

An initiative of CBM Global Disability Inclusion

# Toolkit: Accessible Meetings

Practical guidance on organising accessible and inclusive events and meetings, with tips on issues to consider in the planning, delivery and follow-up stages.

This guidance was initially prepared for the Department of Foreign and Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia.

**May 2021**



**Contents**

[Acronyms 4](#_Toc71386448)

[Chapter 1 - Introduction 4](#_Toc71386449)

[Purpose and structure 4](#_Toc71386450)

[Chapter 2 – Accessibility, Inclusion and Reasonable Accommodations 4](#_Toc71386451)

[Accessibility 4](#_Toc71386452)

[Inclusion 6](#_Toc71386453)

[Reasonable accommodations 6](#_Toc71386454)

[Universal design 7](#_Toc71386455)

[Chapter 3 – Working with Persons with Disabilities 8](#_Toc71386456)

[Getting advice from persons with disabilities 8](#_Toc71386457)

[Chapter 4 - Planning Meetings and Events 8](#_Toc71386458)

[Actions to take 8](#_Toc71386459)

[Budget for accessibility 9](#_Toc71386460)

[Vendors and contractors 9](#_Toc71386461)

[Staff and volunteer support for participants with disabilities 10](#_Toc71386462)

[Chapter 5 - Communications and Materials 10](#_Toc71386463)

[Actions to take 10](#_Toc71386464)

[Websites 11](#_Toc71386465)

[Conference app 11](#_Toc71386466)

[Conference materials 12](#_Toc71386467)

[Braille 13](#_Toc71386468)

[Large print 14](#_Toc71386469)

[Videos 14](#_Toc71386470)

[Invitations and registration 15](#_Toc71386471)

[Real-time captioning 15](#_Toc71386472)

[Sign language interpretation 17](#_Toc71386473)

[Deafblind persons 18](#_Toc71386474)

[Notetakers 20](#_Toc71386475)

[Accessibility guide for participants 20](#_Toc71386476)

[Chapter 6 - Meeting Venues 20](#_Toc71386477)

[Actions to take 20](#_Toc71386478)

[Venue Selection 21](#_Toc71386479)

[Meeting facility infrastructure 22](#_Toc71386480)

[Meeting rooms 23](#_Toc71386481)

[Dining and break areas 24](#_Toc71386482)

[Exhibition and reception spaces 24](#_Toc71386483)

[Side events, special events, and entertainment 25](#_Toc71386484)

[Accessible parking 25](#_Toc71386485)

[Chapter 7 - Hotels 25](#_Toc71386486)

[Actions to take 25](#_Toc71386487)

[Hotel selection 26](#_Toc71386488)

[Hotel infrastructure 26](#_Toc71386489)

[Guest rooms 26](#_Toc71386490)

[Bathrooms 27](#_Toc71386491)

[Hotel restaurants 28](#_Toc71386492)

[Chapter 8 - Transportation 28](#_Toc71386493)

[Actions to take 28](#_Toc71386494)

[Transportation to the meeting city 29](#_Toc71386495)

[Public transportation 30](#_Toc71386496)

[Taxis and car service 31](#_Toc71386497)

[Private hire coaches and busses 31](#_Toc71386498)

[Walking to meeting sites and accessing amenities 32](#_Toc71386499)

[Chapter 9 - Programmes and Presenters 32](#_Toc71386500)

[Actions to take 32](#_Toc71386501)

[Presentations and presenters 33](#_Toc71386502)

[Planning the agenda 34](#_Toc71386503)

[Accessibility cards 34](#_Toc71386504)

[Meeting evaluation 34](#_Toc71386505)

[Chapter 10 - Conclusion 34](#_Toc71386506)

[Annex I – Invitations and registrations 36](#_Toc71386507)

[Recommended questions to use in the conference registration form: 36](#_Toc71386508)

[Annex II – Accessible Meeting Checklist 38](#_Toc71386509)

[Planning Meetings and Events 38](#_Toc71386510)

[Annex III – Glossary 43](#_Toc71386511)

## Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CART | Communication Access Real-Time Translation |
| CRPD | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| DPO | Organisations of Persons with Disabilities |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| JAWS | Job Access With Speech (screen reader) |
| NVDA | Non-Visual Desktop Access |
| PA | Personal Assistant |
| WASLI | World Association of Sign Language Interpreters |
| WCAG | Web Content Accessibility Guidelines |

This toolkit is adapted from the Accessible Meeting Toolkit for the International Committee of the Red Cross by Bailey Grey and Elizabeth Lockwood (2019).

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

### Purpose and structure

This toolkit provides guidance on organising accessible and inclusive events and meetings in planning, delivery and follow-up stages. The guidance is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), key recommendations (particularly recommendations 1 to 7) from the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) [report on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system](https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_6_english_0.pdf), and information from the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy](https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf), particularly on indicator 6.1 Conferences and Events.

In addition, the toolkit introduces key concepts and essential information for planning accessible and inclusive events and meetings. The Accessible Meeting Checklist (Annex I) is a planning tool and quick reference guide designed to aid organisers during both the planning stage and the delivery of events and meetings.

## Chapter 2 – Accessibility, Inclusion and Reasonable Accommodations

### Accessibility

Accessibility is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently, actively participate in society, and have unrestricted enjoyment of all rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. Accessibility goes beyond just physical environments and products and should consider diversity and the removal of unnecessary barriers and exclusions in a manner that benefits all, including persons with physical, sensory, psychosocial, and intellectual disabilities.

Accessibility is defined under the CRPD as taking appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities’ access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.

Accessibility for events and meetings means that organisers must take steps to ensure access to meeting facilities, information, and services, and to ensure access on an equal basis with others through the identification and removal of obstacles and barriers to transportation, lodging, meeting venues, catering and dining, programme agenda and sessions, side and special events, exhibitions, information, communication, volunteering, and other meeting elements.

Moreover, accessibility benefits everyone, including older people, pregnant women, people from different language groups, people from diverse educational backgrounds and more, which can improve the overall experience of meeting participants regardless of whether they have a disability or not.

Accessibility can be measured by comparing how well a product or service can be used by someone with a disability and by someone without a disability. In technology, accessibility features are intended to reduce that gap. The effectiveness of an accessibility feature can be measured by asking: does this feature increase the number of people who can independently use this product or service? If the answer is yes, then the accessibility of the product or service has improved.

Here are a few examples outlining the types of accessibility to consider:

* Physical accessibility – step-free access to buildings, rooms, and public spaces; room to manoeuvre; accessible parking; accessible toilets; barrier-free corridors, etc.
* Digital accessibility: accessibility features in technology, including accessible technology, assistive technology, and specialty hardware and software that are either built-in or added on to products. The purpose of these features is to make technology easier to use by meeting a user preference, a user need, or facilitating a user interaction with the technology.
* Accessible formats: information available in formats such as, but not limited to, Braille, tactile graphics, large print, text-to-speech, oral presentation, electronic files compatible with screen readers, captioned or signed videos for deaf or hard of hearing people, or icons and animations, easy read versions or pictures for persons with intellectual disabilities.
* Web accessibility: web-based content with which persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, interact, and contribute.
* Social accessibility: access to quiet, informal, and uncrowded spaces; notification of flashing lights or noises; notification of distressing images or topics; and regular breaks to allow for rest.

