UPowerWAD

Repository of Best Practices

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PROJECT

UPowerWAD: Involving, empowering and training end users with disability to fully participate in the Web Accessibility Directive objectives

PROJECT ID

2021-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000033176

PR2

Interactive repository of best practices on how to provide structured feedback regarding web accessibility issues

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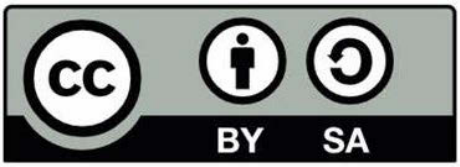

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INTRODUCTION

The project UPowerWAD: "Involving, empowering and training end-users with a disability to fully participate in the Web Accessibility Directive objectives" aims to raise awareness, engage, empower, and train People with Disabilities to participate actively in the implementation of the Web Accessibility Directive by providing constructive feedback regarding accessibility issues of the public sector websites and mobile applications across Europe.

The users

This will help tap into the knowledge of people with disabilities and to engage them to actively participate in improving the accessibility of public sector websites and mobile applications. Apart from supporting public sector bodies in becoming more accessible, users will also have better possibilities to participate in society, better access to higher levels of education and better preparation for new employment opportunities.

The best practice repository

The UPowerWAD project developed this repository of best practices on how to provide structured feedback regarding web accessibility issues. It lists best practices to help build feedback mechanisms the users can use with ease and supports people with disabilities to be more independent and provide relevant and actionable feedback on web accessibility issues – to public sector bodies, web accessibility national monitoring agencies or Ombudsman's offices across Europe.

A public sector body or any other website owner can use a coherent set of these practices to improve the quality and probably also the quantity of the feedback. The structure of the repository aims to help find these coherent combinations by listing best practices in different groups, and by referring to related best practices.

Other project results

The UPowerWAD project developed a methodological toolkit for how to capture and categorise feedback from users in the context of web accessibility.

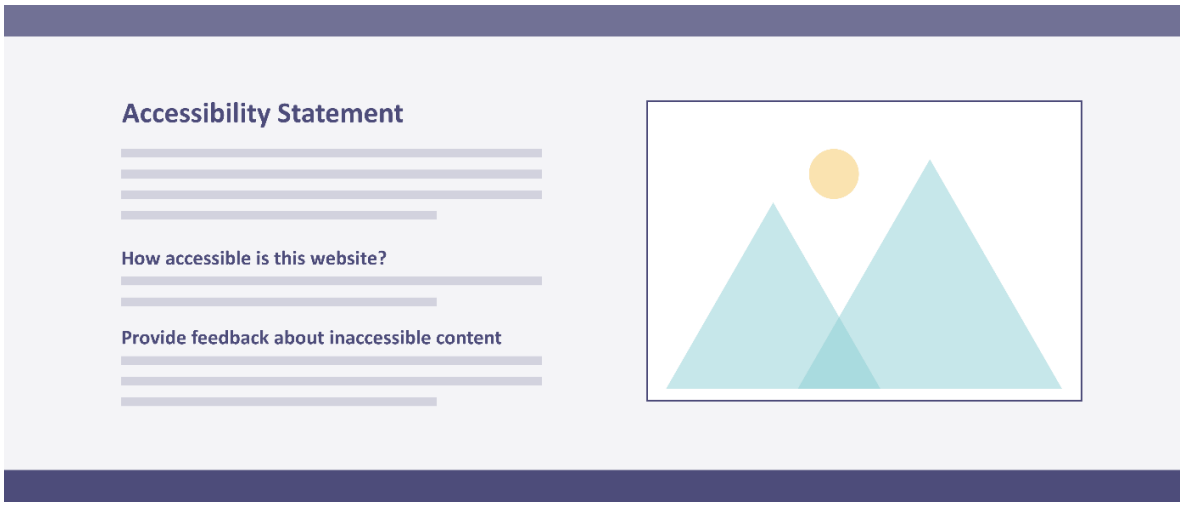
- UPowerWAD methodological toolkit (PDF, 1,84 MB)

The toolkit and the repository facilitate building a model curriculum on how to set vocational education and training courses to train persons with disabilities to be more independent and provide relevant and actionable feedback on web accessibility issues. The curriculum will be developed in English, and translated, localised and piloted in France, Germany, and Sweden. It will be complemented with practical guidelines on how to scale up the curriculum to different contexts and member states across Europe, facilitating the production of specialised courses in the field.

BACKGROUND

The Web Accessibility Directive

The Web Accessibility Directive[1] is one of the EU laws concerning accessibility, which entered into force in December 2016. It requires public sector bodies' websites and mobile apps to be accessible to users, mainly persons with disabilities, and to document and monitor their accessibility.



The Directive ensures the right to give feedback on accessibility. Public sector bodies have to

- publish an Accessibility statement for all of their websites and mobile apps and make it easily available;
- set up a feedback mechanism, through which the users can flag accessibility problems, or request information about content that is published in a non-accessible manner;
- describe the feedback mechanism and provide a link to it in the Accessibility statement.

[1] ⏩ Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies

The Feedback mechanism

Constructive feedback from users can help website owners focus on relevant problems, which in turn may improve the experience and the services offered by public sector bodies to all citizens, with or without disabilities. Public services' feedback mechanisms are a direct line of communication with the citizens, facilitating their feedback on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications.

The quality of the feedback channel has a direct influence on the user feedback. According to a user survey conducted in the UPowerWAD project:

- Most of the users that didn't give feedback were hindered by not finding the feedback channel (50%).
- 20% of users were not aware of the possibility to give feedback using a feedback mechanism.
- 15% of the users gave feedback through another channel that was not connected to the accessibility statement.
- Another 20% did not want to provide input.

User feedback is important for the successful implementation of the Web Accessibility Directive – and for accessibility in general. Even though public sector bodies have been reporting that they welcome user feedback, and the majority of web accessibility professionals agree on how important user feedback is, during the evaluation of the Web Accessibility Directive's implementation[2] most of the member states reported that user feedback was very rarely received. Our research shows that, in order to increase feedback:

- it is necessary to raise more awareness about the right and possibility to provide feedback and
- public sector bodies need to facilitate user feedback by improving the feedback mechanism and by acting on it when received.

[2] ⏩ Study supporting the review of the Web Accessibility Directive

How public sector bodies share information about the accessibility of their websites or mobile apps, ask feedback from citizens and how they react and respond to it, can affect how the feedback mechanisms will be used. If they see user feedback on accessibility as constructive, it can become a driving force that will help considerably improve a public website and the services offered to the citizens.

THE REPOSITORY

Method used to create the Repository

The repository is based on research conducted earlier in the project for the methodological toolkit, on a survey and interviews.

The research for the methodological toolkit identified aspects of the feedback mechanism that are relevant for the user and influence their willingness to provide feedback, as well as the quality of their feedback. This user input was kept in mind when building the survey targeting public sector bodies, looking for the practices used in their feedback mechanisms.

Based on the responses received in the survey, assessing the structure, clarity, quality, efficacy, cost-effectiveness, actionability, increased accessibility and target group satisfaction of the different practices, we interviewed public sector bodies with selected best practices.

The repository is the result of this process, considering both user preferences and existing public sector practices.

The content and usage of the Repository

This repository lists best practices for different parts and elements of the feedback mechanism. They can be relevant for all mechanisms (e.g. the best practices on the Accessibility statement), for a group of feedback channels (e.g. for written feedback, like e-mail and forms), or only for one feedback method (e.g. uploading files into forms).

Internal reference links are marked with the following sign: ⓔ.

The repository shows real-life examples of many of the best practices, by providing a link to a webpage using the practice. It also presents a screenshot for easier identification, to provide an English translation where necessary, and also in case the external resource changes. Additionally, a text version of the screenshot is also provided – to facilitate reading for users of assistive technology.

External links to best practice examples and other resources are marked with underlining and the following sign: .

It is important to note, that the external resource is viewed as best practice only in regard to the practice described – and that the linked webpage may use other practices that this repository does not approve of.

Some of the best practices listed in the repository might seem obvious, but research has shown that many organisations lack accessibility knowledge and experience, which makes even basic information and guidance valuable.

LIST OF BEST PRACTICES

A. Feedback access

1. Accessibility statement link location
2. Accessibility statement link name
3. Feedback channel link
4. Contacts

B. Accessibility statement

5. Style and language
6. Scope of the feedback

C. Feedback in general

7. Alternative feedback options
8. Presentation of feedback options
9. Description of next steps and timeline
10. Comprehensive guidance
11. Help with technical details (automated)
12. Help with the location of the barrier (automated)
13. Guidance on the location of the barrier

D. E-mail and phone feedback

14. Dedicated e-mail address / phone number
15. General e-mail address / phone number
16. E-mail address format
17. Competence to handle feedback call

E. Feedback form

18. Anonymity
19. Possibility to choose feedback subject
20. Possibility to attach files
21. Preferred response channel

F. Complex feedback form

22. Structured form
23. Listing options
24. Multi-level form

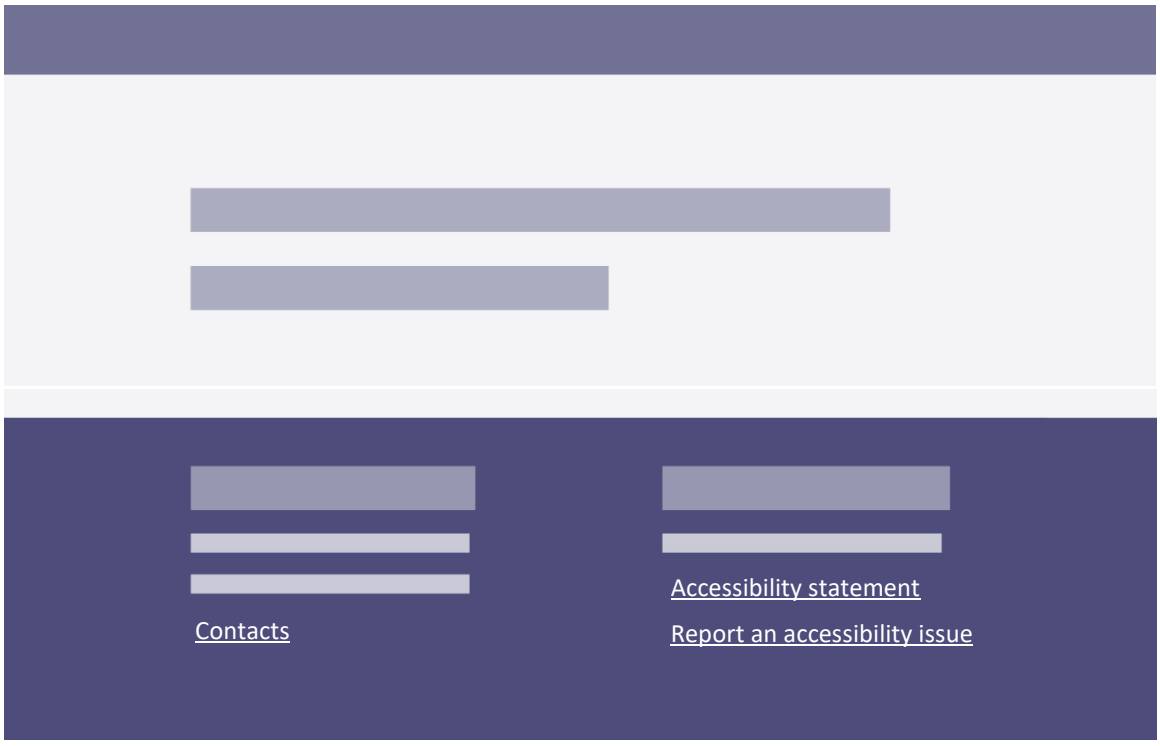
G. Response to feedback

25. Confirmation of receipt
26. Details in the reply
27. Contacting the user
28. Information on fixed content
29. Follow-up possibility

A. FEEDBACK ACCESS

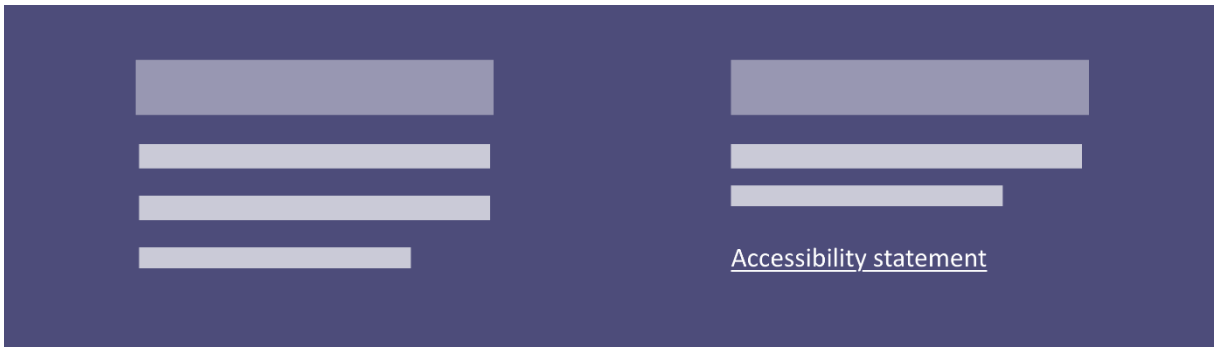
The first set of best practices aims to ensure that the user finds the Accessibility statement and the feedback channels easily.

1. Accessibility statement link location
2. Accessibility statement link name
3. Feedback channel link
4. Contacts



Back to List of Best Practices

1. Accessibility statement link location



The link to the Accessibility statement appears in the footer or in another global part of the website, on each webpage at the same location.

The Web Accessibility Directive requires websites of public sector bodies to have an Accessibility statement that informs the user about website content that is not accessible.[3] The Statement also needs to describe and provide a link to the feedback mechanism.

The law also requires that a link to the Accessibility statement should be placed on the homepage of the website or made available on every web page.

Placing a link in the global framework of the website makes it appear on each page, which makes it easier for the user to get to the Statement and to the feedback mechanism. The location of this type of link is usually in the footer or sometimes right at the top of the webpage, together with similar “functional” links, like Contacts and Legal notice. If this practice is generally followed, the user will know where to look for the link.

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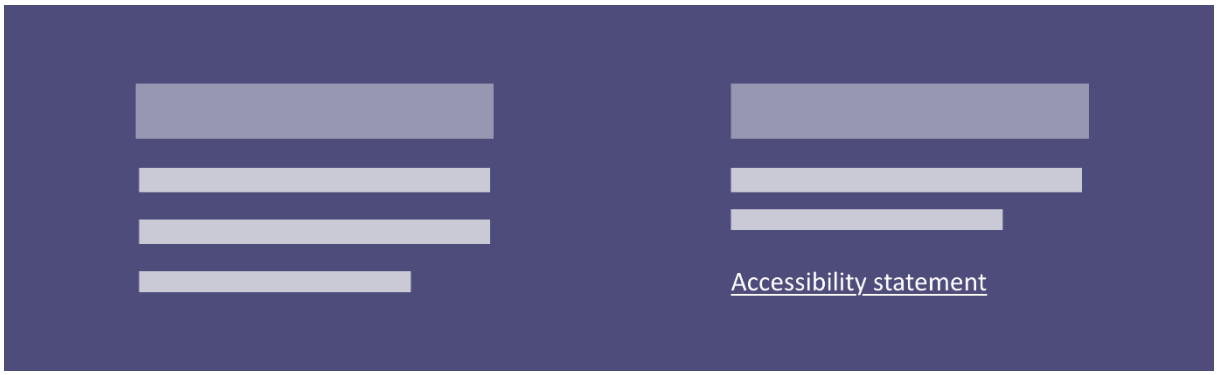
Back to Feedback Access group
Accessibility statement link name

[3] See Article 7(1) of Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies

2. Accessibility statement link name



The link to the Accessibility statement is clearly marked with the text “Accessibility statement”, in the corresponding language.

The link to the Accessibility Statement is clear, and it uses the correct wording so users can find it when looking for or searching the term “accessibility statement”, or the word “accessibility” in the language of the website.

As many users may not be familiar with the term “accessibility statement”, make sure the search function also considers words that may be used in this context, like “inaccessible” or “barrier”.

Example

Location: Website of the Swedish Public Employment Service (accessed in May 2023)

» https://arbetsformedlingen.se

- Other languages
- Sign language
- Accessibility
- Contact us
- Code for screen sharing

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to Feedback Access group
Feedback channel link

3. Feedback channel link

There is a direct link to the Feedback channel in the global framework of the website, in addition to the link to the Accessibility statement.

Providing direct access to the feedback mechanism from every page makes giving feedback easier, as it is one step less for the user.

It can make feedback both easier and more efficient, if the mechanism can detect on which page the feedback link was activated, and suggests the user the URL of that page. (See also Best Practice 11: Help with the location of the barrier (automated) ➔.)

Adding a separate feedback link suggests that feedback is well received, which can be enhanced by providing a link text that calls to action (e.g. “Report an accessibility issue”) or one that makes the process feel more informal (e.g.: “I found a barrier”).

