



Prepared For:
Develop losco

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Website Review

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Website Review: Develop Iosco (Develop Iosco)

<https://develop-iosco.org/>

The following website assessment breaks down the question of website quality and efficacy into five areas:

- Visuals
- Messaging and Content
- Tools
- Usability
- Social Media Presence

Within each of these areas there are a number of recommended best practices, and the website has been assessed for its compliance with these practices. Explanatory notes are included to clarify the findings, and in some cases to suggest alternatives.

Color coding is used to indicate general performance:

- Good
- Moderate
- Weak
- Poor

Visuals

The visual aspects of a website set the tone for the site and strongly influence the user's perception of the site, data, and organization behind it. Presenting information in a graphical fashion makes it easier to process and retain, and – since approximately 65% of people are visual learners – this method will also positively affect an audience's ability to understand the message being conveyed.

The aesthetic of the Develop losco site is bright and colorful, though – after the immediate impression of the brand – the look of the site is fairly generic. The plentiful use of white space is appealing, but has led to some areas around text feeling formless and sloppy. The general take-away from the site is that there is nothing particular to take away - nothing is emphasized and everything is homogenized, so the visitor is left with no lingering impression of what Develop losco is or does or would like them to do.

Economic Development Website Visual Best Practices	Develop losco Performance	
Focus on first impression	✘	The above-the-fold impression of the homepage is cheerful and friendly, but too content-dense. A single message needs to be selected and made the sole focus for the user's first view of the site.
Design and populate each section of the site with a clear purpose and next step for the user to take	✘	<p>The repetitive usage of a three-column block layout with an image and text for almost everything on the site tends to homogenize the pages. Nothing feels like a starting point for engaging with the content on any page, so users may choose not to engage at all.</p> <p>The pages with a layout other than the columnar-block are a refreshing and welcome change, though the lack of unique content on such pages damages this impression.</p>
Use white space deliberately, to direct and generate user interest	✔	The site makes good use of white space; however, paired with excessive centered text from the repetitive columnar-block layouts, many sections of the site go beyond the visual rest of white space and begin directing the user's eye away from the content and into the white space, which contributes to the lack of engagement with the content.
Keep design and layouts consistent throughout the site	✔	The design is consistent throughout.

for a uniform and branded user experience.		
Design to accommodate flexible needs and priorities	✓	The general template appears to accommodate the necessary variety. The columnar-block layouts appear semi-flexible, as multiple rows can be added; however, it does appear to have placed a limitation that new sections come in threes.
Incorporate images throughout the site	✓	Images are used throughout the site to enrich the user's experience. Unfortunately they do not always match the topic of the page and in those cases distract from the content. The photo used for the homepage banner appears to be a very urban image; this creates an inaccurate impression of the region (or the implication of a pretense).
Include infographics of data throughout	✗	No true infographics were locatable on the site.
Include a map on the homepage to give visitors an overview of relative location and important proximities	✗	There is a small map on the homepage, but the artwork is not in keeping with the Develop losco brand or the design of the site. A larger map features on the business Reasons Why page, but is similarly lacking in branding/design. The scale of it also leads the user to expect more informative details which it does not offer. (It does link to a Google map where to user can find more traditional map data, but this could have been embedded on the page and saved the user having to guess it might be available and taking that extra step.)
Target Industry information should be presented visually, including infographics for key statistics	✗	No target industries are clearly called out and identified on the site.
Incorporate video where possible	✗	No videos were found/noticed on the site.
Incorporate movement to attract the eye to key information	✗	Movement/animation were negligible in the site.

Utilize interactive maps highlighting successful international investors	✘	No interactive maps were locatable on the site.
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Messaging and Content

A website needs to have a clear purpose which the user can easily distinguish, and the information and messaging needs to be sufficient for the user to find what they need. Determining the essential information to be conveyed by the site and then organizing and presenting it to the user can be the difference between a visitor who stays on the site and pursues an opportunity, and the visitor who gives up and goes elsewhere.

The Develop losco site content is incomplete as many pages feature some or exclusively placeholder content. The text content of the site – where it exists – seems generally well-written and curated to not come in overwhelming amounts, but it's not very engaging and is all presented in the same way (grids of images and text). This is a great method of breaking up sections of extensive content to make it more consumable, but since the content is mostly high-level overviews of a wide variety of topics, this approach would only work if the primary audience is someone who knows they want one piece of info and just wants to find it quickly. Content depth and layout needs to be more varied if the goal is to engage a more casual site visitor.

While we attempt to restrict content-related comments to the unique content on the site, it should be noted that the presence of placeholder text is pervasive and significantly contributes to an overall poor impression.

Economic Development Website Messaging/ Content Best Practices	Develop losco Performance	
Utilize header banners to focus on key messaging calls-to-action	✓	The homepage does feature a banner with a text message and a call-to-action. However, the text 'We Are Updated and On the Move' isn't particularly engaging overall, and particularly when combined with the banner photo behind it. When the user begins to see the age of the content on the site and how it appears to have stagnated, this message becomes more ironic than anything else.
Make reasons to do business prominent	✗	There is a Reasons Why page in the business section of the site, but it is not particularly prominent, and its content is all placeholders.
Make staff contact information available and prominent, and preferably with staff photos to put a face on the organization	✗	No staff information or organization contact info appears to be available on the site. The board president and vice president are named on the homepage, and there is a contact form available on the site.