#### Resources:

* Accessibility and the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto [Resolution A/74/146 (PDF document)](https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/74/146)
* [Principles of Universal Design (PDF document)](https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf)
* [UNICEF Inclusive Communication Module](https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/index_90418.html) is a three-part video training module available on the UNICEF website
* [CBM Digital Accessibility Toolkit (PDF document)](https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/CBM-Digital-Accessibility-Toolkit.pdf)

### Inclusion

Inclusion is when all people participate in all aspects of civil, political, social, and economic life. For meetings, this means that all participants are enabled to participate in and contribute towards the meeting objectives in a welcoming environment. Inclusion goes well beyond disability; however, it is critical for understanding how persons with disabilities may or may not participate, depending on the environment.

Just because something is accessible, does not mean that it is inclusive. A facility that is inclusive goes far beyond the basic concept of people being able to enter the building. Rather, an inclusive environment allows people with all types of disabilities to easily move around, access the facilities, access information, actively participate in discussions and to present, and utilise equipment and amenities inside the building. For example, if the step-free entrance to the meeting venue was not next to the main entrance but was through a rear or side entrance, this would be accessible but not inclusive. An inclusive venue would provide access to the rooms, facilities, and amenities for persons with and without disabilities alike.

A regular statutory meeting that is inclusive should not only seek to be inclusive and accessible on a meeting-by-meeting basis, but it should also address overarching inequalities and consequent lack of access to opportunities for persons with disabilities who are excluded from organisational programmes and processes.

### Reasonable accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden on the organisation or the meeting, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Accessibility relates to groups, whereas reasonable accommodations relate to individuals. This means that organisers should apply accessibility standards for diverse groups of persons with disabilities and provide reasonable accommodations to meet the needs or requirements of individuals, particularly where the accessibility measures have not sufficiently met the needs of certain individuals. If accessibility standards are adequately applied, then the need for reasonable accommodations should decrease. However, due to the diverse nature of disability, organisers will always need to be prepared to respond to requests for reasonable accommodations.

For an event, the accessibility measures may include providing all documents in both Word and PDF formats to accommodate blind participants, and the reasonable accommodations may mean that the organisers are prepared to provide some materials in Braille, upon request. This reasonable accommodation bears some cost, but if budgeted, it may be reasonable. Similarly, the organisers may ensure that the meeting venue and dining hall is step-free so that all persons using wheelchairs can access the venue but may arrange for the catering staff to help serve the lunch buffet to participants who are unable to serve themselves. This reasonable accommodation may not bear a cost and may only require some coordination with catering staff at the meeting venue.

Here are some guiding questions that can assist on how to apply reasonable accommodation:

* Has the person asked for and explained what they need?
* Is the accommodation proportionate: not more than what the person needs but instead sufficient to do what the person needs?
* Is the accommodation technically possible and/or available in the country?
* Is the accommodation possible to carry out financially and economically feasible, and will not jeopardise the organisation?

Not all reasonable accommodations will bear a cost; however, they may require additional planning, coordination, flexibility, and/or timing well in advance. Because disability is linked to the barriers in the environment, some requests for reasonable accommodations may not be apparent until the person with a disability is in the environment, despite careful planning. Therefore, some requests for reasonable accommodations will not be made until participants are at the meeting.

It is important to establish an accessibility focal point to respond to these requests before and during the meeting. All meetings should have an accessibility focal point, usually a person designated to address accessibility concerns before, during, and after the meeting, but it may be a shared responsibility coordinated between two or more people for very large events and meetings. The focal point should be identified at the planning stages and their phone number and email address should be shared in the registration form for enquiries. The focal point could be a staff member from the hosting organisation, or a hired consultant to carry out this specific work with skills and background in creating accessible events. The focal point should serve as the main contact for accessibility needs and reasonable accommodation requests, as well as for questions and complaints during the meeting or event. It is imperative that all information shared is kept confidential.

### Universal design

Universal design is a design philosophy that aims to create an inclusive, sustainable society, where every person can participate to the greatest extent possible. Universal design is the design of goods, products, facilities technologies, and services to ensure full, equal, and unrestricted access for all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal design should not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

Universally designed products and services accommodate individual preferences and abilities; communicate necessary information effectively; and can be approached, reached, and used regardless of the individual's body size, posture, or mobility. Universal design recognises the common needs shared by persons with and without disabilities. For example, sidewalk kerb cuts provide access for wheelchair users, but also for people with luggage on wheels, parents with strollers, people with injuries, and older people, for whom a sloping surface is often easier to use than stepping up on the kerb. Additionally, the use of captions not only assists people who are deaf and hard of hearing, but also those who are not proficient in a particular language, persons with learning disabilities, and for all people if in a noisy environment.

To ensure disability-inclusive meetings, organisers should select venues, public transportation, informational materials, ICT systems, and other services and products that incorporate the universal design approach, if available.

## Chapter 3 – Working with Persons with Disabilities

### Getting advice from persons with disabilities

It is essential to work directly with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations to ensure that they are meaningfully represented and can provide guidance to ensure accessibility and disability inclusion in meetings. DPOs can provide advice and contribute to consultation processes when planning meetings - from discussion topics for the meeting programme to advice on accessible taxi service providers. Since AMPCDRR is being held in Australia, it is important to work directly with an Australian DPO.

Most countries have a number of DPOs, so it may be easiest to identify one DPO to work with, such as a national umbrella DPO to which most other DPOs are members. Many are located in the capitals, and some have branches in additional cities. A good way to find a DPO partner is to contact one the regional DPOs that cover several countries:

* African Disability Forum: africandisabilityforum@gmail.com
* Arab Organisation of Persons with Disabilities: aodp@cyberia.net.lb
* ASEAN Disability Forum: secretariat@aseandisabilityforum.org
* European Disability Forum: info@edf-feph.org
* Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families: info@riadis.org
* Pacific Disability Forum: pdfsec@pacificdisability.org

For a global perspective, it may be helpful to contact the International Disability Alliance for guidance: info@ida-secretariat.org.

## Chapter 4 - Planning Meetings and Events

### Actions to take

* Ensure that disability is factored into the meeting budget across budget lines (e.g., travel, materials, etc.) and as a stand-alone accessibility expense line.
* Communicate to participants about which expenses are covered, including the additional costs of travel due to disability.
* Designate an accessibility focal point and share their phone number and email address with all participants at the time of registration.
* Set up a system for keeping accessibility requests and/or complaints confidential.
* Train all staff and volunteers in accessibility and inclusion to raise awareness
* Talk to vendors and contractors about accessibility measures they must take and include accessibility into all TORs for vendors and contractors.
* Check the work of vendors and contractors to ensure accessibility measures were taken or applied.
* Write volunteer job descriptions that are inclusive, and ensure that the online application process is accessible.
* Request reasonable accommodations in volunteer applications, and follow up with volunteers requiring reasonable accommodations.
* Set out a plan for volunteers on how to properly support participants with disabilities and how to respond to reasonable accommodation requests.