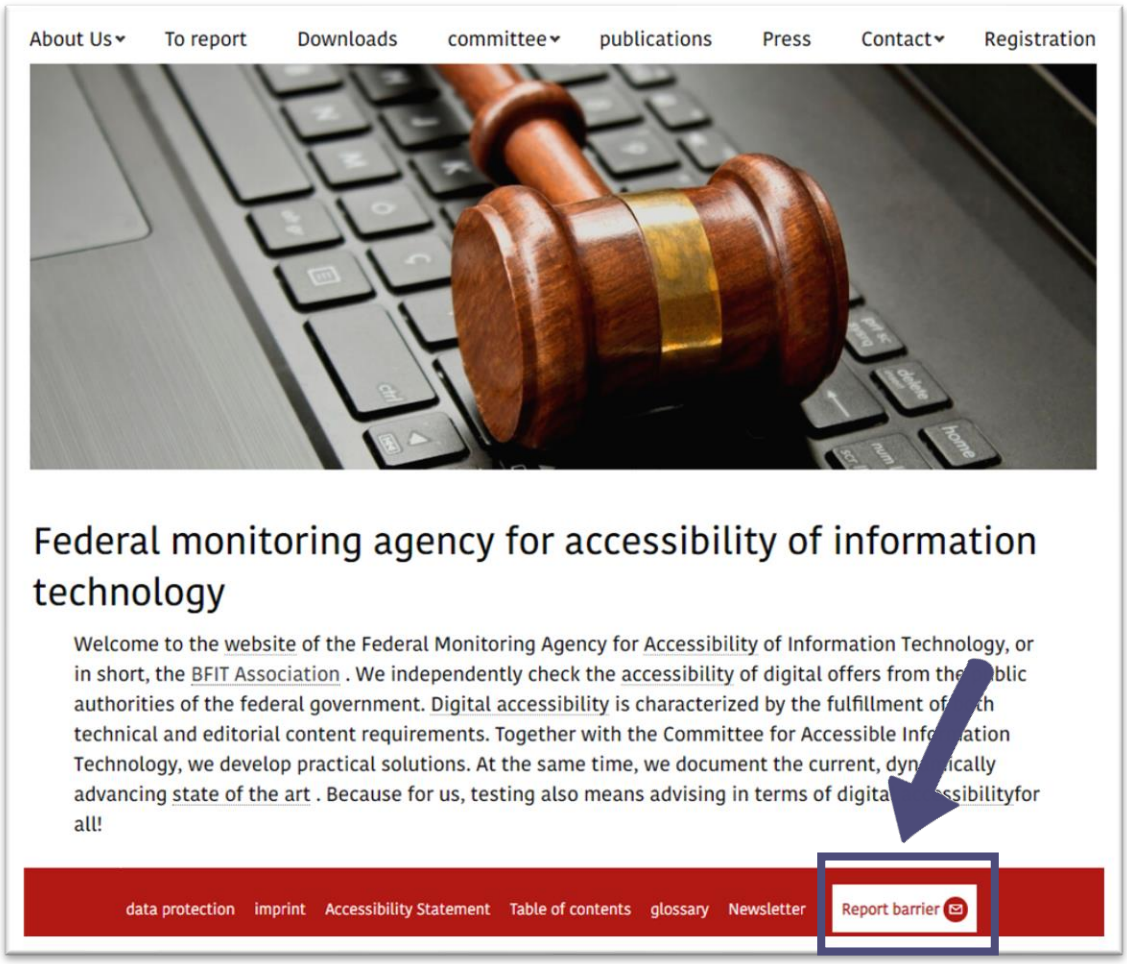
Some websites use a feedback button, instead of a link.

Example

The example shows the “Report barrier” button in the footer of the website.

Location: German Federal monitoring agency for accessibility of information technology (accessed in March 2023, translated to English)

https://www.bfit-bund.de



Links in the footer:

- Data protection
- Impressum
- Accessibility statement
- Table of contents
- Glossary
- Newsletter
- **Report barrier**

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to Feedback Access group
Contacts

4. Contacts

The general Contacts page of the website may also have a link to the Feedback channel(s), in addition to the link in the Accessibility statement.

Users might not look for the feedback mechanism – either because they do not know about its existence, or it is difficult to find. Similarly, they may not know that there is an Accessibility statement. Instead, they use the contacts on the general Contacts page to provide feedback.

Listing the contacts of the feedback mechanism on the Contacts page – or at least providing a link to the feedback mechanism part of the Accessibility statement for accessibility related issues – guides the user towards the designated feedback channels.

The best is to list all available feedback channels, e.g. phone, e-mail, feedback form in a structure that is easy to understand and does not overload the page.

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Back to Feedback Access group ⊕
Accessibility Statement best practices ⊕

B. ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

The Accessibility statement is a regularly updated report where the website owner explains where there are accessibility issues. As they are required to publish an Accessibility statement, the website owners need to assess the level of accessibility of their websites and. Thus, having to publish a statement can already have a positive effect on accessibility.

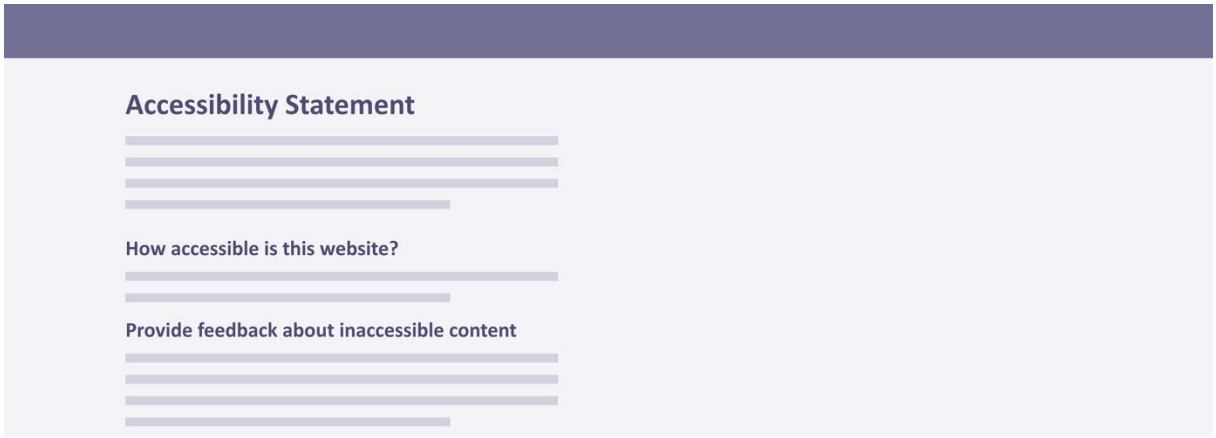
The main aim of the Accessibility statement is

- **to describe the current state of accessibility to the end users, as well as**
- **to facilitate the work of the monitoring agencies, by helping them identify areas or content where accessibility issues are more frequent and to decide what and who to monitor.**

Many users who encounter an accessibility problem will look at the statement in order to get in contact with the department or person that may give them the accessible information they needed – either by providing it in an alternative format or by removing the accessibility barrier.

This set of best practices aim to motivate the user to provide feedback on accessibility issues.

5. Style and language ➔
6. Scope of the feedback ➔



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5. Style and language

The Accessibility statement is easy to understand, has a welcoming style and is appreciative of feedback.

One of the goals of the Accessibility statement is to inform the users about the level of accessibility of the website and about any content that might not be accessible. This can help users to learn whether an accessibility issue can be mitigated by the user (e.g. by changing the browser or opening multimedia content in another player), and to decide whether to try accessing certain content at all.

Therefore, it is important that the users understand the content of the Accessibility statement: it is written in plain language and avoids tech or legal jargon.

The style of the Accessibility statement – and the feedback mechanism – should aim to reassure the users that their feedback is welcome and important to improve accessibility. This increases the confidence of the users that their feedback is valuable and can lead to more willingness to signal the accessibility issues they have found.

Nevertheless, the language should never suggest that it is the users' duty to find the accessibility issues and provide feedback. It

is always the responsibility of the owner to make the website accessible.

Furthermore, in Germany, the law requires that an explanation of the Accessibility statement should be provided in sign language and easy-to-read language.[4] This improves the probability of receiving feedback on accessibility barriers faced by sign language users, persons with cognitive impairments, and users with another native language.

Providing a sign language explanation is very positive, but is just doing half the job. The best practice would be to offer the possibility to provide feedback in sign language – e.g. with a videocall option, or by facilitating sending a video file as part of the feedback. (This, however, is not required by law.)

When it comes to easy-to-read, this is supporting the widest range of users when combined with images or multimedia. (This is, however, not required by law.)

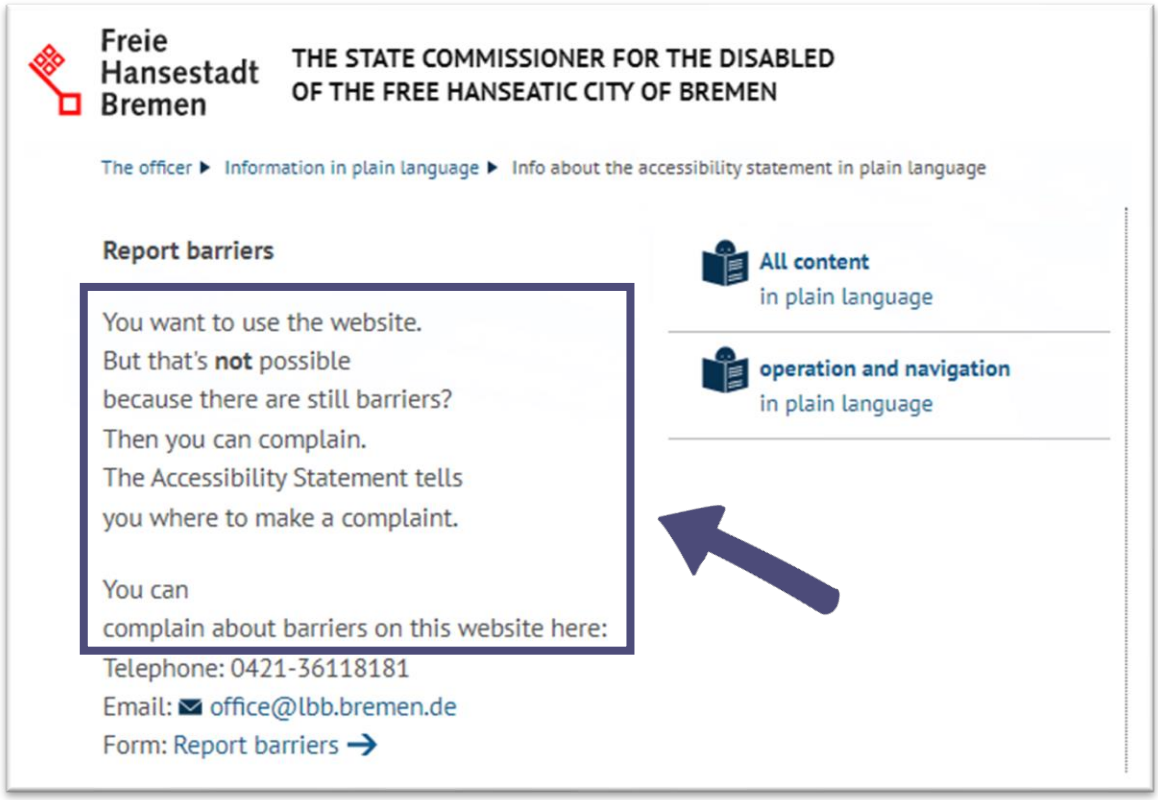
Example

The example below provides easy-to-read information about the feedback mechanism.

Location: Website of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities of Bremen (accessed in May 2023, translated to English)

» https://www.behindertenbeauftragter.bremen.de/der-beauftragte/informationen-in-leichter-sprache/info-ueber-die-erklaerung-zur-barrierefreiheit-in-leichter-sprache-31869

[4] » Verordnung zur Schaffung barrierefreier Informationstechnik nach dem Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung - BITV 2.0) § 4 Erläuterungen in Deutscher Gebärdensprache und Leichter Sprache



Report barriers

You want to use the website.

But that's **not** possible because there are still barriers?

Then you can complain.

The Accessibility Statement tells you where to make a complaint.

You can complain about barriers on this website here:

Telephone: 0421-36118181

Email: office@lbb.bremen.de

Form: Report barriers

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to Accessibility statement group
Scope of the feedback

6. Scope of the feedback

Any feedback is welcome – beyond the legally required level of accessibility, on usability and on user experience.

The user is welcome to report any accessibility issues they face, including broken links, comments on usability, etc. It can lead to a better user experience for all.

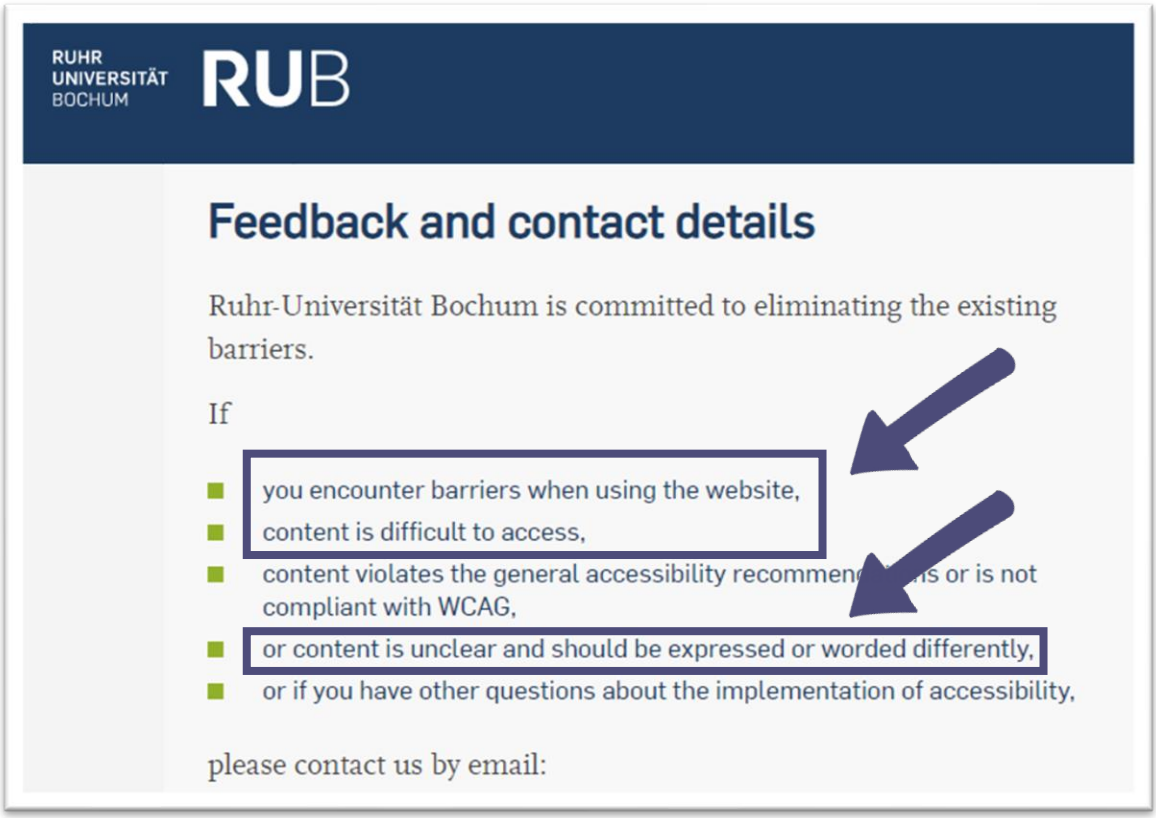
Many websites refer to the legal accessibility requirements when asking for feedback, and some even instruct the users, not to give feedback on content that is listed in the Statement as not accessible. This can discourage users that are not familiar with the legislation and the standards or are not sure about their knowledge in this regard.

Welcoming feedback outside the legal requirements, on any accessibility issues the user may face, and beyond, including for example broken links and comments on usability, help the website owner achieve an overall better user experience.

Example

Location: Accessibility statement of the Ruhr-University Bochum website (accessed in May 2023)

» https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/en/accessibility



Feedback and contact details

Ruhr-Universität Bochum is committed to eliminating the existing barriers.

