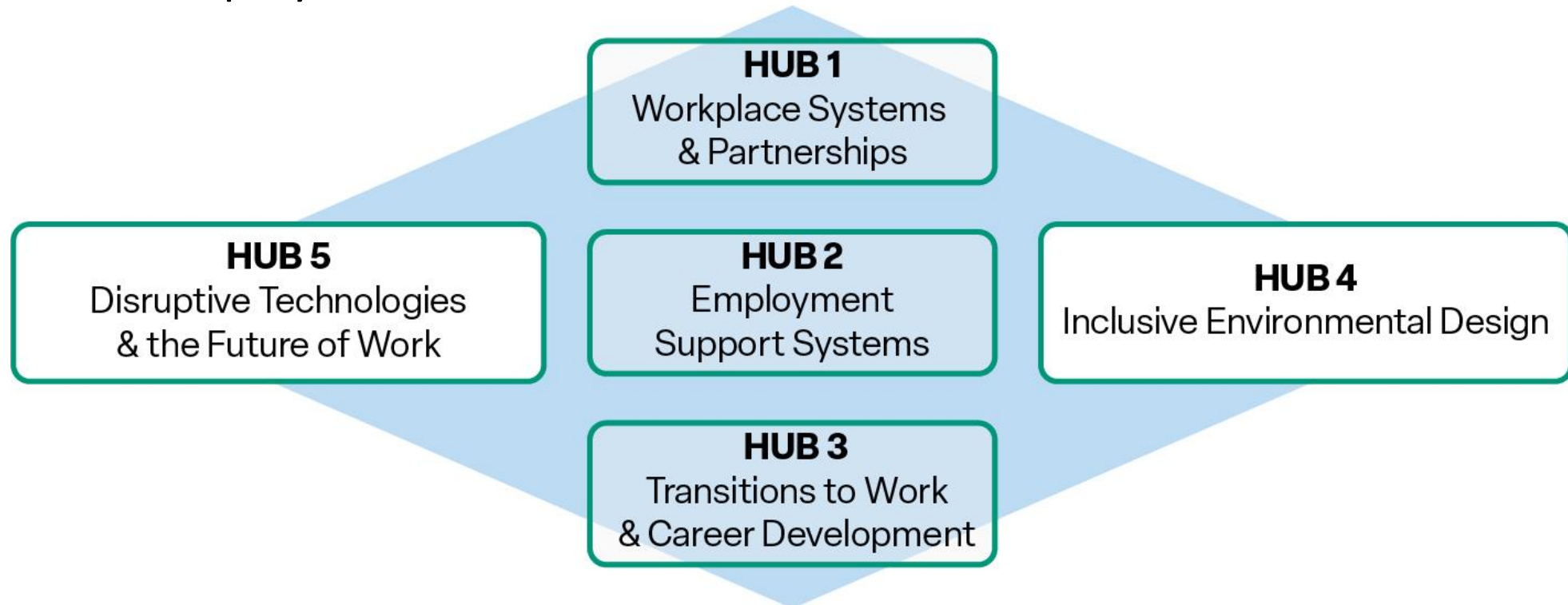
New Frontiers in Research Fund
Fonds **Nouvelles frontières** en recherche

Overview of Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA)

- IDEA is a knowledge-to-practice social innovation laboratory funded by the New Frontiers in Research Transformation Stream
- We focus on advancing the skills and capacities of workplace parties in the area of inclusive employment
- Our unique approach is to develop evidence-informed products that support inclusive workplaces
- We base most of our work on initiatives that are already successful in the workplace, including many involving unions

Our Approach

- Focus on organizational/demand-side capacity building
- Multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, **partner-driven** social innovation laboratory
- Incubator hubs, co-led by a researcher and partner representative, serve as entry points for inquiry