### Budget for accessibility

Costs of travelling with a disability can place a financial burden on the traveller, which may result in persons with disabilities not attending the meeting. Costs may include higher airfares to transport assistive devices or to use a carrier that is more accessible, more expensive hotels that offer accessible rooms, the use of accessible taxis over public transportation, the cost of travelling with an additional person (e.g., personal assistant or sign language interpreter), fewer dining choices due to inaccessible restaurants or special diets, or renting mobility equipment for the event. These costs add up and can be prohibitive in some circumstances. It is, therefore, important to communicate to participants about which expenses, including additional costs due to disability, the organisers will cover. Efforts to support attendance by participants with disabilities should be clearly communicated, and organisers should be flexible about supporting participants with disabilities and avoid making assumptions about what people might need.

There are also direct costs for ensuring accessibility of the meeting for participants. This may include costs for sign language interpreters, captioners, materials in Braille, additional sound or AV equipment, or an accessible coach or bus. In addition, there may be costs to build a temporary ramp or install signage for increased access. These costs will vary depending on location and how many adaptations are needed in the venue.

Consider both types of additional costs when allocating meeting and event budgets. You should factor these costs into individual line items, such as transportation or materials. However, it is best practice to also have a general accessibility budget line to cover unplanned costs and reasonable accommodations.

### Vendors and contractors

External contractors and vendors help to prepare for events and meetings, e.g., hotel and meeting venue staff, caterers, designers, audio visual specialists, printers, and more. Most of these vendors may not think about how their work affects accessibility of meeting participants. Organisers are responsible for selecting and managing vendors and contractors and ensuring that accessibility is included in the terms of references (TORs) and contracts. Accessibility will also need to be discussed with the vendor or contractor at all stages of planning and clear measures on how accessibility will be incorporated into their work should be identified to ensure that there is agreement on how accessibility will be carried out.

For example, if you use an external print designer to create the text and layout of promotional materials (e.g., reports, banners, etc.), you should discuss how accessibility will be included in these materials and check their work to be sure that they have included all of the agreed measures to make it accessible. If organisers require advice on how to include accessibility into the work of specific vendors or contractors, they should contact their organisation’s accessibility focal point or advisor.

### Staff and volunteer support for participants with disabilities

All staff and volunteers who play a role in organising events and meetings should receive accessibility and inclusion training to raise awareness, to address accessibility gaps, unintended stigma, and/or discriminatory attitudes, and to adopt appropriate responses and measures for ensuring inclusion and accessibility. Because volunteers are recruited to help for short periods of time, they may have a limited understanding on ensuring inclusive and accessible events and meetings. It is essential that volunteers understand how their tasks, actions (or lack thereof), and attitudes may affect accessibility and inclusion, regardless of their role.

Volunteers are usually organised into functional teams led by a staff member. Team leaders should take responsibility for training and equipping volunteers with information and advice on how to properly support participants with disabilities with regard to the team’s functional areas. Volunteers should be informed on how to respond to reasonable accommodation requests when they are not sure how to best support the participant with disabilities. In most cases, the team leader should be available to step in and support in these instances.

If volunteers are going to be responsible for fielding disability-related questions or addressing accessibility concerns of participants, they should either have the appropriate training or experience in leading on accessibility in meetings. Alternatively, the accessibility focal point can (for details on an accessibility focal point, refer to Chapter 2) work with volunteers to implement requests by participants with disabilities.

## Chapter 5 - Communications and Materials

### Actions to take

* Create meeting websites and conference app that adhere to WCAG 2.0 standards.
* Ensure all meeting materials follow general accessibility standards for readability, e.g., regarding type of font, font size, colour contrast, etc.
* Send invitations in an accessible format and request the reasonable accommodations or accessibility requirements from participants.
* Log accessibility requirements for each registrant confidentially and follow up with registrants for more details; inform key staff involved in implementing the accessibility requirements.
* Book sign language interpreters, captioners, and notetakers well in advance.
* Provide tips to presenters and speakers and on how to make their presentations accessible.
* Determine how many participants require meeting materials in special formats and which special formats they require.
* Identify local Braille and easy read providers and order the appropriate number of copies for the meeting.
* Format templates of meeting materials in large print and make copies for participants requesting large print copies.
* Identify providers of audio description, captions, sign language interpretation, and easy read content description of videos and arrange for accessible formatting to videos.
* Test videos to ensure that the accessibility features work on the media player used in the meetings.
* Prepare an accessibility guide for participants and share before the meeting.
* Share all meeting documents, including presentations, with sign language interpreters and captioners well in advance of the meeting.
* Share meeting materials with participants in advance of the meeting.

### Websites

All meeting information put on a website, including an official event website, and all documents stored on the website should be accessible. Websites need to conform to WCAG 2.0 standards, which are the internationally accepted standards for web accessibility developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Web and IT staff working on the website need to ensure that these accessibility standards are maintained over time so that the website remains accessible and so that accessibility keeps improving.

#### Resource:

* [WCAG 2.0 standards](https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/)

### Conference app

For a conference mobile app, accessibility must be a priority for the inclusion of all participants with disabilities. Mobile accessibility is covered in existing W3C WAI accessibility standards and guidelines since there are not separate guidelines for mobile accessibility. Since apps are continually developing, a technical expert should be hired to carry out an accessibility audit of the app. In turn, this expert can provide technical feedback to the software company that is developing the app to ensure that the most up-to-date accessibility features are included and accessibility standards are applied. Some basic guidance for making a conference mobile app accessible, but certainly not limited to, include:

* Make sure the app is screen reader compatible.
* Minimise flashing images and consider colour contrast.
* Build adjustable size text, colour, and brightness into the app.
* Provide captions with any audio and video included in the app.
* Include clearly defined buttons to assist in finding content and information.
* Ensure information continuity between portrait and landscape viewing modes.

#### Resources:

* [Mobile Accessibility at W3C](https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/mobile/)
* Mobile Accessibility: [How WCAG 2.0 and Other W3C/WAI Guidelines Apply to Mobile](https://www.w3.org/TR/mobile-accessibility-mapping/)
* [Ability Net](https://abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/how-make-your-video-accessible-and-reach-bigger-audience)
* [Build Fire](https://buildfire.com/app-accessibility-mobile-development/)

### Conference materials

All conference materials should be accessible and provided in a clear manner. It is important to consider the information that is going to be most useful to the audience, how many people will be affected by the information, which documents are most effectively summarised, and how documents may be combined.

#### Meeting documents (printed and online)

Printed and online documents, including programmes, agendas, reports, and promotional materials need to be readable and accessible for participants with disabilities. For general readability of both printed and online documents:

* Ensure that not too many colours are used, which makes it easier for individuals to read text.
* Use high-contrast colour combinations, if using colours.
* Use font size between 12 and 18 for standard documents.
* Use non-decorative Sans Serif fonts, such as Calibri, Arial and Verdana. This means that the letters do not have serifs – the tail-like tips on the edge of letters as found in fonts, such as Times New Roman.
* Use **bold** or underline for emphasis, rather than *italics* or ALL UPPER-CASE LETTERS.
* Explain all images, such as photos, graphs, or charts, in printed and online materials (by adding alt text) to be accessible for blind and partially sighted people.
* Use wide margins to enable readers who use magnifiers.
* Use spiral bindings instead of saddle stitching for readers who use magnifiers.
* Use a matte or non-glossy finish to cut down on glare.
* Use plain language when possible to ensure easy comprehension by all, and avoid acronyms, jargon, and idiomatic phrases.
* Provide both Word and PDF formats for documents, so individuals who are blind or have low vision can use the format with their assistive software, such a screen readers.
* Avoid sending scanned or photographed documents to participants, as screen readers are usually not able to read these formats.
* Utilise built-in headings and styles in your Word document to make it easier for screen readers to read documents.
* Use a simple table structure, and specify column header information.
* Add meaningful hyperlink text which should convey clear and accurate information about the destination.