If

- you encounter barriers when using the website,
- content is difficult to access,
- content violates the general accessibility recommendations or is not compliant with WCAG,
- or content is unclear and should be expressed or worded differently,
- or if you have other questions about the implementation of accessibility,

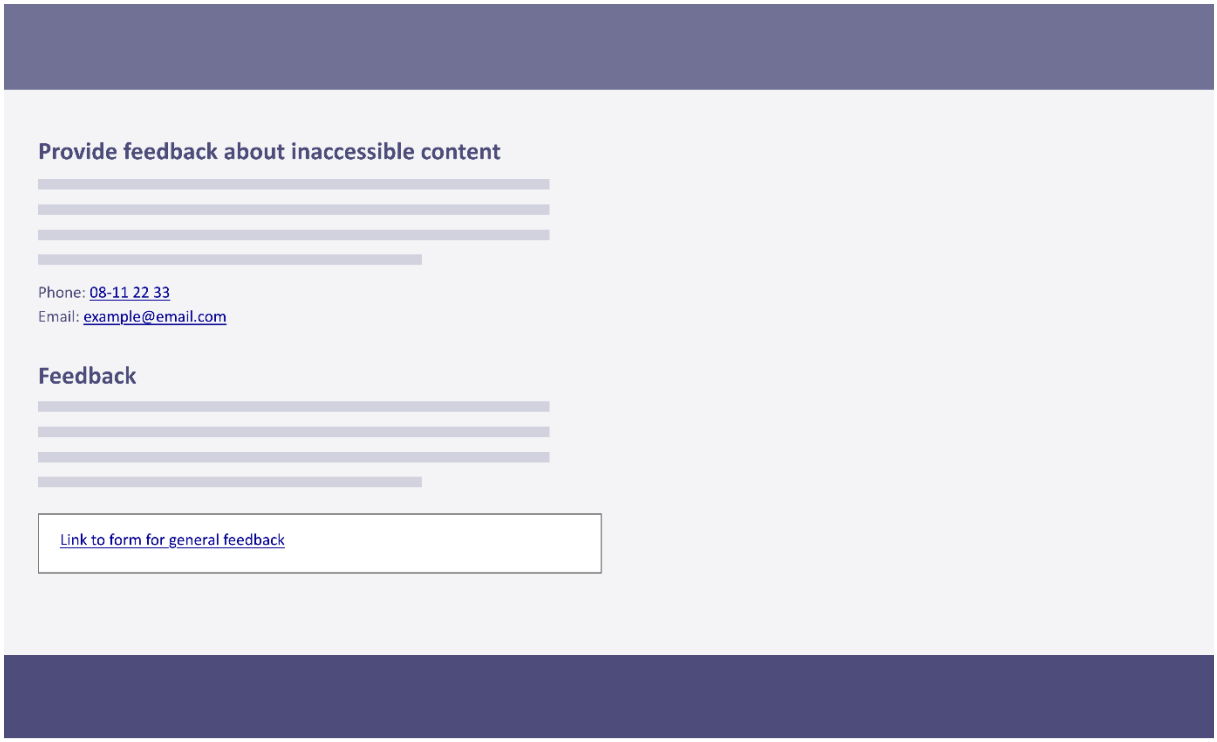
please contact us by email:

Back to List of Best Practices ⊕
Back to Accessibility statement group ⊕
Best practices for Feedback in general ⊕

C. FEEDBACK IN GENERAL

This section lists best practices that are relevant for feedback channels in general.

7. Alternative feedback options
8. Presentation of feedback options
9. Description of next steps and timeline
10. Comprehensive guidance
11. Help with technical details (automated)
12. Help with the location of the barrier (automated)
13. Guidance on the location of the barrier



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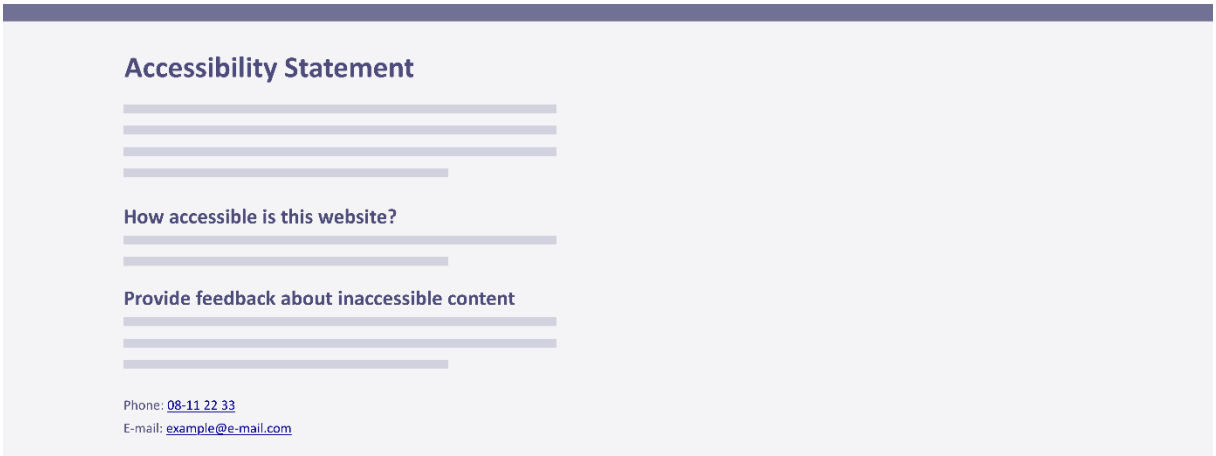
7. Alternative feedback options



Various feedback channels are provided in order to meet different user needs.

Providing only one feedback channel can exclude users.

People express themselves in different ways and use different means of communication. What is easy or preferred for some, might be difficult or disliked for others. This affects the preferences for feedback channels and format (e.g. structured forms, open-ended questions, chat, phone). The type of disability the user might have plays a significant role in their preferences. For example, deaf users might prefer using sign language in a video call instead of writing feedback, and users with visual impairments might choose a phone call.

Offering alternative feedback channels supports different user needs and preferences and makes it possible for more users to act and use the feedback mechanism. A combination of the different channel types facilitates addressing the needs of users with various disabilities. You can find an example at Best Practice 8: Presentation of feedback options ➔.

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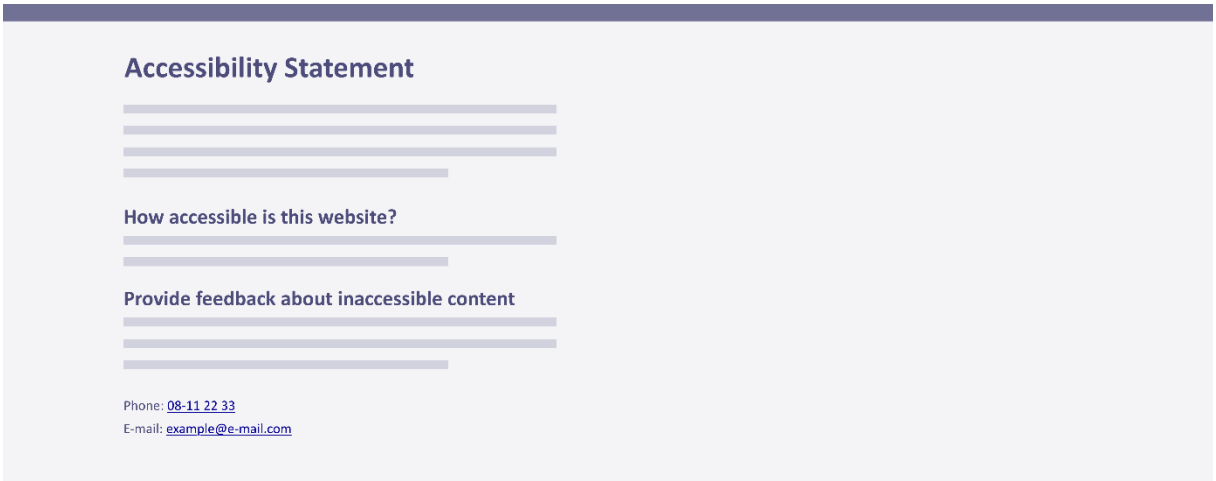
Back to Feedback in General group ➔
Presentation of feedback options ➔

8. Presentation of feedback options



All accessibility feedback options are presented at the same place.

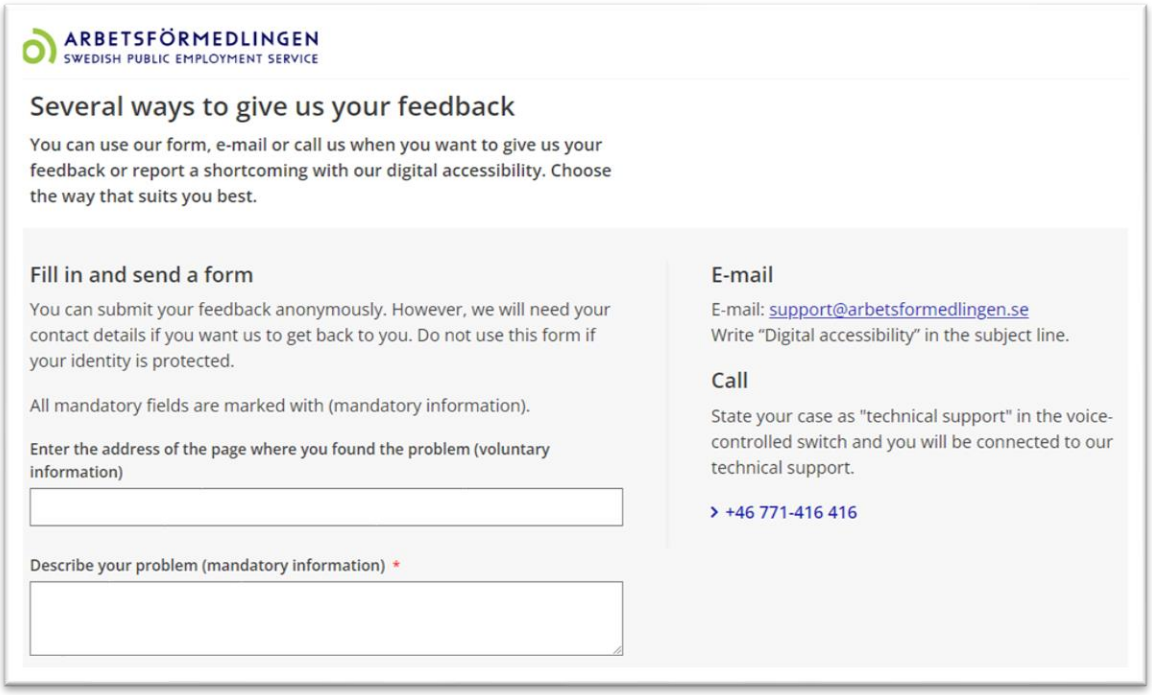
Providing all the feedback options at the same place lets the user know about the available feedback channels all at once. It also helps the users choose the channel corresponding the most to their preferences.

The Accessibility statement should list all the available feedback channels, and if feedback links are provided on the general Contacts page, it should also list all options.

Example

Location: Website of the Swedish Public Employment Service (accessed in May 2023)

- https://arbetsformedlingen.se/other-languages/english-engelska/contact/give-us-your-suggestions-and-feedback/feedback-about-digital-accessibility



Several ways to give us your feedback

You can use our form, e-mail or call us when you want to give us your feedback or report a shortcoming with our digital accessibility. Choose the way that suits you best.

Fill in and send a form

[Instructions and form fields]

E-mail

E-mail: support@arbetsformedlingen.se

Write “Digital accessibility” in the subject line.

Call

State your case as "technical support" in the voice-controlled switch and you will be connected to our technical support.

+46 771-416 416

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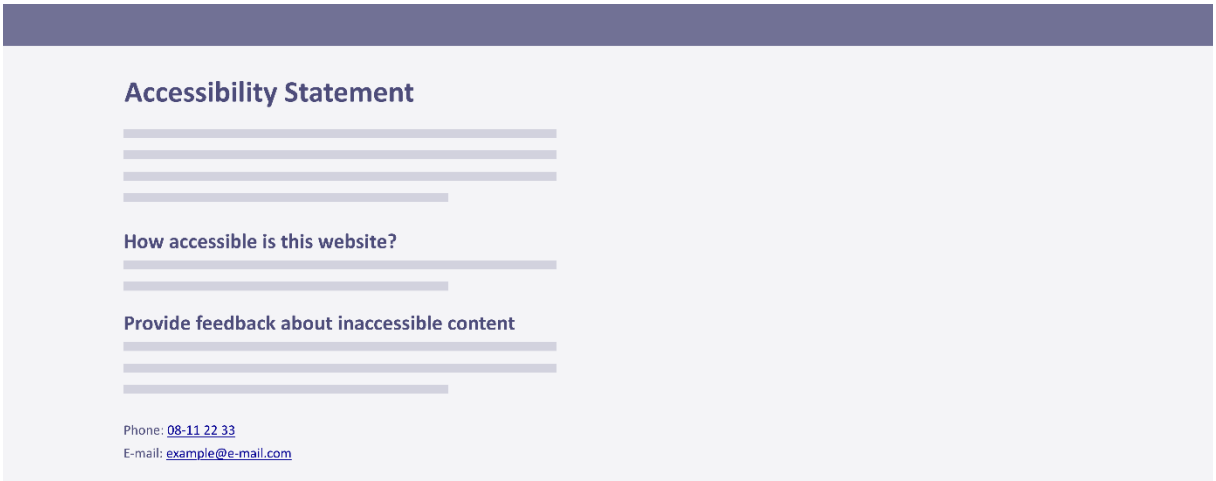
Back to Feedback in General group
Description of next steps and timeline

9. Description of next steps and timeline



The description of the feedback mechanism includes information about what action follows the feedback and marks also the foreseen response time by the website owner.

Describing the next steps and establishing a timeline shows that the website owner is prepared and takes the responsibility to react on the feedback. This shows the user that their feedback is important and creates trust.

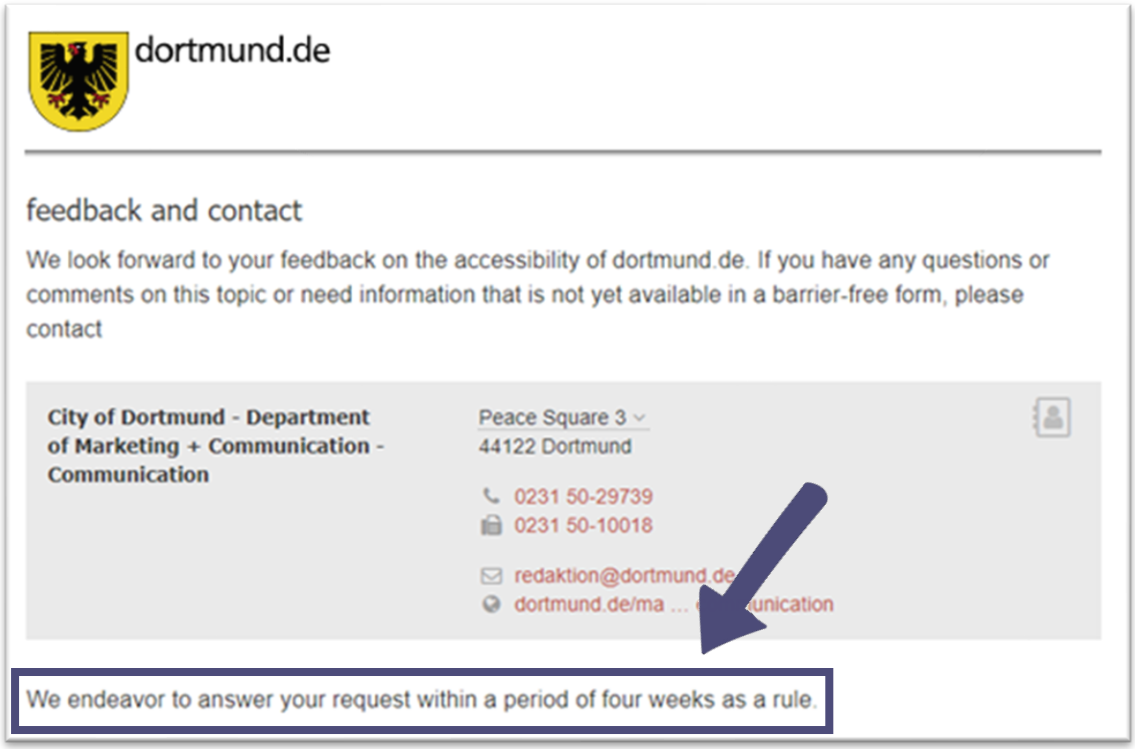
It is important to set up adequate procedures to ensure that feedback is acted upon, and that the user is informed about it. The response time communicated should be realistic and respected, and if it cannot be kept, the user should be informed.

The Web Accessibility Directive requires an adequate response within a reasonable period of time, but the law in some member states sets an exact time limit for the response, and it usually varies between 2 weeks and 2 months.

Example

Location: Website of the city of Dortmund (accessed in May 2023, translated to English)

- https://www.dortmund.de/de/dortmund_de/erklaerung_zur_barrierefreiheit/index.html



Feedback and contact

We look forward to your feedback on the accessibility of dortmund.de. If you have any questions or comments on this topic or need information that is not yet available in a barrier-free form, please contact

City of Dortmund - Department of Marketing + Communication - Communication

Peace Square 3, 44122 Dortmund

Phone: 0231 50-29739
Fax: 0231 50-10018

redaktion@dortmund.de
dortmund.de/ma … communication

We endeavor to answer your request within a period of four weeks as a rule.