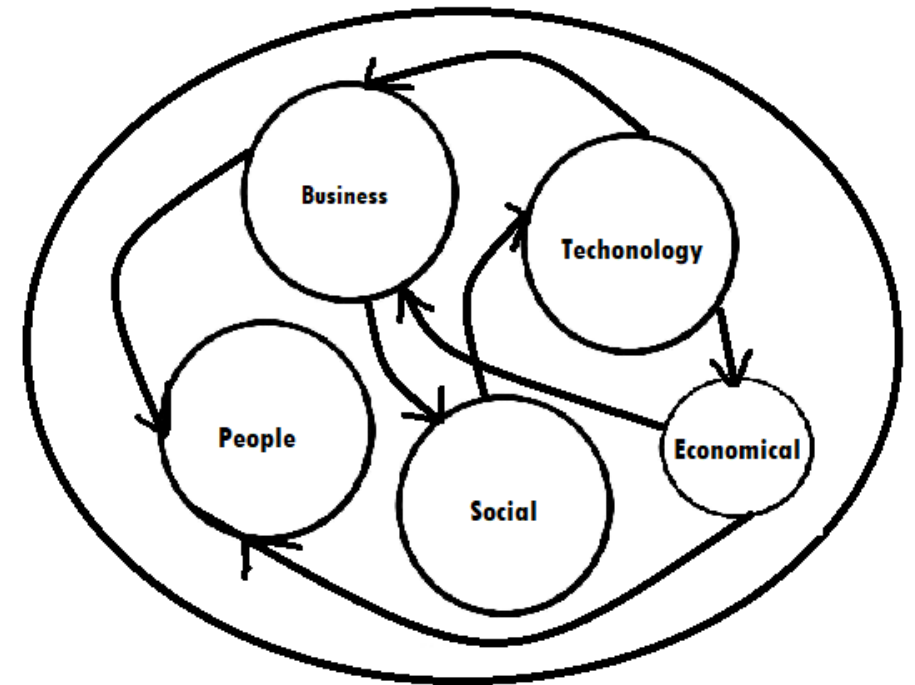
Social Model of Disability

- Explores how disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.
- Strengthens the idea that disability exists within the relationship between impairment and the surrounding social world
- Helps shift the emphasis from how limited the individual with a disability is, to what happened (discrimination?) or what should happen (accommodation, inclusion?) in interaction with the disability (Davis & Sanchez, 2021)
- Explores the the complex web of disadvantages persons living with a disability experience and how negative social attitudes, cultural assumptions and environmental barriers, including policies, services, laws, and structures may result in marginalization (Davis & Sanchez, 2021)

Key Concept: Systems Thinking

- A way to make sense of the complexity of the world by **looking at it in terms of wholes and relationships** rather than by splitting it down into its parts
- Used to explore and **develop effective action in complex contexts**, enabling systems change.
- A **holistic way to investigate factors and interactions** that contribute to outcomes
- A **comprehensive approach to introducing organizational change** and development
- At the workplace level, associate with **management/workplace systems**