For the programme, agenda, and other key documents, easy read, Braille, and large print versions should be available for the event. Ensure that presentation materials are shared electronically ahead of the meeting to participants that require advance copies, sign language and guide interpreters, and captioners.

#### Easy read documents

Easy read is a way of making written information easier to understand for people with intellectual disabilities, although it can be helpful for many people, including non-native language users. Easy read uses basic language and illustrates information with pictures. Its aim is to help people with intellectual disabilities understand information more easily.

You can find consultants to convert documents into easy read, or you can convert them yourself. To make documents easy read:

* Use short, clear sentences with one piece of information in each sentence.
* Include clear instructions, facts, and statements.
* Limit detailed background information.
* Eliminate jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations.
* Be consistent with words and terminology.
* Avoid using contractions.
* Use active verbs.
* Use 16-point font for text and 18-point font for headings.
* Use a Sans Serif font.
* Aim for no more than 15 words per sentence.
* Include a word bank (key words with definitions) in addition to explaining words as you use them.
* Maintain plenty of white space on each page.
* Print with black text on a white or very light background.
* Keep the document as short as possible.
* Use pictures and graphics, such as speech or thought bubbles, arrows, colours, thumbs up or down. Pictures should be large and clear and should directly reflect and support text. Multiple pictures can help to create a visually supportive document.
* Consult with people with intellectual disabilities to create documents and seek feedback before publishing.

#### Resource:

* How to Make Information Accessible: [A Guide to Easy Read Documents](https://www.changepeople.org/getmedia/923a6399-c13f-418c-bb29-051413f7e3a3/How-to-make-info-accessible-guide-2016-Final) (CHANGE)

### Braille

Some people who are blind, deafblind, or partially sighted use Braille, a tactile writing system using embossed dots on paper. One misconception about Braille is that it is universal. In fact, every spoken language has its own form of Braille. Not all blind, deafblind, and partially sighted people use Braille, so it is important to ask participants if they require Braille versions of documents. Braille also comes in two grades: Grade 1 (uncontracted) and Grade 2 (contracted). Ask participants which grade they wish to use, as some people may only be able to read one grade. Request Braille translations and printing services early in the planning process.

To find Braille providers, ask a local DPO for blind and partially sighted people for recommendations. It is important to send a Word document unformatted, such as without bullet points. As a general rule, Braille uses three sheets of paper for every one page in standard print.

If a participant from another country needs Braille in their local language, it is important to factor in the process of getting this carried out well ahead of time, and the printing and shipping costs.

It is highly recommended that organisers have business cards with Braille translations, which can raise awareness on the importance of information accessibility. Braille labels on signs and lift buttons can enable Braille users to move around the venue and/or hotel independently.

### Large print

Large print refers to the formatting of a book or other text document in which the typeface (or font), and sometimes the medium, are considerably larger than usual, to accommodate people with low vision. It is important to note that for people with low vision, visual acuities vary greatly, as do individual needs. It is important to ask people requiring large print if they have specific requirements regarding the formatting. You can convert documents into large print or ask a DPO of persons with low vision if they can recommend a consultant to do this work.

To create large print documents:

* Use at least an 18-point, and preferably a 20-point, bold, Sans Serif, mono or fixed space font.
* Ensure line spacing (leading) of at least 1.5 to provide good readability and help reduce eye strain.
* Make titles and headings larger than the text of the document and use both upper- and lower-case letters.
* Align titles and headings to the left, where possible.
* Ensure double spacing between paragraphs.
* Make sure that page numbers are the same font style and size as the document text and that they are positioned in the top right corner.
* Use paper that has a matte or dull finish to reduce glare, preferably an eggshell colour to minimise eye strain.
* Use asterisks, dashes, double bolding, or underline an individual word to bring emphasis rather than using colour or italics for emphasis.
* Isolate graphs, charts, and pictures on individual pages accompanied by explanatory captions.
* Note that the enlargement feature on a copy machine does not produce large print documents; therefore, documents need to be formatted to meet large print specifications.
* Characteristics that have the greatest effect on the readability can be ranked as follows: spacing, font size, contrast, and font style.

### Videos

To make videos accessible, include audio description, captions, International Sign interpretation (or/and the national sign language), and easy read content description of videos, which can be shared separately.

Here are some further tips on accessible videos:

* Audio descriptions should reflect exactly what is shown on the screen, and the audio description volume should be slightly lower to not interfere with the main video sound.
* If the video will be posted on a website, make sure that the website is fully accessible for screen readers.
* When drafting the scripts for the audio description, make sure they are revised by someone familiar with the process and avoid being redundant in the audio description.
* If translation is needed for a video, e.g., Spanish to English, make sure that the translation is not just written but also spoken by someone, and that sign language is also included.

When selecting the media player for the video, check:

* That the media player supports closed captions and audio descriptions in a way that enables users to toggle the narration on and off,
* Whether the controls can be operated with a mouse,
* Whether the buttons and controls are properly labelled so that a blind person can find them using a screen reader, and
* Whether all of its accessibility features can be used across platforms and in all major browsers.

#### Resources:

* [Colour contrast check](https://snook.ca/technical/colour_contrast/colour.html#fg=33FF33,bg=333333)
* [Example of audio description is on this video from Microsoft](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nGaDdfLXNg)

### Invitations and registration

Any official documents sent prior to or after the meetings should be accessible, including invitations. Invitations to events should be shared with adequate time in advance to arrange for accessible travel, accommodation and other accessibility needs. Invitations should include an accessible online registration form, and this form should have a section requesting reasonable accommodation requests for participants. It should include a section for open-ended responses and not only a checklist for various accommodation requests due to unique accommodation needs (see Annex I for recommended questions). However, you may use a combination of list and open-ended question for further details or unmentioned accommodations listed. In addition, there should be a space to include special dietary requirements. A contact person with an email and phone number should be included in the invitation for possible follow-up and clarification questions. If participants are downloading forms to fill in and either post or email, they should have the option to download in both Word and PDF formats. Invitations with a registration form should be shared online and should conform to WCAG 2.0 standards.

### Real-time captioning

Communication access real-time translation (CART) or real-time captioning is a service in which a captioner listens to speech and instantaneously translates all speech to text in real time, which is usually projected onto a screen or available via internet link. The captioner may be physically present in the room or connected remotely via the internet. Multiple captioners may be needed if various meetings are taking place at the same time at the conference, as well as for side events and meetings. Organisers are responsible for arranging captioning services, but in rare instances, a person with a disability may bring a personal captioner if they require captioning in a specific language or if they require captioning in side meetings. To find local CART providers ask local DPOs of deaf or hard of hearing people for recommendations. It is best to find a captioner that has experience supporting similar types of events.