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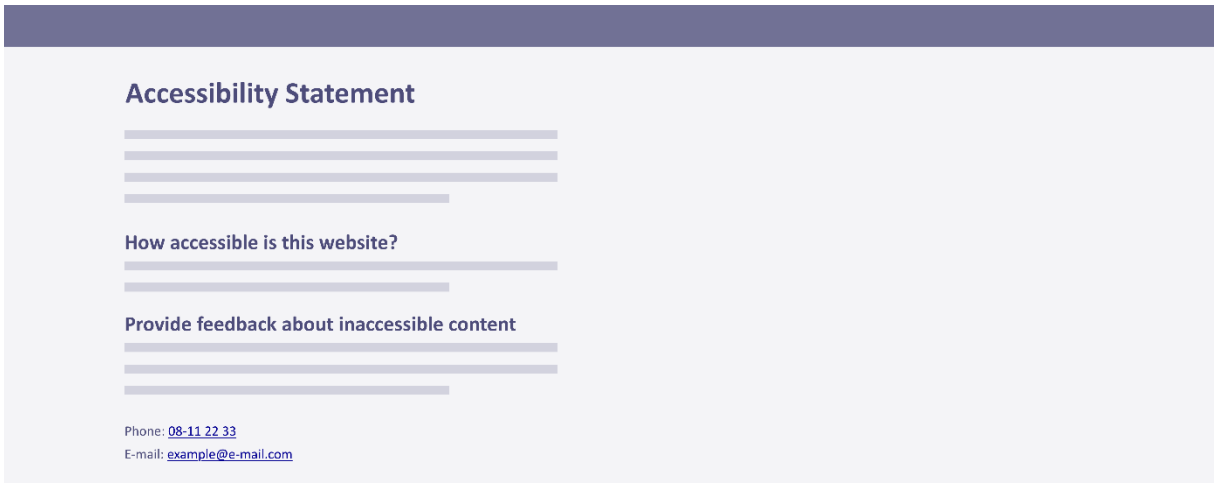
Comprehensive guidance

10. Comprehensive guidance



The user gets comprehensive guidance on what information should be shared in the feedback, including the assistive technology used.

The Accessibility statement or the feedback page provides guidance on the process of giving feedback and on what details the user is encouraged to include in their feedback.

It is important that the guidance is clear, easy to understand, and provides practical instructions and examples. It is equally important not to require from the user that they fill in technical data, as this may scare some users away. (See also Best Practice 24: Multi-level form ➔.)

In case of a feedback form, the instructions and help are ideally linked to the different form fields.

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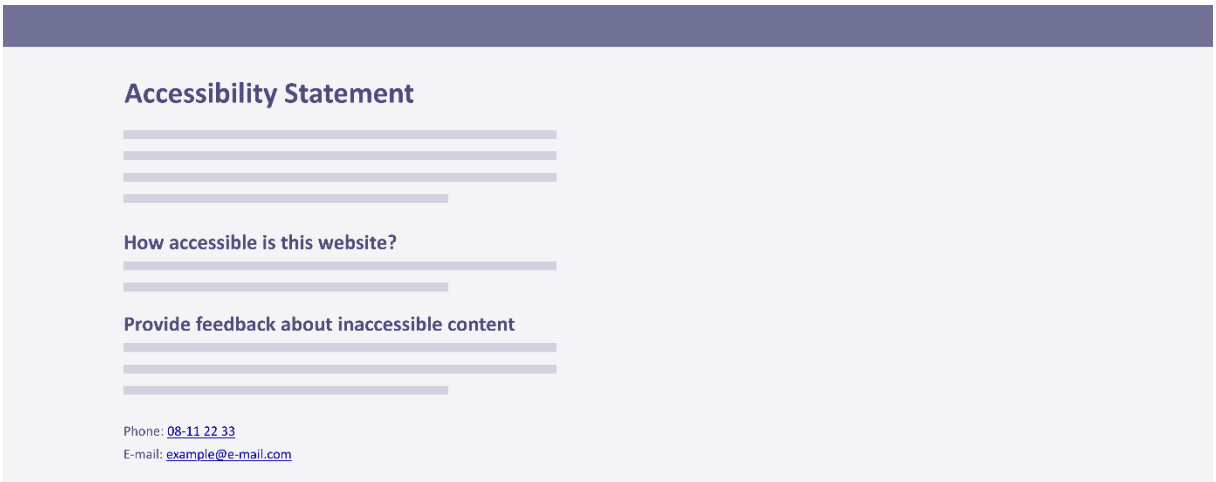
Back to Feedback in General group ➔
Help with technical details (automated) ➔

11. Help with technical details (automated)



Technical data, like operating system and browser used, is pre-filled – with the consent of the user.

To solve an accessibility issue, it can be important to know what technical environment the user has, as some issues can be specific for one operating system, for example, and not be present in another one. Similarly, the browser can also influence whether a solution provides accessible content or not.

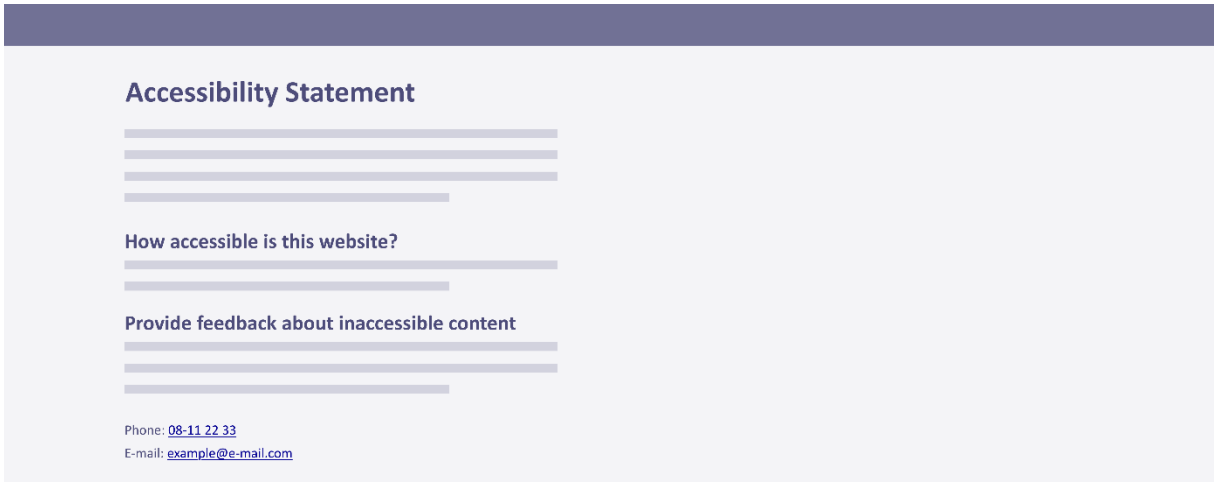
By setting up a mechanism that provides such technical details, the website owner ensures that the necessary technical data is available. Not all users are “tech savvy”, for some it can be difficult to find out these details, others might simply forget to mention them.

It is important to always ask for consent when information on the user is obtained in an automated way.

This practice is relevant for e-mail feedback and for feedback provided by using a form.

Back to List of Best Practices ➔
Back to Feedback in General group ➔
Help with the location of the barrier (automated) ➔

12. Help with the location of the barrier (automated)



The URL of the page with inaccessible content is automatically determined – with the consent of the user.

Similarly to the technical environment, it is possible to set up the feedback mechanism so that it reads the URL of the page from where the user decided to give feedback.

Again, it is important to ask for consent from the user.

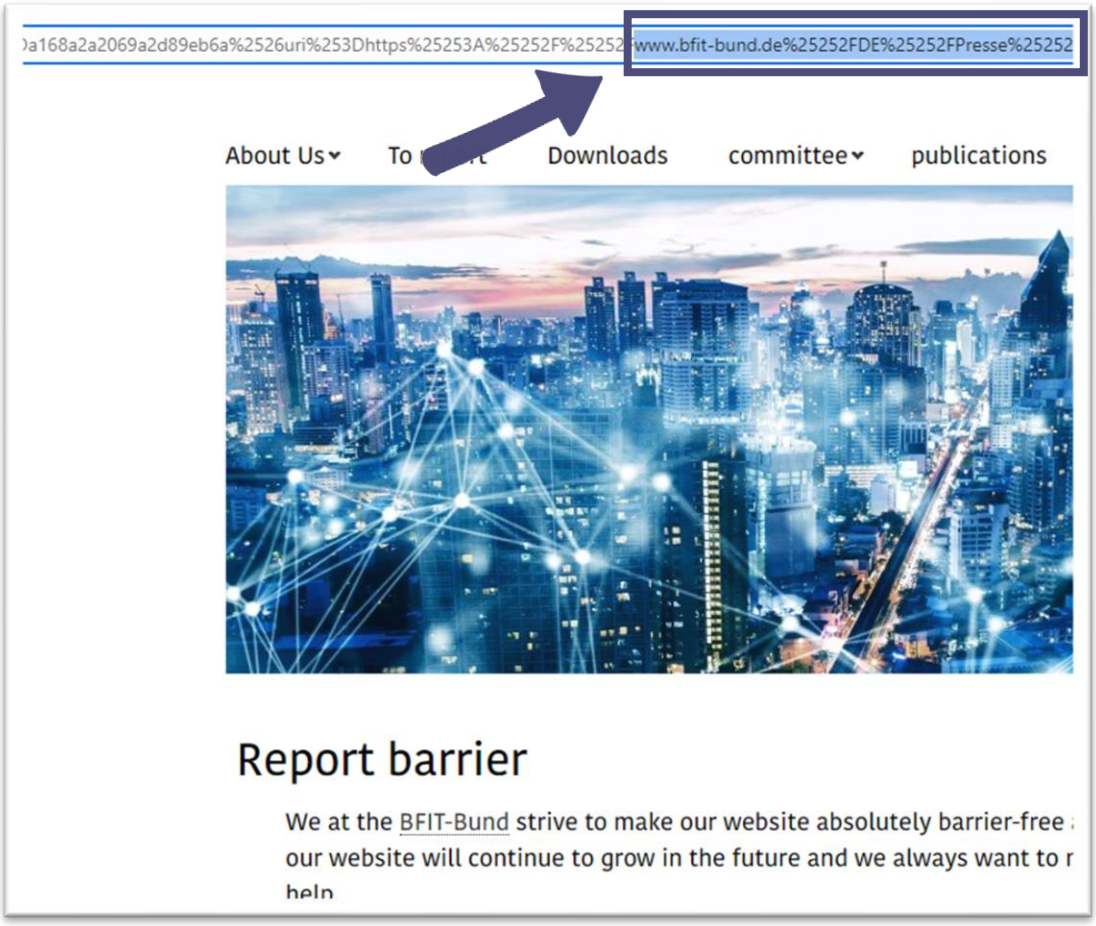
This practice is relevant for e-mail feedback and for feedback provided by using a form.

Example

The example below shows the URL generated after pressing the “Report barrier” button on a website. (See also Best Practice 3: Feedback channel link ➔.) The URL includes data on the previously visited “Presse” page, and this data will be forwarded with the feedback.

Location: Website of the German Federal monitoring agency for accessibility of information technology (accessed in March 2023, translated to English)

» https://www.bfit-bund.de/DE/Service/barriere_melden/barriere_melden_func.html



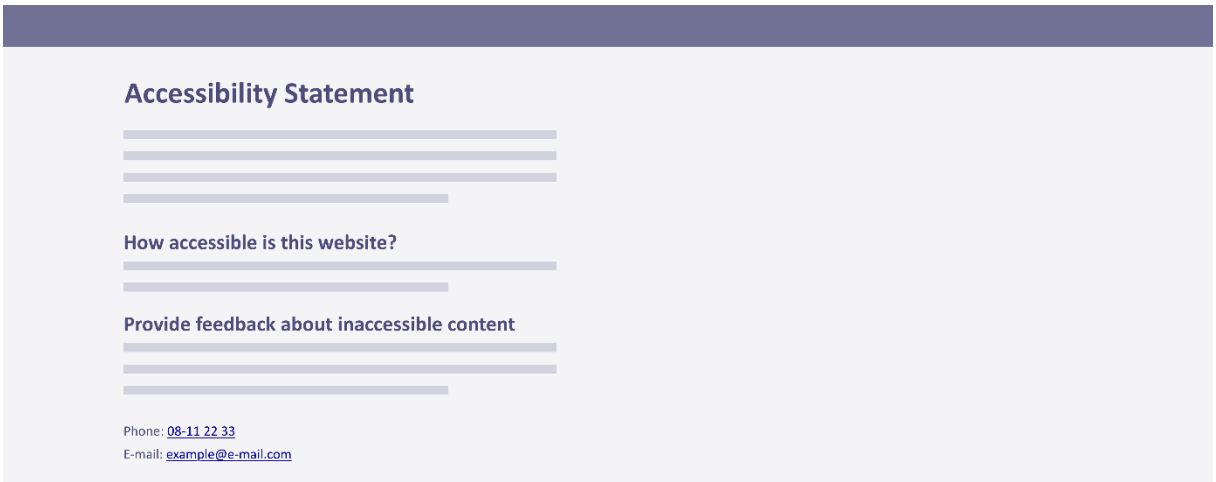
URL of the Report barrier webpage, with the following fragment**:**

…www.bfit-bund.de%25252FDE%25252F**Presse**%...

The title of the previously visited Presse webpage is part of the URL.

Back to List of Best Practices ⊕
Back to Feedback in General group ⊕
Guidance on the location of the barrier ⊕

13. Guidance on the location of the barrier



The user gets guidance on how to obtain the URL of the page with inaccessible content.

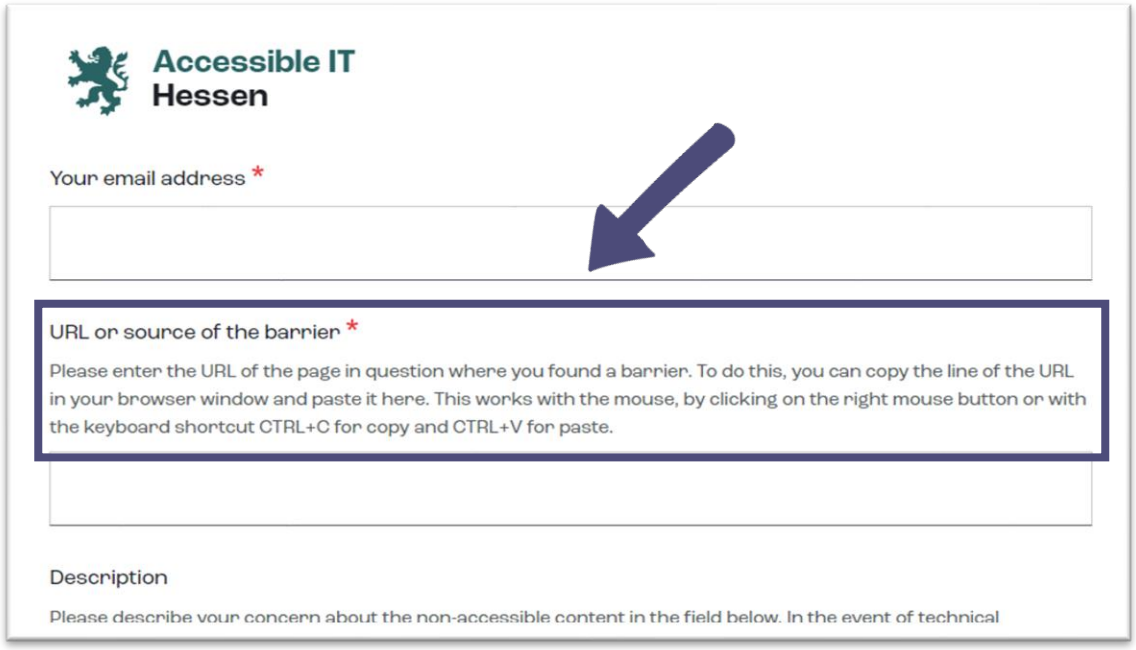
If the feedback mechanism cannot locate the address of the page with the accessibility issue, a practical, step-by-step guidance can lead the user to find the URL and copy it into their feedback.

This way the website owner can find easily where the user faced the accessibility barrier.

Example

Location: Accessible IT Hessen website (accessed in May 2023, translated to English)

» https://lbit.hessen.de/Barriere-melden



Your email address:

URL or source of the barrier:

Please enter the URL of the page in question where you found a barrier. To do this, you can copy the line of the URL in your browser window and paste it here. This works with the mouse, by clicking on the right mouse button or with the keyboard shortcut CTRL+C for copy and CTRL+V for paste.

Description: …

Back to List of Best Practices ⊕
Back to Feedback in General group ⊕
Best practices for E-mail and Phone Feedback ⊕

D. E-MAIL AND PHONE FEEDBACK

Below you can find best practices relevant for e-mail and phone feedback.

14. Dedicated e-mail address / phone number ➔
15. General e-mail address / phone number ➔
16. E-mail address format ➔
17. Competence to handle feedback call ➔

Back to List of Best Practices ➔

14. Dedicated e-mail address / phone number

The e-mail or the phone number is dedicated to accessibility issues. It can be reflected in the e-mail address, or the name of the team / person receiving the feedback may be shown.

An e-mail address dedicated to accessibility issues assures the user that the message will get to the right hands. It can either be a direct address to a person that works with accessibility or a functional one, like accessibility@authority.gov.xx.