Systems Thinking

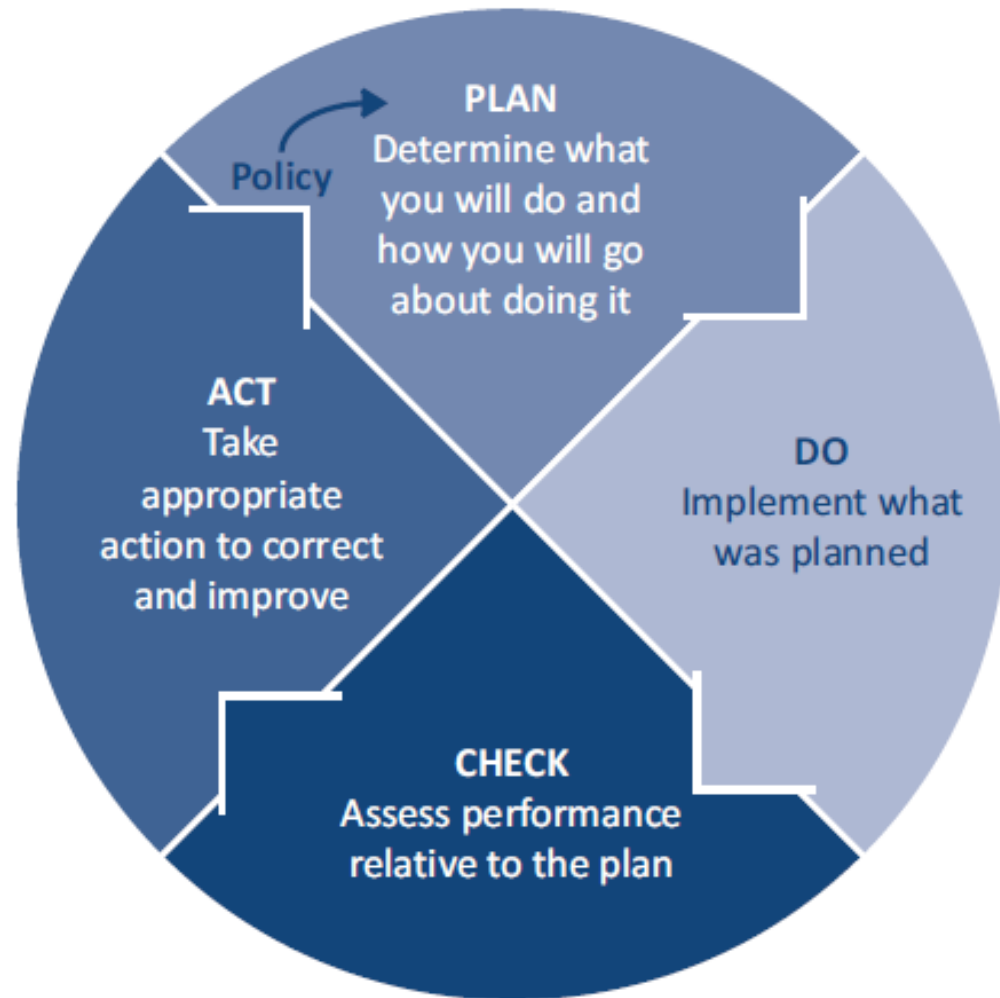


What is a Management System?

- A formalized framework of policies, processes and procedures used by an organization to meet its objectives in a particular core area of activity
- Documented and tested step-by-step method aimed at smooth functioning through standard practices
- Audits are a vital part of the management system approach
- Ideally, organizations have frameworks in place to address all core aspects of organizational activities
- Systems approach ensures clarity, consistency and integration with other organizational activities
- Proactive approach to addressing systemic barriers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities



Key Concept: Continual Improvement



- The process of enhancing a system to achieve ongoing improvements in targeted areas of activity and desired outcomes
- In workplace systems best practices, it is often associated with the framework of plan-do-check-act (PDCA)

Knowledge to Practice through Best Practice Guidance

IDEA has spearheaded best practice guidance in the form of Management System Standards:

- CSA Work Disability Management System (CSA Z1011:20)
https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA%20Z1011:20/?srsltid=AfmBOopUOzAAVlVL_OFAUPFaf-b4thQ-6aPfcu7punJZxvPHWC-IRAB
- CSA Work Disability Management in Paramedic Service Organizations (CSA Z1001.1:22)
https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA%20Z1011.1:22/?srsltid=AfmBOoq2bC9s_GBQuvY_hUU3V_qIivoHYae0Sdkl6CZDa4kDnavjwiLNf
- CSA Equity Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) in Apprenticeship Programs (CSA Z301:24)
https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA_Z301:24/?srsltid=AfmBOoqMLFABxR7q5ATTJE9ryFF_gwlc_FN4kVYUPkRlcfRBcKNhXselo
- Accessibility requirements for ICT Products and Services (CAN/ASC - EN 301 549:2024)
<https://accessible.canada.ca/en-301-549-accessibility-requirements-ict-products-and-services-1>
- ASC Employment Standard (CAN/ASC-1.1:2024) <https://accessible.canada.ca/creating-accessibility-standards/can-asc-112024-employment>