Display options include computers, projection screens, monitors, or mobile devices. The real-time text may be displayed as a full screen of large text at the front of the room or incorporated onto the same screen as a PowerPoint presentation or video of the speaker. However, it is optimal to have two screens - one for the presentation and the other for the projected captions - to increase readability. Real-time captioning is an important accommodation for many deaf and hard of hearing participants and also benefits non-native language users and other persons with disabilities, including people with information processing disabilities. Real-time captioning also can provide an electronic record of the meeting’s proceedings, but this should be requested ahead of time and may have an additional cost. Two common formats used by English language captioners are CART (Communication Access Real-Time Translation) and C-Print, although each country generally has a different captioning system and technology.

The two most common methods of real-time captioning are onsite and remote captioning. Onsite captioning requires that the captioner is in the room where the event is occurring. Minimal space is required for the captioner’s setup, but they will require a seat and space on a table for their equipment. Onsite captions are projected onto a screen or shown on monitors viewable by all attendees and can be simultaneously streamed online and made available as a remote feed. Onsite captioning tends to be more expensive. Remote captioning streams text to a secure internet URL for viewing and may be displayed on a variety of computers, projection screens, and/or mobile devices. There must be a cable feed link in the room for remote captioning to work. Remote captioning tends to be less costly, but technical issues can arise, such as a weak internet connection.

Tips for ensuring accessible captioning:

* The captioned letters should be big enough to read easily from any seat in the room.
* Use smooth scrolling, i.e., when captions appear one line at a time in a continuous motion versus line-by-line scrolling in which captions appear word-by-word across the screen as they are captioned.
* Text displayed at the bottom of the screen tends to be easier to view than at the top of the screen.
* If text is displayed on the bottom of the screen, there should be three lines visible and it should be positioned high enough (and above the heads of participants seated) so anyone can see it.
* If possible, provide participants the option to see the captions on their laptop, tablet, or smartphone. This can be done easily, especially if using a remote captioning service.
* If there are two languages being projected in captions, you need a clear separation between the two languages, e.g., a coloured line, or a separate window for each language.

Arrange for captioning well in advance of the meeting and share the agenda with presenters’ full names and relevant documents, including presentation materials, to allow captioners to prepare.

### Sign language interpretation

Deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind people who use sign language as a mode of communication need sign language interpretation at events to ensure equal access to information and to participate in discussions. Providing sign language interpretation is in line with the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on the topic of enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system (particularly key recommendations 1-7), and information from the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, particularly on indicator 6.1 Conferences and Events. Please refer to Chapter 5 on Communications and Materials in the Accessible Meeting Toolkit for more information.

Sign languages are natural languages that have the same linguistic properties as spoken languages. They have evolved over the years in different Deaf communities and vary greatly between countries and regions. There is not one universal sign language in the world; in fact, some countries have more than one sign language or dialect. However, an auxiliary language often referred to as International Sign has developed for use at international gatherings. This is not a fully-fledged language; however, it is a communication solution when having to provide access to a diverse audience. It cannot replace national sign languages but can be an acceptable solution at international-level meetings and events, although it is not optimal. For more information on International Sign, read World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) [Frequently Asked Questions about International Sign (PDF document)](https://wfdeaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FAQ-on-IS-June-17-2019-FINAL-included-IS.pdf).

A sign language interpreter is a professional who is fluent in two or more (sign and/or spoken) languages and interprets between a source language and a target language and mediates across cultures. The role of the interpreter is to interpret between people who use a signed language and a spoken language and provide complete and accurate information both to deaf and hearing people. The interpreter's task is to facilitate communication ensuring equal access to information and participation. Depending on length of meeting and number of people in the room, there will be two interpreters in the room. Additionally, at conferences, the team is usually composed of three interpreters. This allows for periods of rest, even though the resting interpreter still supports the other interpreter in case something is missed.

Sign language interpreters can be deaf or hearing, but should always carry appropriate sign language interpreter qualification from their respective country. They are bound to a code of ethics, ensuring impartiality, confidentiality, linguistic, and professional competence, as well as professional growth and development. Deaf interpreters typically work in tandem with hearing interpreters, but not always. There is immense value of a cohesive team, which can have synergistic benefits in the interpretation being produced.

The deaf-hearing interpreter team ensures that the spoken language is interpreted into a form of sign language that is as accessible as possible for as many deaf individuals as possible. And, in turn, the team ensures that the deaf person can share their messages successfully in the spoken language. For more information please refer to WASLI’s [statement on the role of sign language interpreters (PDF document)](http://wasli.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WASLI-Statement-on-Role.pdf).

International Sign may not be understood by all sign language users, so it is important to check with participants on their language and interpreter preferences. Organisers should adapt to the context and either provide national sign language interpreters, International Sign interpreters, or a combination of both, depending on the participants’ preferences. It is important to note that there are a limited number of International Sign interpreters accredited by the [World Federation of the Deaf and World Association of Sign Language Interpreters](https://wfdeaf.org/our-work/wfd-wasli-international-sign-interpreter-accreditation/wfd-wasli-accredited-is-interpreter/), and there may not be accredited International Sign interpreters in the country where the meeting is being held. For this reason, you need to book interpreters well in advance and may need to arrange for their travel.

For national sign language interpreters, contact the relevant National Association of the Deaf. In the context in which no formal interpreters exist, the National Association of the Deaf will be able to recommend the appropriate interpreters.

The following links may be useful for finding sign language interpreters:

* World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI): [WFD-WASLI Accredited International Sign Interpreter List](https://wfdeaf.org/our-work/wfd-wasli-international-sign-interpreter-accreditation/wfd-wasli-accredited-is-interpreter/)
* For national sign language interpreters in Europe, contact the [National Association of the Deaf](https://www.eud.eu/eud-members/) or the [National Association of Sign Language Interpreters](http://efsli.org/membership/full-membership/)
* For national sign languages around the world, contact the National Associations of the Deaf that are [members of the World Federation of the Deaf](https://wfdeaf.org/who-we-are/members/)

### Deafblind persons

Deafblind people often use guide interpreters who facilitate communication as well as orientation, so that the deafblind person understands what is happening in their environment. A variety of communication methods are used depending on whether they have some hearing or some vision. Some methods of communication include speech, sign language, tactile communication, objects of reference, picture symbols, or any combination of these methods. Guide interpreters work on a one-to-one basis with deafblind people and do not typically serve multiple deafblind people simultaneously. Often, more than one guide interpreter is needed to support a deafblind person.

Deafblind people often establish a deep rapport with interpreters, and together they establish a highly individualised system of communication. Since there are very few professionally trained guide interpreters, family members will often serve as guide interpreters. When working with guide interpreters, speakers may need to allow more time for interpretation, especially if the deafblind participant communicates through tactile signing by spelling out each letter of each word. It may not always be possible to adjust the meeting pace completely for deafblind participants. Therefore, it is important to discuss other accommodations, such as pre-meeting discussions on meeting content or individualised meetings with speakers that interest the deafblind participant.