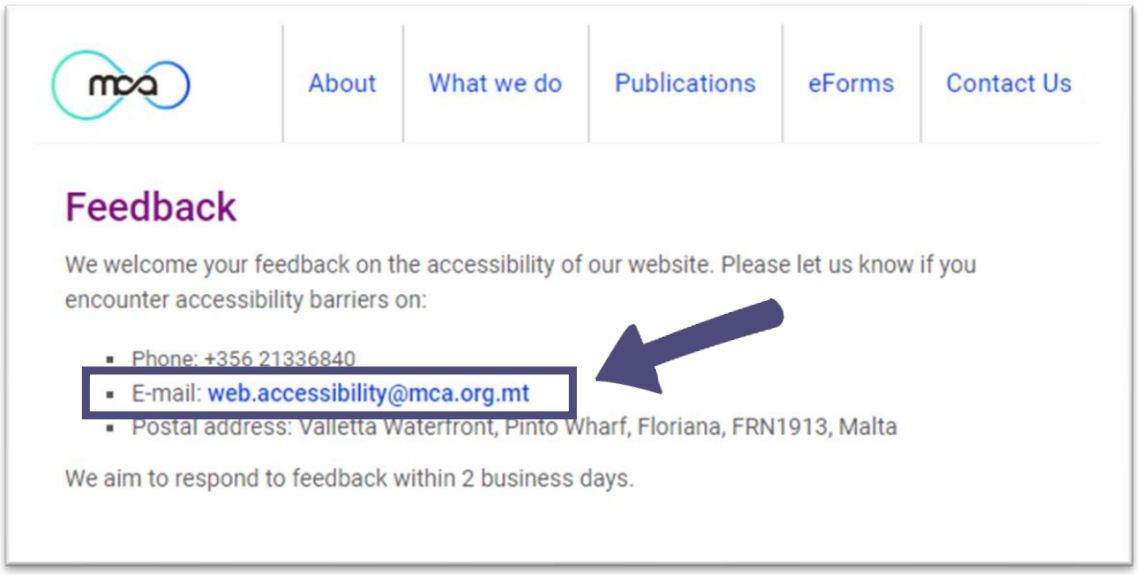
Providing a personal e-mail can create trust, and some users prefer writing to a person instead of sending a message to a functional e-mail. This quality can be further improved by adding a photo of the person receiving the e-mail. On the other hand, personal e-mails can also be problematic if the feedback is very negative or demanding. It also requires additional measures from the website owner when the person is sick, on vacation or has a full schedule.

The same applies for the person or team that receives phone calls with accessibility feedback.

Example

Location: Website of the Malta Communications Authority (accessed in May 2023)

https://www.mca.org.mt/page/accessibility



Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the accessibility of our website. Please let us know if you encounter accessibility barriers on:

- Phone: +356 21336840
- E-mail: web.accessibility@mca.org.mt
- Postal address: Valletta Waterfront, Pinto Wharf, Floriana, FRN1913, Malta

We aim to respond to feedback within 2 business days.

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to E-mail and Phone Feedback group
General e-mail address / phone number

15. General e-mail address / phone number

If the feedback goes to a general e-mail address (or phone number), it is explained how it gets to the right person/team.

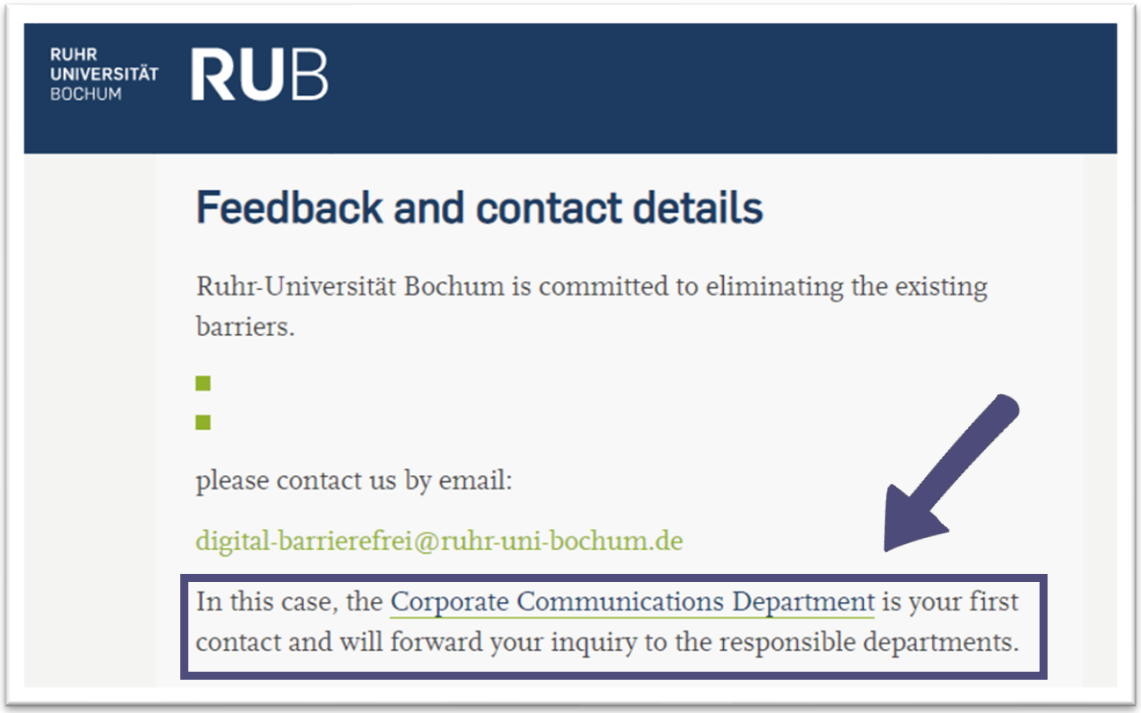
As the user does not know where an e-mail sent to a general e-mail address ends up, or when it gets to the right hands, it is reassuring to provide these details when describing the feedback mechanism.

The same applies for the person or team that receives phone calls with accessibility feedback.

Example

Location: Ruhr-University Bochum website (accessed in May 2023)

» https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/en/accessibility



Feedback and contact details

Ruhr-Universität Bochum is committed to eliminating the existing barriers.

…

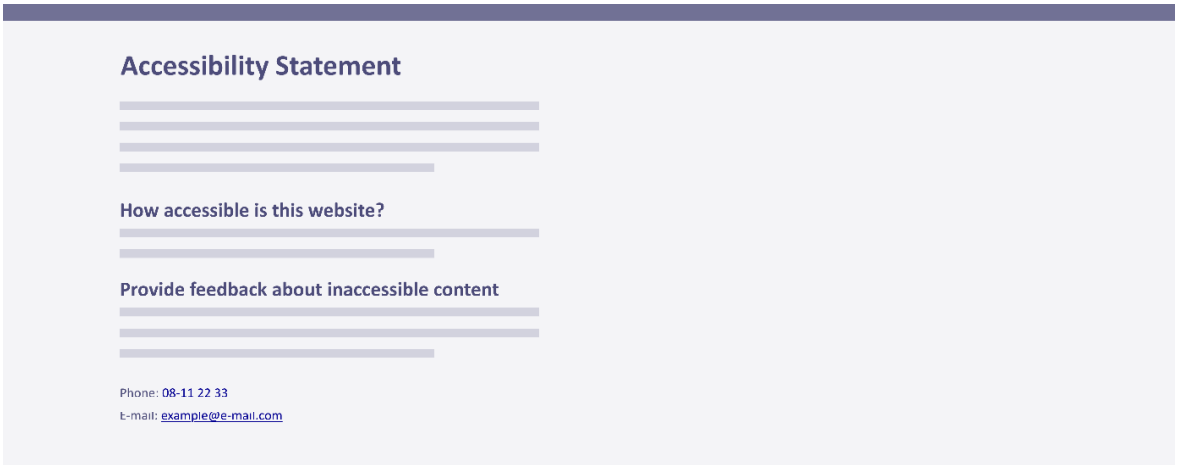
please contact us by email:

digital-barrierefrei@ruhr-uni-bochum.de

In this case, the Corporate Communications Department is your first contact and will forward your inquiry to the responsible departments.

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to E-mail and Phone Feedback group
E-mail address format

16. E-mail address format



The e-mail address is provided as a clickable link.

Providing an e-mail address as a hyperlink makes it easier for the user to launch a feedback e-mail, without the need to copy the address and paste it into the e-mail.

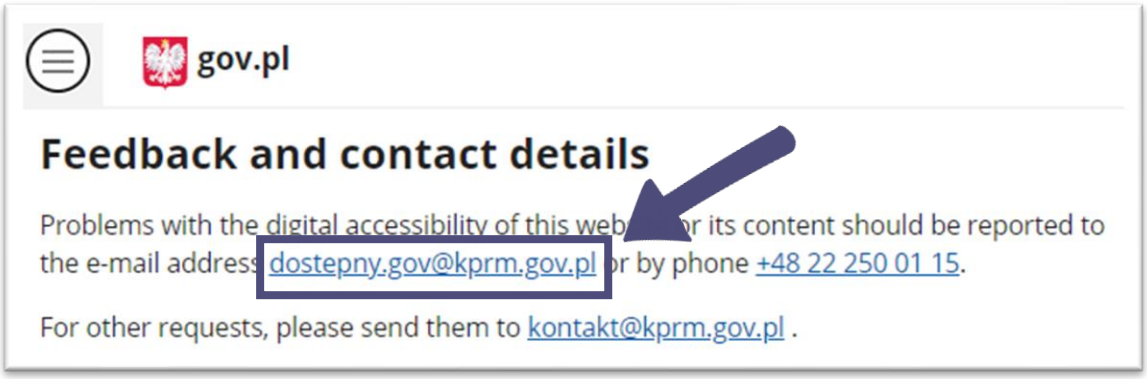
The practice of changing the “@” sign to “at”, for example, creates difficulties for some users. As one example: the difference is not perceivable for screen reader users.

Not using the “@” sign puts on the user the burden of avoiding spam. Instead, spam filters and other backend solutions should be used to solve the issue.

Example

Location: Government portal of Poland (accessed in May 2023, translated to English)

- https://www.gov.pl/web/gov/deklaracja-dostepnosci-serwisu-govpl



Feedback and contact details

Problems with the digital accessibility of this website or its content should be reported to the e-mail address dostepny.gov@kprm.gov.pl or by phone +48 22 250 01 15.

For other requests, please send them to kontakt@kprm.gov.pl.

[In the e-mail address, “dostepny” means accessibility.]

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to E-mail and Phone Feedback group
Competence to handle feedback call

17. Competence to handle feedback call

If the feedback channel uses a general phone number, the receiver has adequate knowledge to ask the user the necessary questions.

To get the necessary information from the user already in the first round, the person who receives the feedback call has tools that help them to ask the relevant and necessary questions. The users might not provide all the necessary details by themselves. This can be ensured by a well thought-through process, a manual or a template.

It is also important to train the receiver of the feedback call about how to communicate with persons with different disabilities, when that is necessary. This includes “disability etiquette”, using ways of communication that is empathic and helps understanding, as well as knowledge about how to reach disability services that can help (e.g. relay service).

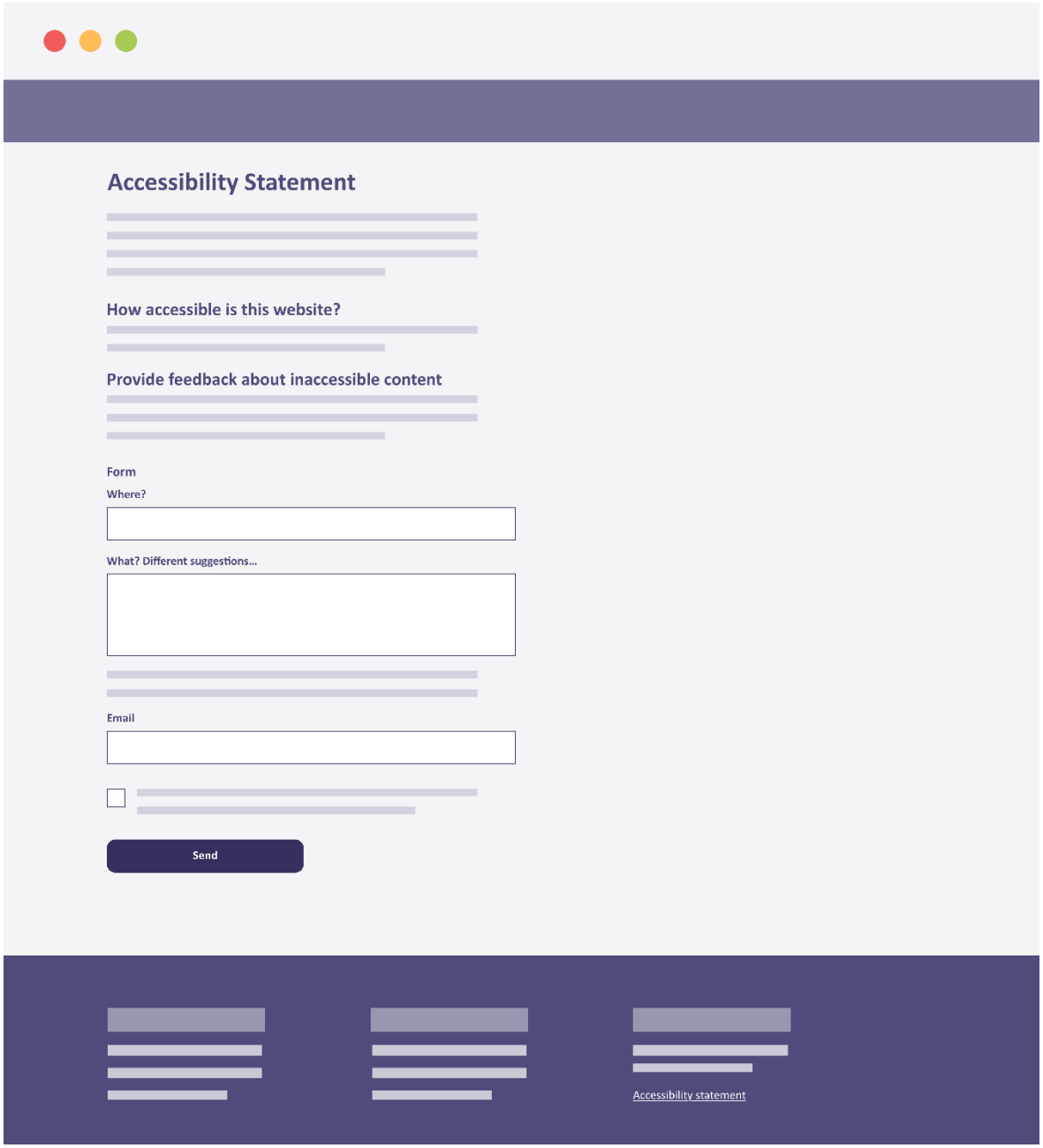
Back to List of Best Practices ⊕
Back to E-mail and Phone Feedback group ⊕
Best practices for Feedback Form ⊕

E. FEEDBACK FORM

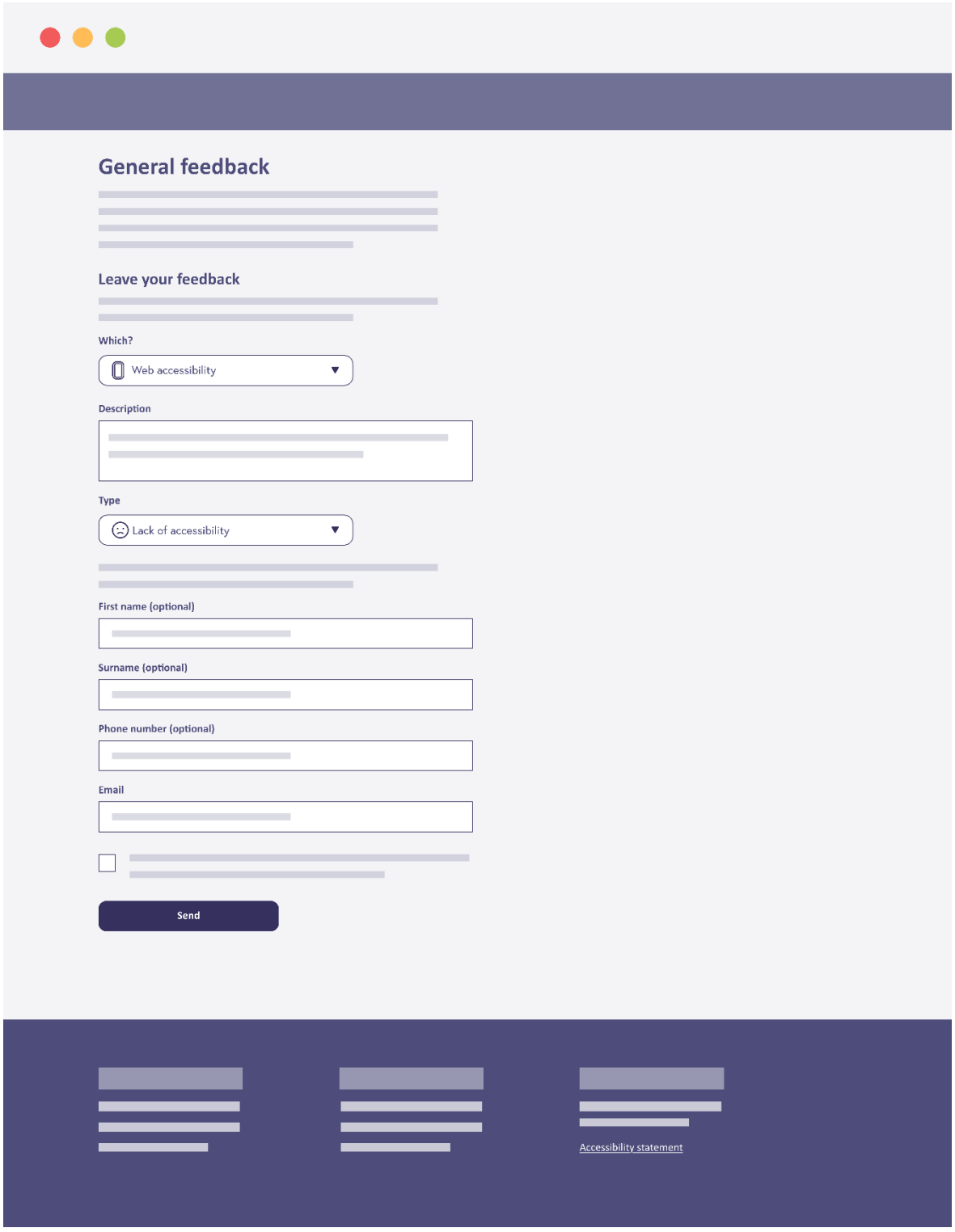
There are various types of feedback forms, from simple to complex, from generic to specific, from static to interactive, etc.