Knowledge to Practice through Regulatory Impact Analysis

IDEA has supported development and implementation of cost-benefit models for evaluating Accessible Canada Act (ACA) regulations:

- Baseline regulations on accessibility planning and reporting
- ACA priority areas of Information and Communication Technologies, Service Deliver, and the Built Environment
- Spearheaded special issue of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (41:3) – The Benefits of Inclusion: Disability and Work in the 21st Century

Details: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/2040-7149/vol/41/iss/3>



Total Benefits: \$338 Billion (17.6% of GDP)
Labour-Market Benefits: \$62.2 Billion (3.2% of GDP)

Category	Lower healthcare expenses	Output and productivity gains	Quality of life and social role engagement	Spillover effects	Market multiplier effects	Total benefits	Range
Total	\$19.4 B	\$62.2 B	\$132.2 B	\$76.7 B	\$47.3 B	\$337.7 B	\$252.8-\$422.7 B
Percent	5.73%	18.42%	39.13%	22.70%	14.02%	100.00%	100.00%
Per person	\$3,100	\$9,957	\$21,156	\$12,273	\$7,578	\$54,066	\$40,473-\$67,675
Percent of GDP	1.0%	3.2%	6.9%	4.0%	2.5%	17.6%	13.1%-22.0%

Knowledge to Practice through Government of Canada- IDEA Capacity Building Initiative

GC-IDEA Collaboration to improve the recruitment, retention, and advancement of employees with disabilities in the Public Service of Canada and beyond:

- **Project 1** – Access to adaptive equipment and services (with Shared Services Canada)
- **Project 2** – Human resources specialists with accessibility expertise (with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC))
- **Project 3** – Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility training (with Canada School of Public Service)
- **Project 4** – Employment benefits packages (with Office of Disability Issues at ESDC)

Details: <https://vraie-idea.ca/our-work/idea-government-canada-collaboration>

Background on ASC Employment Standard (CAN/ASC-1.1:2024)

- Accessible Canada Act (ACA) made into law in 2019
- Target of the ACA is to have Canada be fully accessible and inclusive by 2040
- Accessibility Standards Canada created to address need for guidance to help achieve the objectives of the ACA
- 7 priorities in the ACA, with Employment being a key one
- Technical committee struck in 2021 to create an inclusive employment standard
- First release of Standard in December 2024, with full Standard release during Accessibility Week at end of May
- Standard takes a social model approach and seeks to change culture and norms such that workplaces are inclusive by design

Details: <https://accessible.canada.ca/creating-accessibility-standards/can-asc-112024-employment>

Paradigm Shift Central to the Employment Standard

Current Practices	Target Norms
Medical Model	Social Model
Focus on disability	Focus on removing barriers
Emphasis on the person	Emphasis on the environment
Address barriers experienced by an individual	Address systemic barriers
Reactive Approaches	Proactive Approaches
Duty to Accommodate	Workplace that is Accessible by Design

Key Challenge: Legislation such as human rights code and provincial employment standard, as well as disability support programs based on medical model of disability where disclosure, medical documentation and duty to accommodate are basis of support provision.



Key Concept: Inclusive Design (ID)

Current terminology that describes methodologies to create products, services, operational systems and environments for people of all backgrounds and abilities, addressing the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference.

Employment Accessibility: A Practical Guide for Workplace Parties

An Implementation Guide for CAN/ASC 1.1: Employment

A step-by-step approach to building an inclusive and legally compliant workplace that works for everyone.



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IDEA Speaker Series Talks – May 16 & 30, Jun 13, 2025 (12 noon ET)

Target release for the Guidance in June 2025

Best Practices for Creating Inclusive Work Environments



Start with simple things that can readily be changed and make things easier for most people



Create flexibility where possible--consider when, where and how work can be done



Ensure ongoing training across the organization



Pay attention to how people interact, communicate, and work together



Explore how technologies can create opportunities but also barriers



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