#### Guidelines for hiring and working with sign language and guide interpreters:

* Interpreters should be booked at the time that the meeting date is booked, as there are shortages of interpreters in most countries, and sometimes it is difficult to guarantee this service.
* If the event lasts longer than one hour, at least two interpreters must be provided. Large meetings such as conferences require at least three interpreters per meeting room.
* Organisers should consider budgeting for many interpreters so deaf participants are able to attend all events equal to other participants.
* Interpreters must be given appropriate break times, as they are co-working at all times, supporting their colleagues. Therefore, if the participants require interpretation during breaks and meals (e.g., for networking), additional interpreters must be provided to ensure the quality of interpretation and to ensure inclusion of the participants.
* If there is a deaf panellist and also deaf participants in the audience, a minimum of four sign language interpreters is required.
* All presentations, scripts, and background materials, including the agenda with the names of presenters must be sent to the interpreters prior to the event at least a week in advance. This will enable the interpreters to better follow the event content and provide a higher quality of service.
* Sign language interpreters must be visible; appropriate lighting depending on the preference of the audience members who are deaf must be provided. Guide interpreters and deafblind participants will usually sit close together and will require a set up that is unique to the needs of the deafblind participant. For example, they may require face-to-face seating with their interpreter if using certain forms of tactile sign language.
* There should be reserved seating near the front of the room for the deaf and deafblind participants to use, but the participant should also be consulted about his/her preference of seating when working with interpreters (of both the interpreters and the participant).
* The organisers are responsible for the adequate remuneration of professional sign language and guide interpreters, similar to spoken language interpreters. Depending on the assignment and availability of interpreters in the meeting location, this may include appropriate accommodation and travel cost reimbursements.

Presenters and speakers should be provided with some tips so that they enable sign language interpreters to effectively carry out their role. Below are some tips that can be shared:

* Speak naturally, at a regular pace, and avoid reading out a written paper, as this may affect the quality of interpretation.
* Expect a slight delay in sign language interpretation and a much longer delay for interpretation of deafblind persons, often double the time to speak.
* Provide captions or alternative formats for all audio and video content, including sounds and descriptions of both sounds and images for deafblind persons.
* Check that the sign language interpreters are able to hear you well for interpretation.
* Avoid jargon, idioms, and acronyms. Speakers should refer to the full name of an entity and not assume knowledge of abbreviations.

#### Resources

* World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) [Statement on the Role of Sign Language Interpreters (PDF document)](http://wasli.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WASLI-Statement-on-Role.pdf)
* World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) [Frequently Asked Questions about International Sign (PDF document)](https://wfdeaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FAQ-on-IS-June-17-2019-FINAL-included-IS.pdf)

### Notetakers

Notetaking services are very useful, as they can complement captioning and assist many participants with disabilities who may not follow the meeting at all times due to various reasons. Notetakers should produce summarised notes of the main points discussed during a meeting. These notes can be projected onto screens during the meeting or distributed later to participants. Additionally, clear, concise, and simple summaries of proceedings are useful for all participants but can be particularly beneficial to persons with intellectual disabilities.

### Accessibility guide for participants

An accessibility guide outlines primarily logistical advice and guidance for participants with disabilities. It should be shared in advance of the event in an accessible format. The guide should include:

* The purpose of the meeting.
* Contact details of the accessibility focal point.
* Venue description.
* Accessibility services available at the meeting and inside the venue.
* Security and evacuation procedures.
* Transportation to the venue, to and from the airport, and around the city.
* Accessible transportation services, including paratransit, public transportation, railways, car services, and taxis.
* Accessible hotels and restaurants near the venue.
* Accessible parking at the venue.
* Guide and service dog information.
* Wheelchair repair and rental information.
* Medical information, such as hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies.
* Other relevant information.

## Chapter 6 - Meeting Venues

### Actions to take

* Contact DPOs to get recommendations on accessible meeting venue options.
* Conduct site visits of shortlisted venues (bring checklist, tape measure, and something to note down details).
* Decide on a venue, considering the accessibility factors.
* Meet with venue staff to review any modifications that need to be made to the venue to make it accessible and to communicate venue set up, including accessibility factors.
* Take stock of the number of accessible parking spaces nearby, check local parking regulations for accessible parking spaces, and keep participants informed.
* Design and plan for meeting rooms seating arrangements and exhibition space so that it is accessible and inform exhibitors on how they can make their displays accessible.
* Review security protocols and evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities with organisers, including venue staff and volunteers, and brief them on disability awareness.
* Arrange for captioning display screens, a sound system (including translation headsets and additional microphones), and portable hearing loop induction (if required) at the meeting venue.
* Inform staff or volunteers working at the meeting venue about the accessibility features that affect their work.
* Set up the speakers’ area to be accessible.
* Set aside a designated and signposted quiet space.
* Set aside seating and appropriate workspace for captioners and notetakers.
* Reserve seating for deaf and hard of hearing participants, sign language interpreters and other participants with disabilities and their personal assistants who require reserved seating.
* Do a walk-through of the venue well in advance of the event to check that accessibility features are in place and are functioning, including agreed modifications, appropriate signage, working lifts and accessible toilets, and ensure that no unintended obstructions have been created.
* Test all sound equipment, captioning displays, and hearing loop induction systems on the day of the meeting.
* Check to ensure food at breaks is clearly labelled and staff are able to assist with serving participants with disabilities who require it.
* Check meeting rooms during breaks to ensure that chairs, bags, and electrical cords do not create obstructions or hazards.

### Venue Selection

Accessibility should be a requirement for the selected venue, and if available, venues with universal design are ideal. It is best to seek recommendations and advice from persons with disabilities and local DPOs who have experience with venue options in the city where the meeting is being held. Many venues will claim to be accessible but may only be partially accessible. Furthermore, accessibility standards and inspections may be sub-standard in many countries. A site visit will help organisers to better understand the accessibility features and whether the venue is sufficiently accessible, which should include talking with venue staff to answer questions regarding modifications that can be made. Organisers should invite local DPO representatives to assist with the site visit to seek their input. If local DPO representatives are not located in the area, contact and work with national DPOs. Since venues are often booked before participants have registered, organisers need to consider the accessibility requirements of a diverse range of potential participants with disabilities. The following accessibility features should be considered during the site visit when selecting a venue and checked again just before the meeting to ensure that they are still in place.

### Meeting facility infrastructure

Attention should be paid to the venue’s physical features regarding space, light, signage, furniture, surfaces, and gradients. Some venues will be easier to navigate than others, and the space should be assessed considering the numbers of potential participants.