The three basic types are:

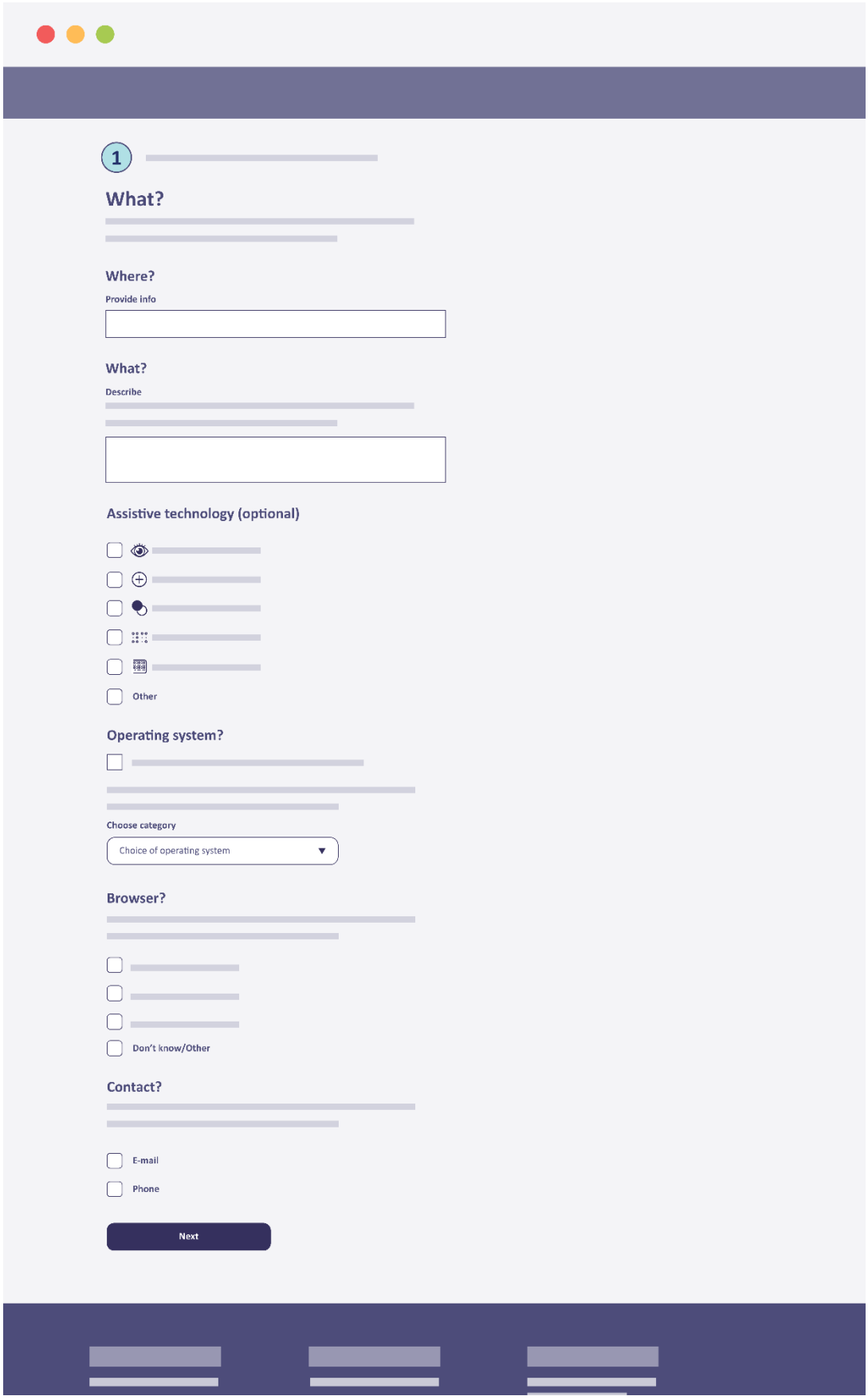
1. **Simple form, with text fields, providing basic structural guidance**



2. Complex form

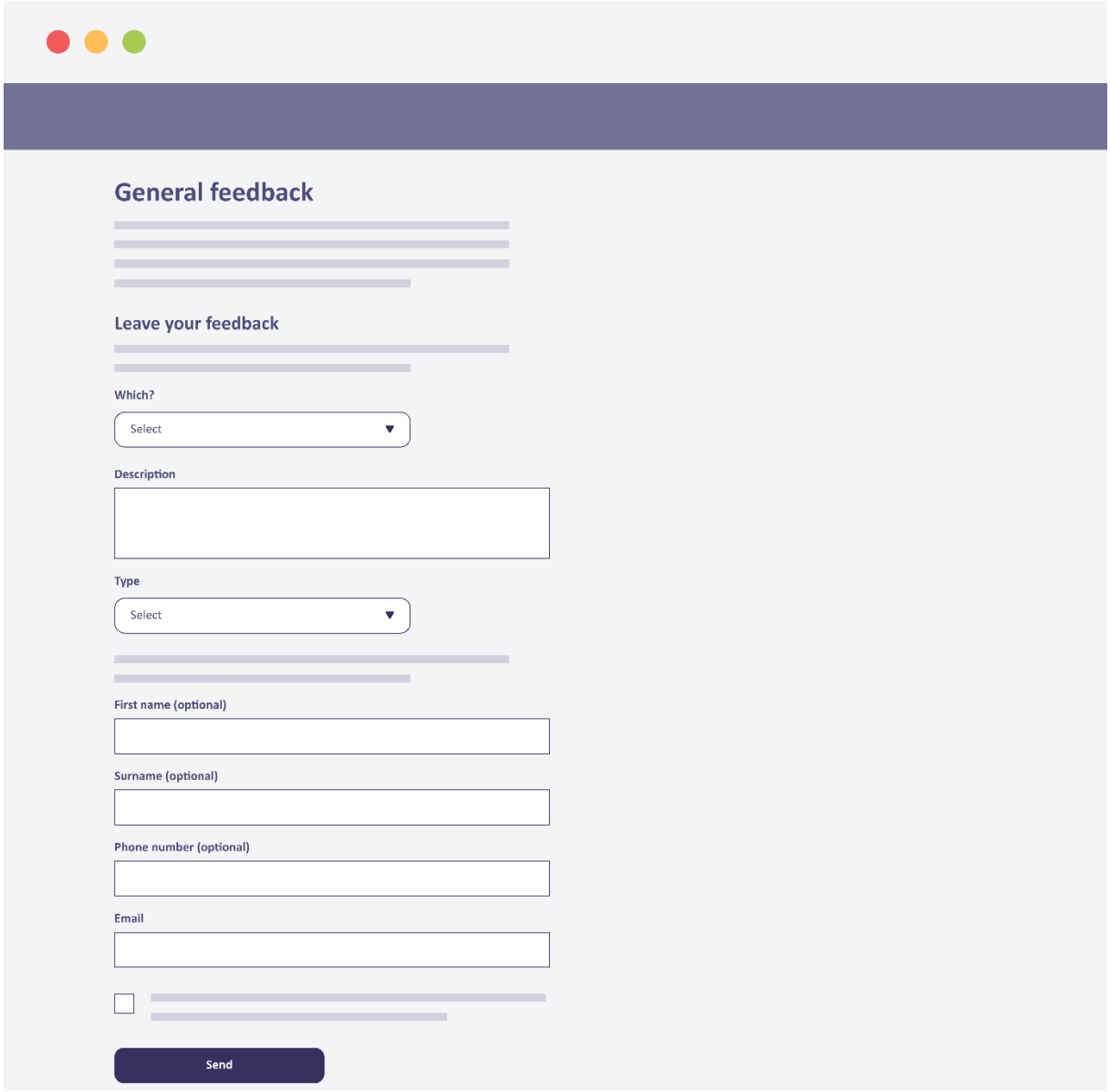


3. Complex, detailed form



In this section, you can find best practices relevant for all feedback forms.

18. Anonymity
19. Possibility to choose feedback subject
20. Possibility to attach files
21. Preferred response channel



Back to List of Best Practices

18. Anonymity

The consequences of giving anonymous feedback or the lack of the possibility to provide anonymous feedback are clearly explained.

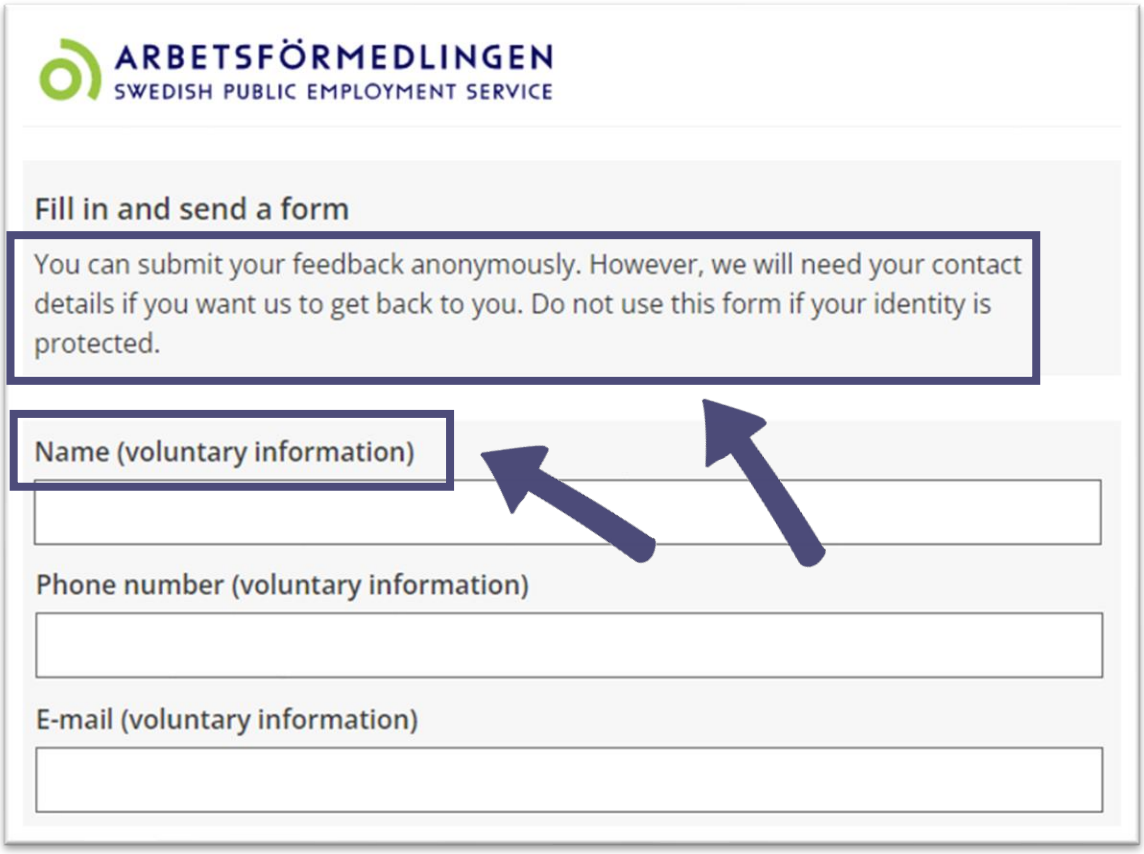
Users may want to be anonymous when giving their feedback. That does not go again the Web Accessibility Directive, even if the process in the directive favours dialogue. Therefore, it is important to clarify whether the feedback can or cannot be anonymous. If identification is necessary, it is beneficial to explain the reasons for why the user cannot give anonymous feedback.

If anonymous feedback is possible, the description should explain that it can create difficulties with the feedback and complaint process: it can restrict the possibilities to ask for more details from the user or to inform them that the issue has been solved. And it can also prevent the user from using their right to complain to a supervisory body.

Example

Location: Website of the Swedish Public Employment Service (accessed in May 2023)

- https://arbetsformedlingen.se/other-languages/english-engelska/contact/give-us-your-suggestions-and-feedback/feedback-about-digital-accessibility



Fill in and send a form

You can submit your feedback anonymously. However, we will need your contact details if you want us to get back to you. Do not use this form if your identity is protected.

…

Name (voluntary information)

Phone number (voluntary information)

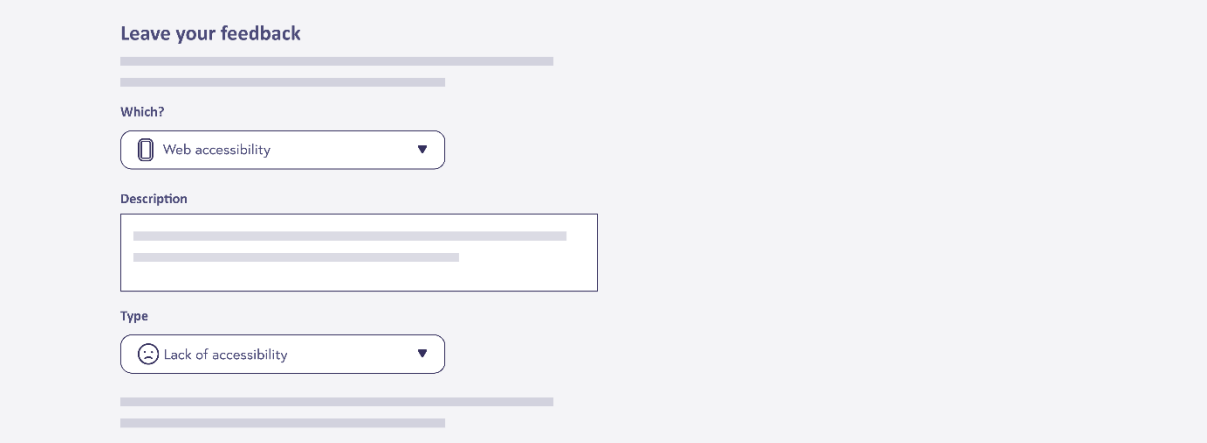
E-mail (voluntary information)

Back to List of Best Practices ⊕

Back to Feedback Form group ⊕

Possibility to choose feedback subject ⊕

19. Possibility to choose feedback subject



If the feedback form is used for all types of feedback, the user has the possibility to indicate that the subject of the feedback is accessibility.