Highlight key sites and buildings, as well as trade or development zones	✘	No highlighted sites or zones were locatable on the site.
Provide property and site information to support investor exploration of potential property or opportunities available to them	✘	No property information was locatable on the site.
Promote specific investible opportunity information to support investor exploration	✘	No information on available business opportunities or where to find them was available on the site.
Provide comprehensive data within each targeted sector	✘	No data was locatable on the site, by industry or otherwise.
Include statistics on the homepage which highlight features and benefits of the area.	✘	No statistics illustrating the benefits of investment were locatable on the homepage.
Consider organizing a marketing plan for posting consistent news content.	✘	The content on the DI News section of the site did not appear to be news related, and was significantly (years) out of date.
Success stories are a key marketing aspect of a successful economic development site and should be aligned with targeted industry sectors, highlighting successful employers within the sector	✘	No success story content was locatable on the site.
Showcase businesses which are available to support business growth and development	✘	There is no locatable presence of business support resources on the site. The homepage includes text lists of member organizations who may be extrapolated to be of some support to those interested in business development.
Maintain content to be accurate, up-to-date, and functional	✘	The site includes placeholder text throughout, and time-sensitive materials are dated 2018 and 2019.

Avoid empty or under-populated pages. Each page should have a clear purpose and content which conveys its message.

✘

Multiple pages throughout the site have only placeholder text, and many more have a mix of unique and placeholder text.

Tools

A website needs to enable visitors to find the information they need, and also to facilitate visitors being able to use and retain that information. A website should also make it easy and efficient for the organization running it to keep the site current. Functional tools with intuitive interfaces which facilitate workflows should be utilized.

The Develop losco site is basic, which means there are not many tools available. The up side of this is that there is less scope for anything to malfunction or be unintuitive, but the downside is that the user has less help and encouragement to engage with the content and progress towards doing business in the region.

Economic Development Website Tools Best Practices		Develop losco Performance
Offer universal site reporting	✘	No universal reporting tool was locatable in the site.
Integrate lead tracking for more aggressive lead generation	✘	There is no indication of more extensive lead tracking tools integrated on the site. Knowing who is visiting the website supports lead generation and validates marketing efforts.
Organize available incentives into a searchable directory	✘	While some tools and programs were noted as existing in lists in the site, no detail about any of these options was provided, nor was there a centralized source to review all possible options.
Utilize HTTPS	✔	HTTPS is used on the site.
If supportable, a live chat tool can increase engagement	✘	There is no locatable presence of a chat tool on the site.
Include a website search tool	✘	No search tool was locatable on the site.

Usability

Because of the multitude of devices on which the internet can be accessed, it is increasingly important for a website to be built to accommodate the widest possible array of platforms, and for all users to have as consistent access to the site's content as possible.

The visitor's access to content of interest is a significant weakness of the Develop losco site, due to the lack of a centralized and comprehensive menu or site map. Users may entirely miss relevant content and never know it. Problems with content responsiveness are an issue as well; although these issues will only affect the segment of audience using mobile devices to access the site, that represents the fastest-growing segment of the web audience.

Economic Development Website Usability Best Practices	Develop losco Performance	
Ensure responsive design is used for support on all device types (computers, tablets, phones, etc.)	✓	The site templates have been built to be responsive. The treatment and layout of the content within the site – while entirely usable – could have a little more thought put into how the tablet and smartphone user's experience could be improved.
Consistent navigation throughout the site (menus, buttons, etc.)	✓	The site's navigation is consolidated into a single menu system which is available in a consistent location and is usable on all screen sizes.
Organize key information and materials into tools which can be searched wholesale or filtered by relevant sector	✗	No tools for organization appear to be used. Since the available content is not extensive, the need to search or filter it is lessened.
Incorporate a translation tool	✗	No translation tools were locatable on the site.
Provide navigation controls on carousels to advance or pause the movement of slides.	-	Not applicable. No carousels were locatable on the site. Carousels are a good idea for adding action to a page and for presenting large amounts of content in a limited space.

Social Media Presence

Social media platforms offer an opportunity for organizations to show themselves present and active in their areas of interest, as well as engaging their audience in ways which the passive conveyance of information through a website alone cannot achieve. It provides a means of communication which is widely available to the public, and a way to increase exposure of achievements, news, and other information to a much broader audience.

The Develop losco site does not give any indication of social media presence. A brief search indicates that the organization does have a Facebook page. The last activity on it was in October of 2021, where the same message appears to have been posted 23 times. Having a trained individual responsible for keeping social media content active, and a schedule and plan for producing valuable content for social media posts is recommended.

Economic Development Website Usability Best Practices	Develop losco Performance	
Facilitate viral marketing through the inclusion of sharing tools, including social media	✘	No encouragement to share content or tools to facilitate sharing were locatable on the site.
Promote active social media accounts on the website	✘	No links to existing social media accounts for the organization were locatable on the site.