Key accessibility features to look for include:

* Location that is ideally close to lodging options for participants or easily accessible via transportation. This should be considered in conjunction with considerations for lodging options to look for accessible routes and ease of transport between the venue and lodging.
* Nearby accessible parking and drop off points where persons with disabilities can easily alight from taxis or busses to access the meeting venue (e.g., without a steep hill or stairs).
* Physical, step-free access to the entrance, emergency exits, stage / speakers’ platform, toilets, corridors, dining areas, and other public areas. Step-free access includes access via lifts, ramps of a reasonable gradient with handrails, or level access, avoiding gaps or slippery surfaces or other barriers. A reasonable gradient is 1:12, i.e., for every 1 inch of vertical rise there is a ramp length of 12 inches.
* Doors of the venue (including lift doors) are wide enough for wheelchairs (around 90 cm wide), and door handles are easy to grip and at a standard height.
* A sufficient number of working lifts centrally located if events are being held on multiple levels of a building.
* Reception desks and counters that are accessible for wheelchair users.
* Stairs that are even in height, have handrails, and colour contrast on stairs and landings.
* If there are key cards or keypad entry systems to the venue and its amenities, they can be switched off or diverted.
* Clearly visible, correct signage throughout the venue with colour contrast, including emergency exits.
* Evacuation procedures in place that include persons with disabilities.
* A sufficient number of accessible toilets that are not being used as storage space and are free of obstructions.
* Ideally, accessible toilet seats should sit around 40 cm from the floor and flush controls are best positioned towards the front of the cistern on the side that is easiest to access with easy grip buttons or handles.
* Space for a wheelchair to rotate (around 150 cm) within the accessible toilets.
* Handrails provided next to the toilet.
* A wall-mounted sink at around 77-85 cm from the floor to allow room for a wheelchair below the sink basin with sink tap handles that are easy to grip, and hand dryers or towels within easy reach.
* Assistance and service dog relief areas, if the meeting venue restricts the use of their outside space.

If the venue entrance is not accessible, there should be an alternative accessible entrance. People who use wheelchairs should be able to use the main entrance of the building rather than navigating around the building to use a side or back entrance; however, if this is unavoidable, be sure to check the alternative entrance and route for distance, convenience, barriers and other factors.

All other public spaces, such as lounge areas, prayer rooms, business centres, AV rooms, lobbies, registration areas, and souvenir shops should follow the above advice, particularly in regard to step-free access, room to manoeuvre, and signage. There should also be a reserved area to provide a quiet space to limit auditory, visual, and other input, especially if the hotels are not nearby.

In some local contexts, it might not be possible to secure an accessible venue as described above. If this is not possible, choose a venue that is willing to make adaptations, such as providing temporary ramps.

### Meeting rooms

Key accessibility features to look for include:

* Meeting rooms that are easy to find with clearly marked signs and / or greeters to help direct participants.
* Close proximity between meeting rooms that are close to toilets, including accessible toilets.
* Step-free entrances that are at least 90 cm wide to enable wheelchair access and more than one entrance if it is a high capacity room.
* Well-lit, ideally with natural light and blinds or curtains to block direct sunlight.
* Lighting controls to change lighting levels, e.g., if needed to reduce glare.
* Good sound quality (e.g., no echo) and little or no background noises, such as traffic, air conditioners, and adjacent meeting rooms, as background noises can cause distress for those who cannot tune it out.
* A portable or installed sound system, even for smaller rooms, to ensure everyone can hear people speaking.
* At least two or more roving microphones available for participants with disabilities and sign language interpreters for spoken interpretation. Microphones need to be checked on the day of the meeting and back-ups, including batteries, should be provided.
* Hearing loops in all of the rooms being used, but, plug-in devices for hearing aid loops for participants who are hard of hearing may need to be provided. Hearing loop systems need to be checked on the day of the meeting, as they can be affected by background noise.
* Portable audio translation devices/headsets available for sign language interpreters, captioners, and wheelchair users if the headsets are built into the tables and not removable.
* A speakers’ area that is either level or accessible via a ramp. If using a podium, make sure that the level of the microphone is adjusted for speakers using a wheelchair.

Seating should be arranged so that participants with physical disabilities can easily navigate the room. This becomes more challenging when the room is occupied, as chairs and bags in the aisles create obstructions and trip hazards. Similarly, very crowded rooms, can make navigation challenging. Ideally, the room set up should enable all those with physical disabilities to be able to navigate the room and reach everything on the table. If this is not possible, reserve accessible seats for blind people, wheelchair users, people who use other mobility aids, and personal assistants. Chairs need to be removed for wheelchair users. Seats should be reserved in the front row for deaf and hard of hearing participants to have clear and direct access sign language interpretation and captions. Extra chairs should be provided for sign language interpreters, captioners (see Chapter 5 on Communications and Materials), and personal assistants, and space should be provided for guide or service dogs next to the person they support. Some participants may also request reserved seating located near the exit if they need to take breaks outside of the schedule to avoid disrupting the meeting.

Persons with disabilities should be fully included in interactive activities. For example, if the presenter wants everyone to gather in one place, they need to ensure that there is a clear route with enough space for persons with disabilities to participate. If there are break-out rooms, ensure that these are accessible with enough room for wheelchair users to manoeuvre easily.

### Dining and break areas

For tea and coffee breaks and lunches, the following accessibility features should be in place:

* A sufficient number of tables and chairs for lunch and for less formal breaks, availability of low tables for wheelchair users (not only standing tables) and seating for people who cannot stand for long periods of time.
* Venue staff to assist people, especially if lunch and breaks are self-service / buffets. This needs to be arranged in advance and followed up just before break and lunch times with venue staff.
* All food is clearly labelled.
* Caterers are able to accommodate dietary requirements.
* Plastic straws are available upon request for those who need them.
* Sign language interpreters, captioners, and notetakers are provided food.

Some participants may need to eat outside of normal lunch and break times, so make sure there is space for this where eating is not prohibited.

### Exhibition and reception spaces

For exhibition and reception areas, the following accessibility features should be in place:

* Sufficient space for persons using a wheelchair to manoeuvre (approximately 150 cm rotation space).
* Corridors that are wide enough to allow the flow of traffic.
* Accessible seating available for those who cannot stand for long periods, which can be along the side of the room.
* Good lighting for sign language users.
* Little or no background noise.
* Displays that are easy to reach and view for all persons with disabilities.
* Information displayed or provided in electronic or accessible formats for blind and partially sighted people.

Alternatively, volunteers can describe and read displays to blind and partially sighted people. If displays are interactive, then volunteers should be advised on how to support the participation of persons with disabilities, if needed.

### Side events, special events, and entertainment

All side events and special events organised by other parties, but related to the main meeting should be accessible, such as entertainment, receptions, tours, and other events in a non-meeting format. If these events are held outside of the main meeting venue, then these additional venues should be checked for accessibility in line with the above guidance, including step-free access, lighting, signage or location guidance, space for manoeuvring, sound and background noises, and accessible toilets. There may also be a need to review accessible transportation options (refer to Chapter 8 on Transportation). If being organised by another party, this chapter, Chapter 5 on Communications and Materials, and Chapter 9 Programmes and Presenters should be shared to ensure accessibility. If special events involve a visual component, such as a video, pictures or walking tour, then volunteers and presenters should provide a description of what is being shown. This also applies to organised entertainment, such as dance.

### Accessible parking

Some participants with disabilities may arrive by car. Ideally, the meeting venue and hotels will have accessible parking. However, there may be limited spots. Identify additional accessible parking spaces nearest to all relevant meeting venues and hotels. This includes taking stock of the number of accessible spaces offered, looking for alternative accessible parking if spaces offered are full, checking if there is a fee for accessible parking, and checking local accessible parking regulations for display badges for vehicles so that participants can avoid paying penalties, especially if participants are driving from other countries or regions, which may have different regulations or display badges. Provide links to websites and contact information on available parking options and to request display badges, if required for foreign vehicles.