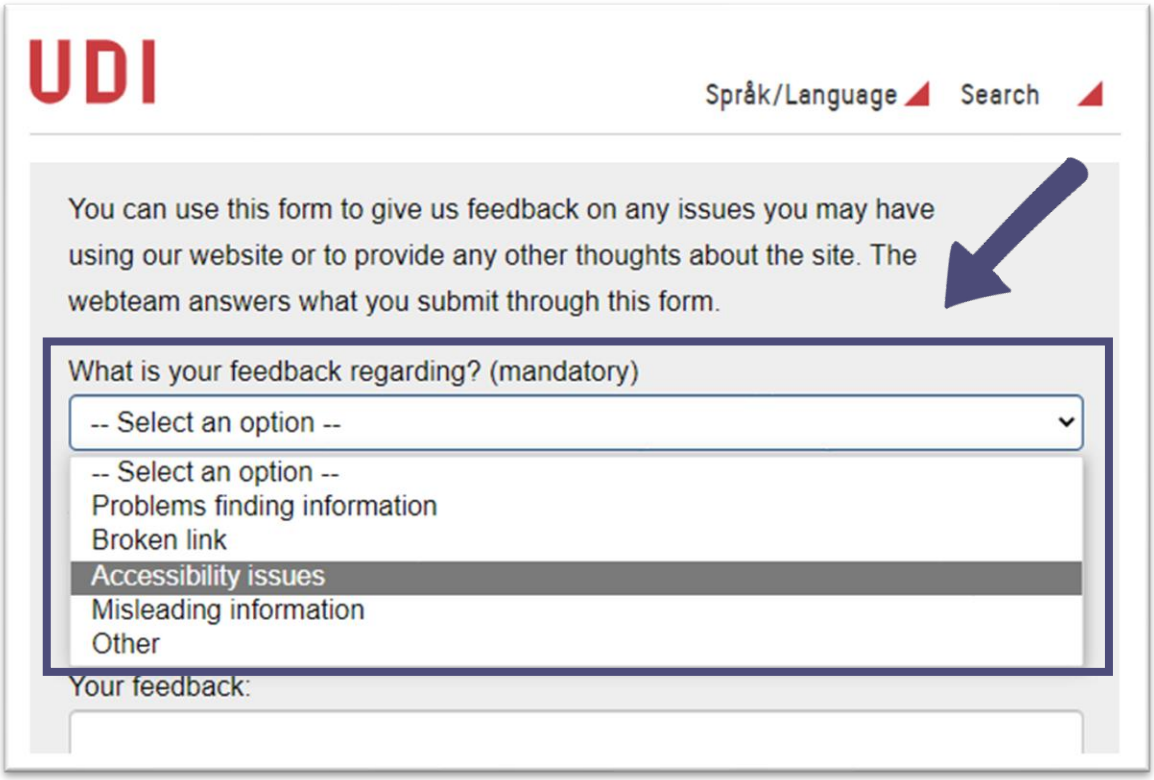
A menu where the user can select the subject of the feedback allows using a general feedback form for accessibility feedback, with the possibility to automatically directing the feedback to the right team.

It also reassures the user that the accessibility feedback will not be lost among all the other types of feedback, and that it gets to the right hands.

Example

Location: Website of the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (accessed in May 2023)

- https://udi.no/en/contact-us/other-contact-information/webteam-udi.no/



You can use this form to give us feedback on any issues you may have using our website or to provide any other thoughts about the site. The webteam answers what you submit through this form.

What is your feedback regarding? (mandatory)

Select an option:

- Problems finding information
- Broken link
- Accessibility issues
- Misleading information
- Other

Your feedback:

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to Feedback Form group
Possibility to attach files

20. Possibility to attach files

The user can attach files to provide details about the inaccessible content.

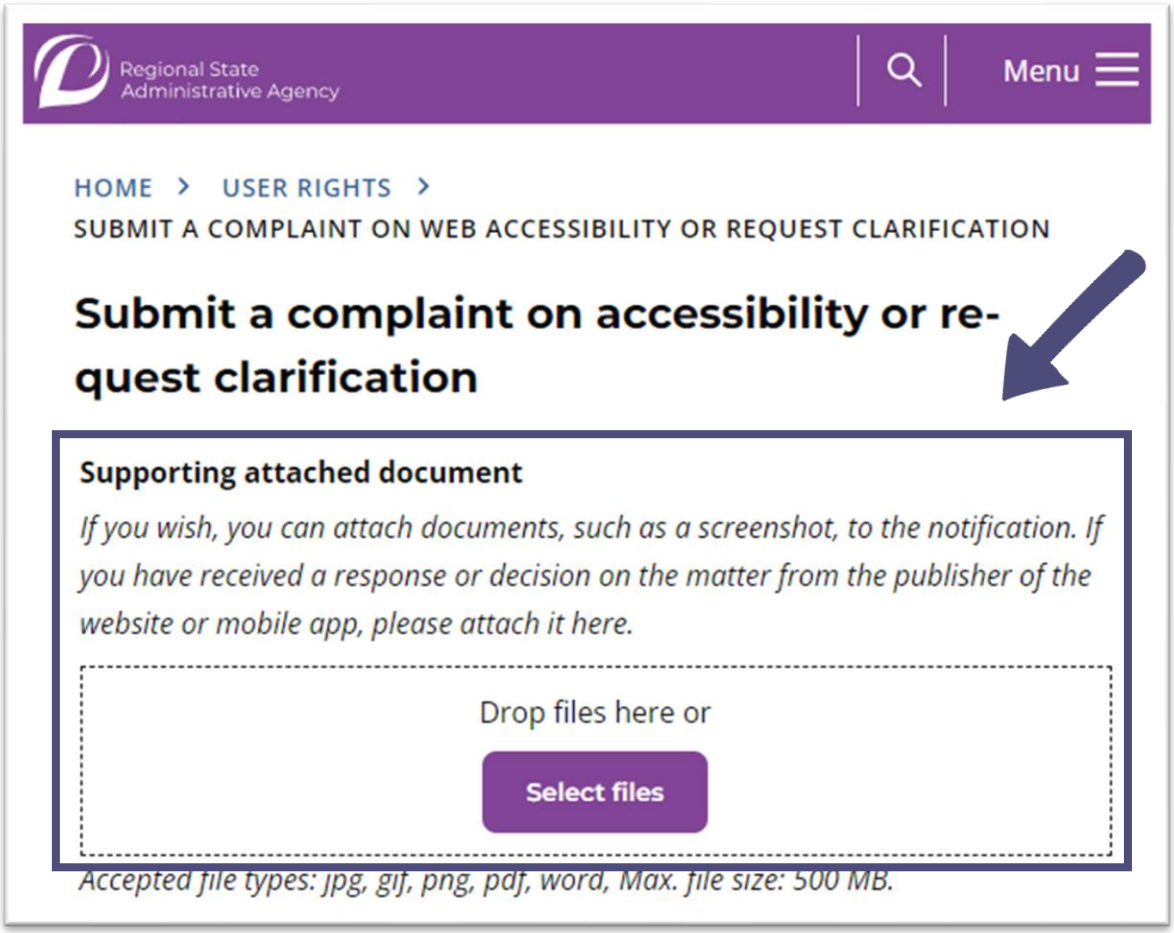
A file attachment can be useful in many ways. A screenshot or a screen recording can show the barrier the user met, or it can also be used to provide technical details (on the technical environment, assistive technology location of the page with an accessibility barrier) without having to type.

Providing the possibility to attach a voice or video recording can also facilitate communication for the user. For example, a deaf user can upload their feedback as a video with sign language.

Example

Location: Website of the Finnish Regional State Administrative Agency (accessed in May 2023)

- https://www.webaccessibility.fi/rights-of-users/submit-a-complaint-on-web-accessibility-or-request-clarification/



Submit a complaint on web accessibility or request clarification

Supporting attached document

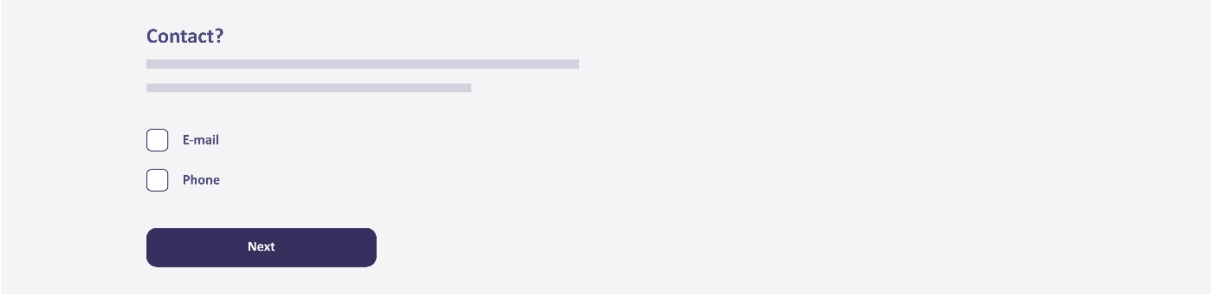
If you wish, you can attach documents, such as a screenshot, to the notification. If you have received a response or decision on the matter from the publisher of the website or mobile app, please attach it here.

Drop files here or Select files

Accepted file types: jpg, gif, png, pdf, word, Max. file size: 500 MB.

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to Feedback Form group
Preferred response channel

21. Preferred response channel



The users are asked about their preferred channel for follow-up communication.

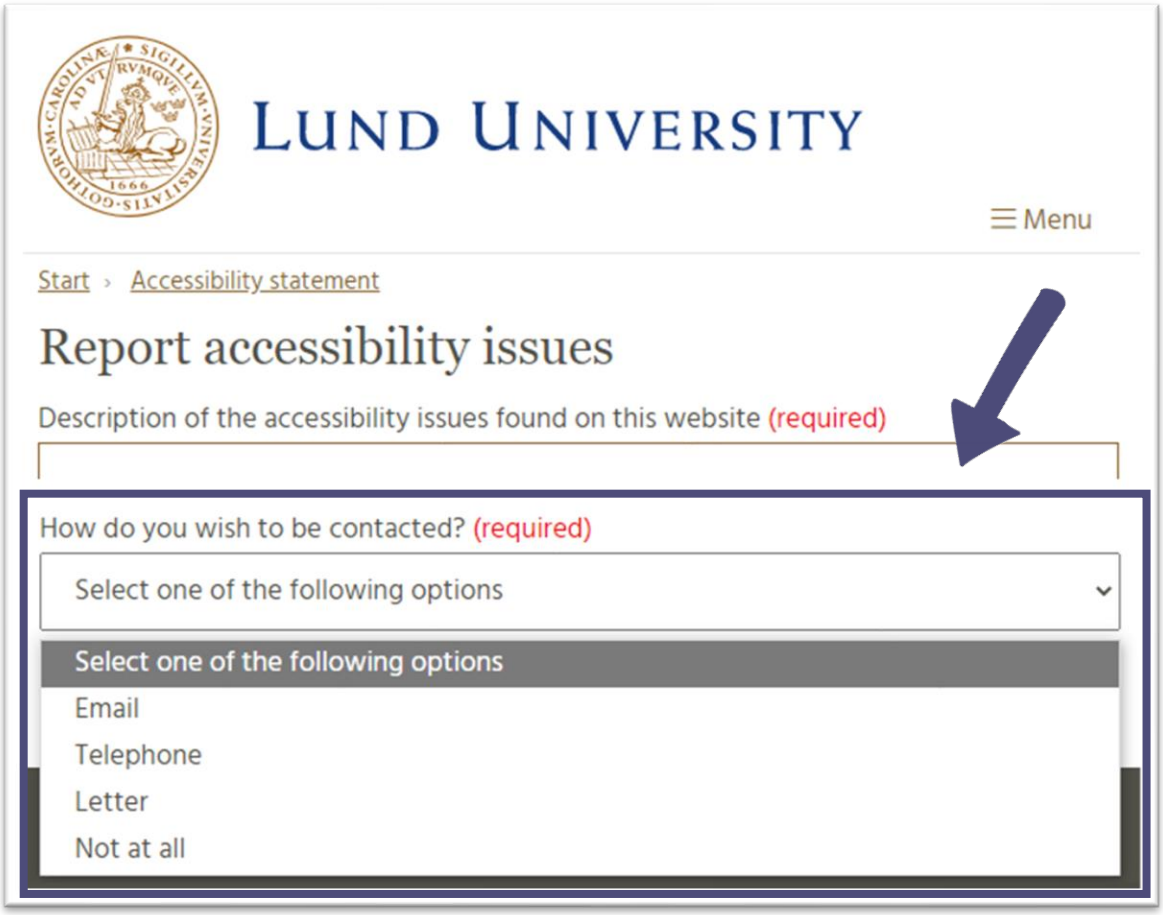
In order to maintain good communication with the user, it is practical to ask the user whether they want to be contacted, and ask about their preferred channel of communication (e.g. e-mail, phone, videochat).

The website owner can use it for contacting them either to inquire about further details regarding the accessibility issue, or to inform the user about fixing it.

Example

Location: Website of the Swedish Lund University (accessed in May 2023)

» https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/accessibilitystatement/contact



Report accessibility issues

Description of the accessibility issues found on this website (required)

…

How do you wish to be contacted? (required)

Select one of the following options

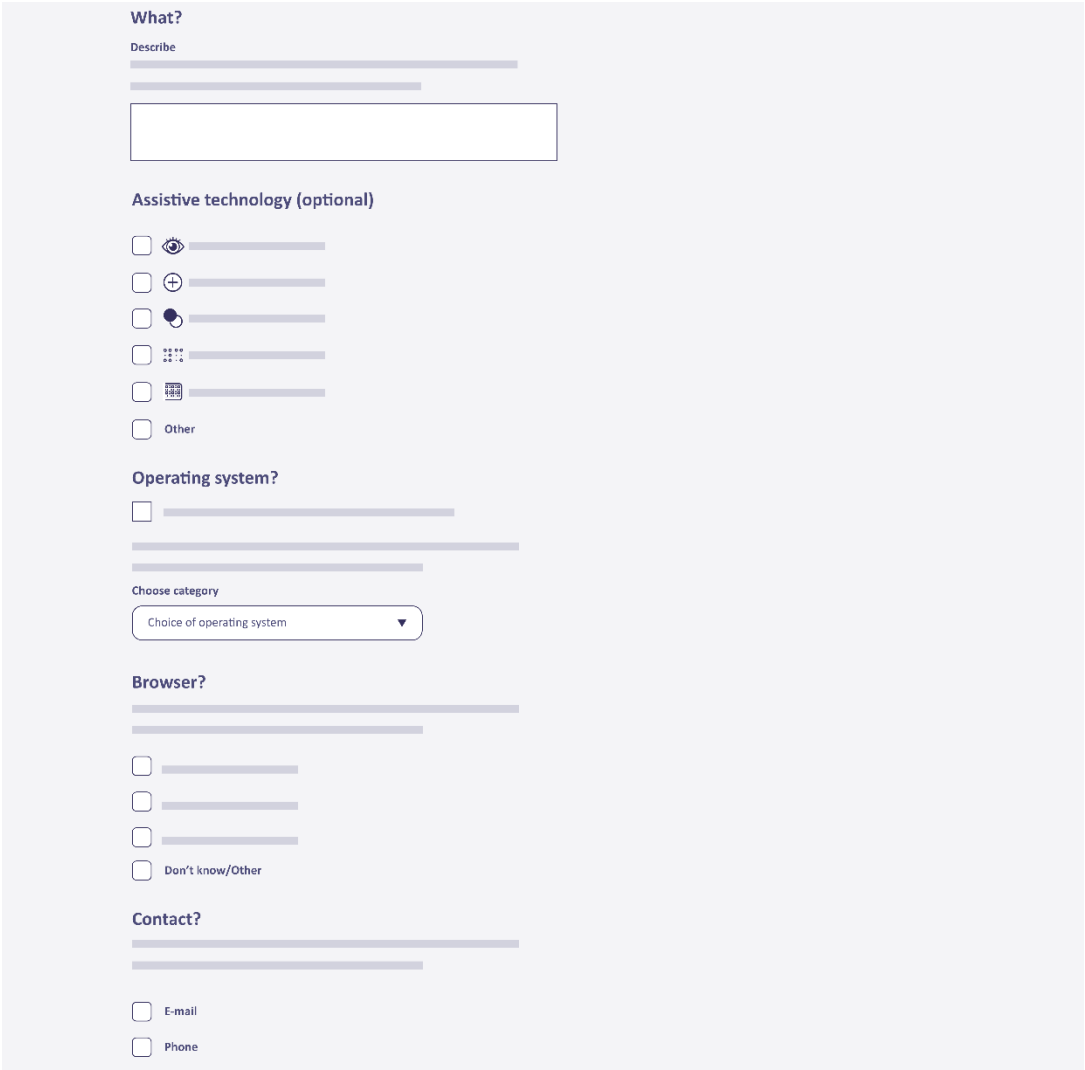
- Email
- Telephone
- Letter
- Not at all

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to Feedback Form group
Best practices for Complex Feedback Form

F. COMPLEX FEEDBACK FORM

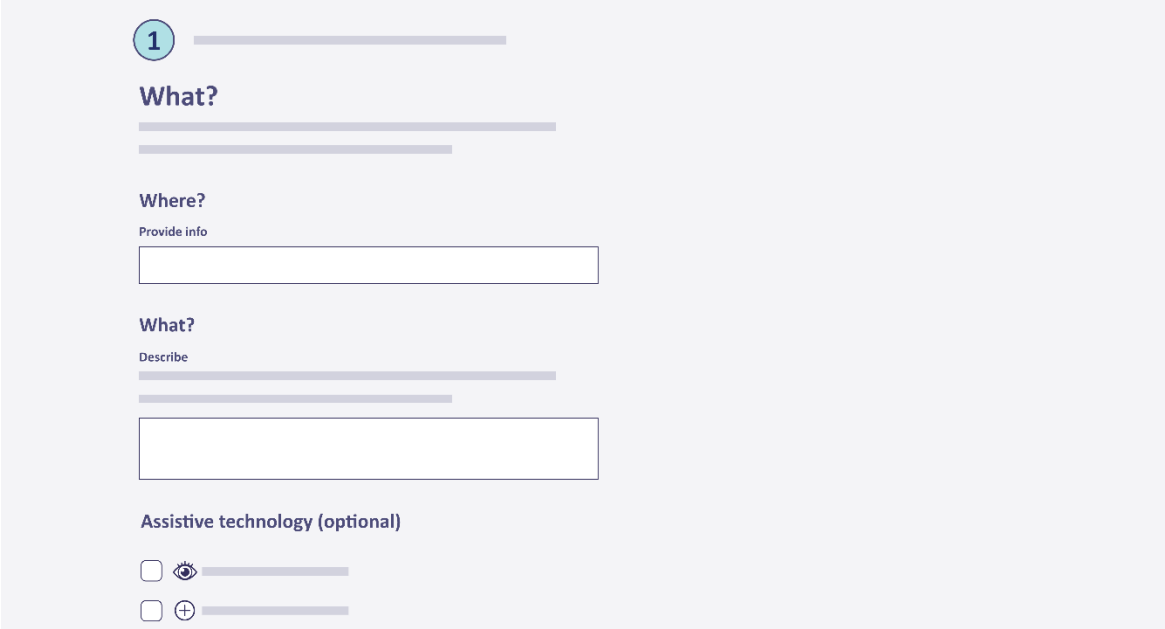
Here you can find best practices for complex forms.

22. Structured form ➔
23. Listing options ➔
24. Multi-level form ➔



Back to List of Best Practices ➔

22. Structured form



The structure of the form is logical and easy to understand.

In a well structured form the questions guide the user through the feedback process. They are easy to understand, follow a logical order and explanation is provided for the questions or technical details where clarification can be useful.

Example

Location: Website of the Swedish Lund University (accessed in May 2023)

» https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/accessibilitystatement/contact

LUND UNIVERSITY

Menu

Start › Accessibility statement

Report accessibility issues

Description of the accessibility issues found on this website (required)

Report accessibility issues – describe your problem and your needs.

Link to webpage with examples of accessibility issues (required)

This must be an external URL such as *http://example.com*.

Accessibility aids used, if applicable

If the lack of accessibility is due to the site not working with an accessibility aid you use, please describe it here and which aid it is

Which operating system and web browser do you use?

How do you wish to be contacted? (required)

Select one of the following options

Send message

Report accessibility issues

Description of the accessibility issues found on this website (required)

[text field]

Instruction: Report accessibility issues – describe your problem and your needs.

Link to webpage with examples of accessibility issues (required)

[text field]

Instruction: This must be an external URL such as http://example.com.

Accessibility aids used, if applicable

[text field]

Instruction: If the lack of accessibility is due to the site not working with an accessibility aid you use, please describe it here and which aid it is

Which operating system and web browser do you use?

[text field]

How do you wish to be contacted? (required)

Select one of the following options

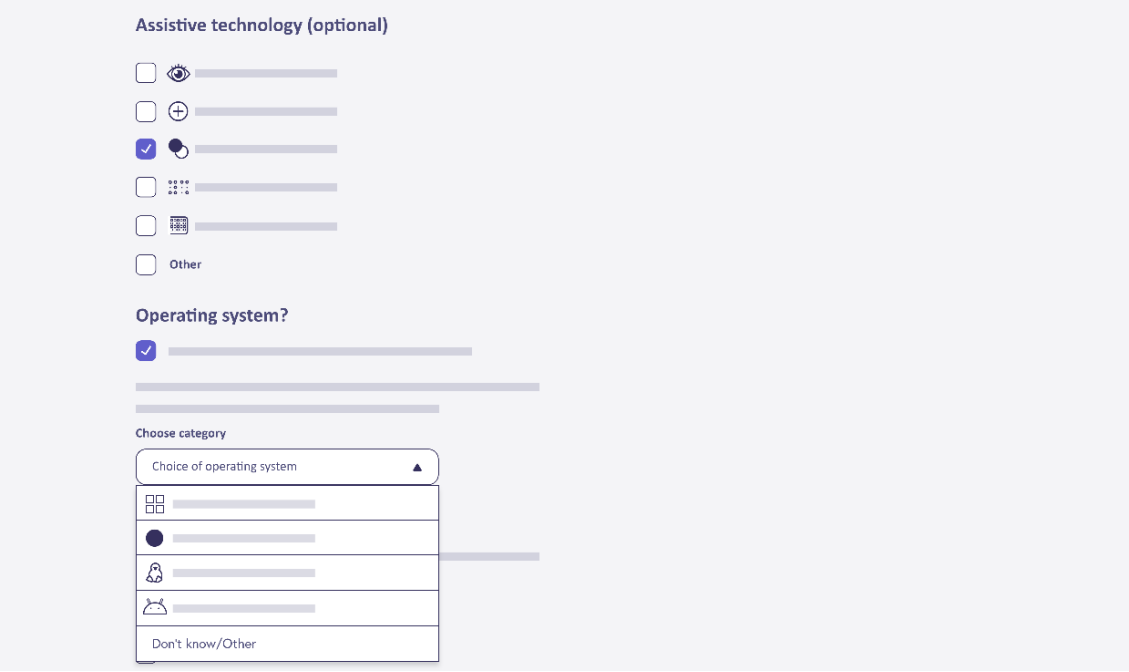
Send message

Back to List of Best Practices ⊕

Back to Complex Feedback Form group ⊕

Listing options ⊕

23. Listing options



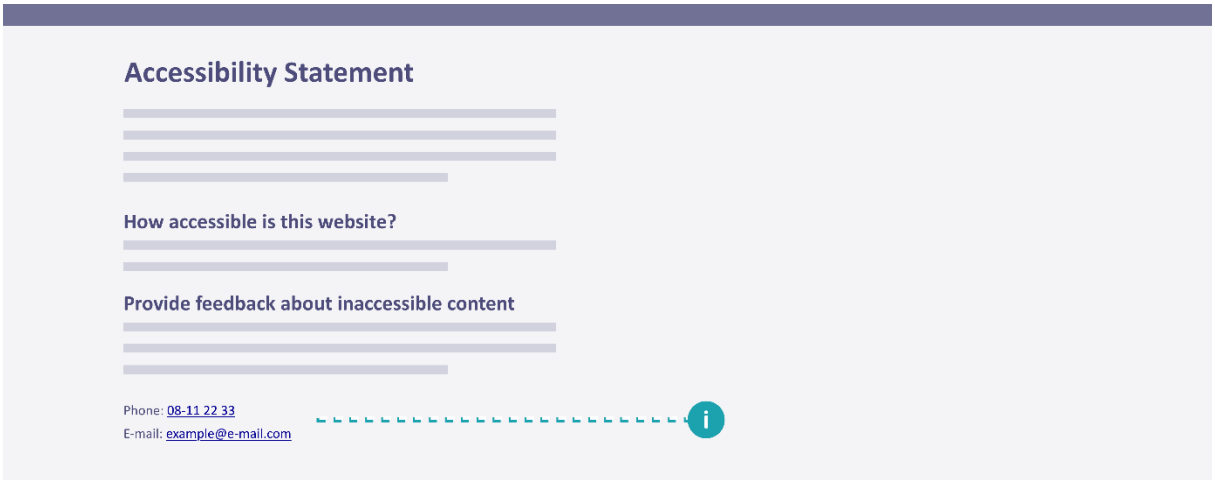
The form lists answer options where the user can choose among a closed number of possibilities.

Pre-established answer options (e.g. listing operating systems or assistive technologies) help the user providing the correct information: using the adequate expressions and the right category for certain details. An “Other” option should be provided, in case the list does not cover the user’s situation, the user prefers to express themselves differently, or add further details.

At the same time, a form should also have free text fields, to provide for describing aspects that are not covered by pre-defined answers, and to ensure that the user can write free text feedback, if that is their preference.

Back to List of Best Practices ⊕
Back to Complex Feedback Form group ⊕
Multi-level form ⊕

24. Multi-level form



If the form asks questions that need a higher level of technical knowledge, they are voluntary and asked in a separate section.

Feedback forms that aim for well-detailed feedback should also be usable for feedback by persons with less technical knowledge. Therefore, questions encouraging expert users to provide higher-level details should ideally be in an additional, voluntary field/section; or otherwise, they should be easy to skip. It should be made clear that it is all right not to answer those questions.

Back to List of Best Practices
Back to Complex Feedback Form group
Best practices for Response to Feedback

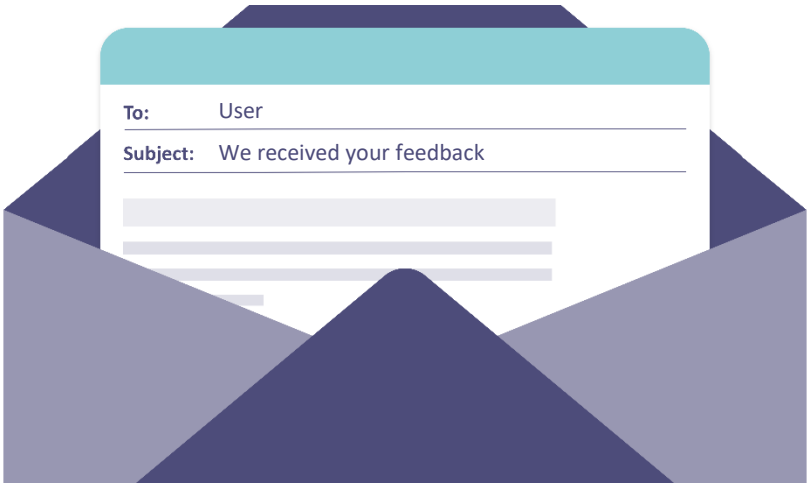
G. RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

This last section lists best practices for after receiving the feedback.

25. Confirmation of receipt
26. Details in the reply
27. Contacting the user
28. Information on fixed content
29. Follow-up possibility

Back to List of Best Practices

25. Confirmation of receipt



The user gets an automated confirmation that the website owner received the feedback.

It is crucial that the user gets a response to their feedback. This can happen in various phases of the feedback process. First, when confirming the reception of the feedback.

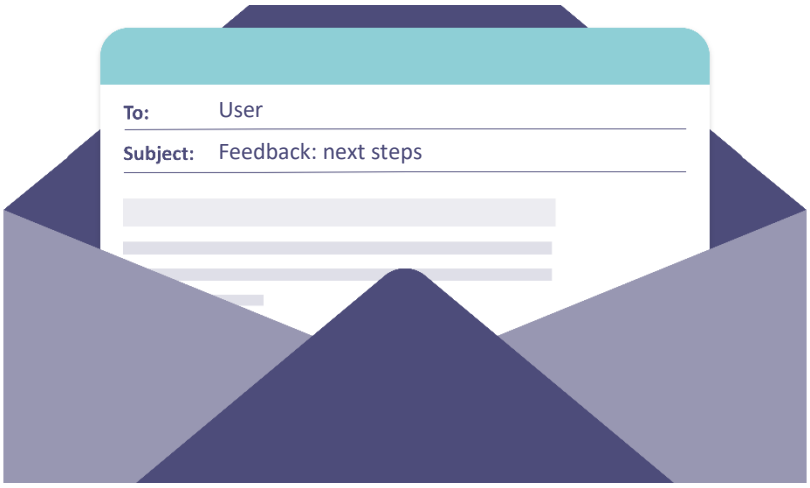
Setting up an automated response for the feedback received through the feedback mechanism has many advantages: users can be reassured that their feedback is sent, and they also have a written record of that. A confirmation of receipt also suggests that the public sector body cares about the feedback and intends to handle the accessibility issue.

For a higher quality reply, the response may include (the summary of) the user's feedback, and the generally expected response time.

Some organisations use a ticketing system to keep track of the feedback and of its handling, and they usually come with an auto-response function.

Back to List of Best Practices ⊕
Back to Response to Feedback group ⊕
Details in the reply ⊕

26. Details in the reply



The user receives a reply about what the next steps are and by when the issue is expected to be fixed – if this is known to the website owner.

Either already the confirmation of receipt or a later reply can share details about the subsequent steps, the possibilities to follow-up on the status of the feedback and the expected timeline for fixing the issue. While the confirmation of receipt may include only generic information, a later reply can be adjusted to the issue at hand.

If the Accessibility statement already describes the next steps and establishes a timeline, the details in the reply should aim to be in line with those. (See also Best Practice 9: Description of next steps and timeline ⊕.)

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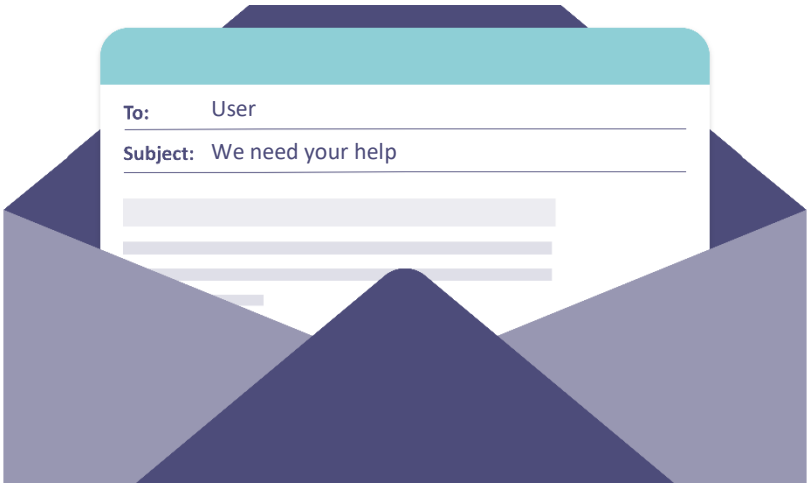
Contacting the user ⊕

27. Contacting the user



Users are contacted for further information, if they have asked for it or if it is necessary for solving the issue – with the consent of the user.

If the user does not share all the necessary details, contacting the user for further information can help. Some users ask for being contacted for further details, and are happy to discuss the barrier, to help finding the best solution, or even to test it.

On the other hand, it can also happen, that the user does not want to spend more time with the feedback and is not willing to have further contact, which should be respected.

When contacting the user, the public sector body should use the preferred contact channel. (See also Best Practice 20: Preferred response channel ➔.)

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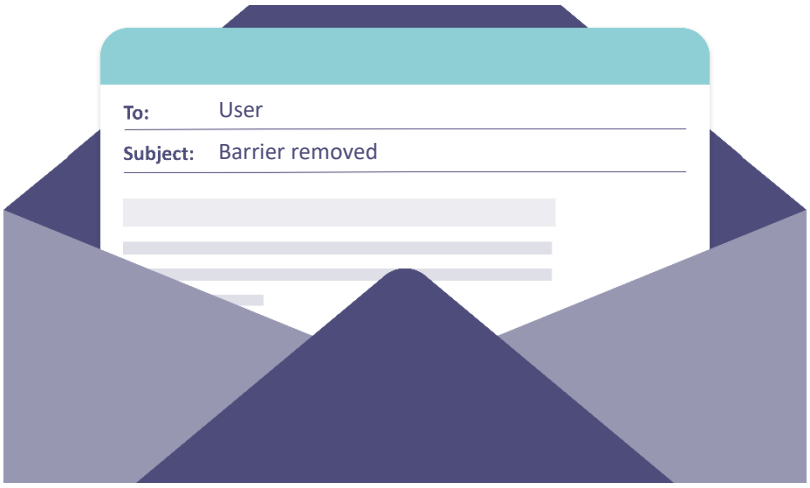
Information on fixed content ➔

28. Information on fixed content



The user receives information when the accessibility issue has been fixed.

When the accessibility issue has been fixed, it is important to notify the user that gave the feedback. On the one hand, it publicises the action and the commitment of the website owner, on the other hand, it gives an opportunity to the user to test the solution, and probably to let the website owner know whether it works properly.

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Follow-up possibility

29. Follow-up possibility

Users can follow the status of their feedback online.

Some users like to be informed about the status of their feedback. If the public sector body uses a ticketing system to handle feedback, as a highly transparent solution, it can provide access to the user to view the status of their feedback.

This increases the trust of the user in the feedback mechanism, and potentially leads to providing more useful feedback.

Furthermore, this way, the user can follow the process of fixing the accessibility issue and may provide further, helpful information.

At the same time, this transparent setup can grant visibility to the efforts of the website owner.

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THE ORGANISATIONS BEHIND THE REPOSITORY

European Blind Union

EBU is a non-governmental, non-profit-making European organisation founded in 1984. One of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union, it represents the interests of 30 million blind and partially sighted persons at European level EBU aims to protect and promote the interests of all blind and partially sighted persons in Europe and works towards an accessible and inclusive society with equal rights and opportunities for them to fully participate in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life.

Funka

Funka was started in the 1990s as a joint, non-profit initiative among all disability organisations in Sweden. The knowledge, staff and technology of the non-profit was turned into a privately owned company in 2000. Today, Funka is market leader in the field of accessibility and enjoys a close relationship to end user organisations, ensuring a unique level of quality control.

SYNTHESIS Center for Research & Education

SYNTHESIS Center for Research and Education is a pioneering organisation which initiates and implements projects of social impact, with a focus on social inclusion and integration of people with fewer opportunities. SYNTHESIS is the leading organisation in Cyprus in the fields of social entrepreneurship and social innovation.

TU Dortmund University

TUD participates in the project with the Department of Technology in Rehabilitation, which is part of the research cluster Technology, Inclusion, Participation. Research and teaching focus on new technologies, digitalization processes, assistive technologies and accessibility and their use to support people with disabilities.