## Chapter 7 - Hotels

### Actions to take

* Contact DPOs to get recommendations on accessible hotels.
* Conduct site visits of shortlisted hotels (bring checklist, tape measure, and something to note down details); be sure to talk with hotel staff to better understand how they can support guests with disabilities.
* Maintain records of accessibility features and accessibility limitations of hotels to inform and assist participants with disabilities when choosing a hotel.
* Ensure that the hotel registration processes for participants are accessible, e.g., if online, check that it adheres to WCAG 2.0 standards (See Chapter 5 on Communications and Materials).
* Reserve accessible rooms when block booking hotels, request a guarantee on the accessible rooms so that they are not given to guests without disabilities, and follow up with hotels to inform them on the number of accessible rooms required.
* Provide the email address and phone number of accessibility focal point to participants with disabilities in case of difficulties during check-in and check-out.

### Hotel selection

The lodging options for meeting participants should be as close to the meeting venue and amenities, such as shops and restaurants, as possible to enhance accessibility. Find hotels that will accommodate all participants with disabilities and avoid segregating participants with disabilities from participants without disabilities. If possible, choose hotels that are in line with universal design principles. It is also important to ensure that staff at the hotels are willing to make the necessary adjustments and modifications to support guests with disabilities. Organisers should conduct site visits of hotels before selecting them, even if the hotel claims to be accessible, in order to advise participants regarding accessibility. This should include viewing all public areas of the hotel as well as the accessible rooms. In addition, the accessibility focal person for the event should provide contact details to both the hotel and participants with disabilities in case there are difficulties during check-in and check-out.

### Hotel infrastructure

Attention should be paid to the hotel’s physical features regarding space, light, signage, furniture, surfaces and gradients. Some hotels will be easier to navigate than others. For guidance on the accessibility features for the entrance, doors, signage, stairs and ramps, lifts, guide dog relief areas, and emergency exits, see Chapter 6 on Meeting Venues. All public areas should have a ramp or be step-free. There should also be accessible parking available, refer to Chapter 6 on Meeting Venue for more on parking.

If you are block booking rooms for the event, keep hotel staff informed regarding the number of accessible rooms required. In addition, request a guarantee on the accessible rooms so that they are not given to guests without disabilities, even if there are regulations protecting guests with disabilities. It is not uncommon for accessible rooms to be given to guests without disabilities if the hotel is full. If participants are required to book their own accommodation, examine the room booking experience to gauge the accessibility of the booking process and offer assistance, if required. Reservations for accessible rooms should be reconfirmed before participants with disabilities travel.

### Guest rooms

Key accessibility features to look for include:

* A choice of room type (e.g., double, single, etc.) similar to the room choice offered for non-accessible rooms.
* Conveniently located rooms within easy, step-free reach to the main hotel amenities for guests with physical or sensory disabilities, even if they do not require a room that is wheelchair accessible.
* Where there are no lifts, accessible ground floor rooms must be available.
* Hotels should be willing to accommodate persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities who request a quieter room away from street traffic or noisy public areas.
* Information about the hotel services and emergency procedures are available in accessible formats.
* Fire alarms emit an audible sound and visual strobing light in the rooms and in public areas.
* Free moving space of 90 cm around all furniture and rotation space of 150 cm in wheelchair accessible guest rooms.
* Cupboards with clothes hangers that do not exceed 130 cm in height for wheelchair accessible rooms.
* Carpets that are not thick and uncarpeted floors that are not slippery.
* A tactile distinction on key cards for guests who are blind and partially sighted.
* Room numbers displayed in a large font size with good contrast and lighting and ideally available in Braille.
* Wall or ceiling mounted hoists should be in good operating order, and hotel staff should provide information regarding weight restrictions.
* Plug sockets and light switches located at the ideal height for wheelchair users.
* Door handles and locks are conveniently located and easily gripped at no more than 100 cm from the floor.
* TVs provide closed captioning and a remote control is available for the TV.
* The heating / air conditioning controls are no more than 100 cm from the ground or accessible via a remote control.

Hotels may also provide some equipment to support guests with disabilities, such as shaking alarms for deaf guests, mobile hoists, and shower seats, and organisers should obtain information from the hotels in order to help participants plan their visit. Some persons with disabilities may prefer a personal assistant to sleep in the same room or in a room next door for easy access; whereas others may prefer a higher degree of privacy. Therefore, some coordination may be required with hotel staff. Most hotels will not have wall- or ceiling-mounted hoists. If there are not hoists in any of the hotels, then it may be necessary to negotiate with a hotel to rent a portable hoist as a special request in instances where a hoist may be required by a participant with a disability.

### Bathrooms

Key accessibility features to look for include:

* Sufficient rotation space of 150 cm for wheelchair accessible rooms.
* The bathroom door opens outwards into the bedroom.
* The power sockets and switches are easily reached, and door handles and locks are easy to reach and grip.
* The toilet seat sits round 40 cm from the floor with the flush controls positioned towards the front of the cistern on the side that is most easily accessed, and the handle is easy to grip.
* Handrails are provided for the toilet and in the shower and/or bath.
* The sink is wall-mounted at around 77-85 cm from the floor to allow room for a wheelchair below the basin.
* Sink tap handles are easy to grip.
* Towels, towel rails, and complimentary toiletries are within easy reach.
* Showers are step-free and accessible for a wheelchair to roll in.
* If there is a wall-mounted folding chair, it should ideally be installed at 50 cm from the ground with a seat of 40 x 50 cm minimum and folding grips of 90 cm long situated at 35 cm of the axe of the seat and installed at a height of 80 cm. Alternatively, a stable, removable shower chair with a back rest and handles with non-slip feet may be preferred.
* Easy to grip and operate bath / shower controls.
* Adequate drainage to avoid hazardous conditions.
* A slip-free shower mat should be provided or available on request.

For individuals requiring bathtubs, the height should be 50 cm with an approaching area of 80 cm next to the bathtub. At one of the extremities of the bath, there should be a transfer plan of 60 cm over the total width of the bath. Next to the transfer plan, there should be a grip of 80 cm long at a height of 70 cm. As with the bedroom, ceiling or wall-mounted hoists in the bathroom should be in good working order, and hotel staff should provide information regarding weight restrictions.

### Hotel restaurants

Even if meals are not included in hotel packages, the hotel restaurants should be assessed for their accessibility, as some individuals may use their services.

Key accessibility features to look for include:

* Step-free entrance and access to self-serve buffet areas.
* Pathways in between tables to move around the restaurant.
* A sufficient number of tables that are at a height accessible to people who use wheelchairs (e.g., higher tables with barstools may not be accessible).
* Staff available to provide information to individuals who are blind or partially sighted on the menu choices and to assist individuals who are unable to serve themselves in buffets.
* Food labels and signage in large font with clear contrast.
* Menus provided in accessible formats, including Braille and large print or in an accessible format online (i.e., for screen readers).
* Accessible toilets located in or near the restaurant.

## Chapter 8 - Transportation

### Actions to take

* Ensure procedures for delegates receiving travel assistance take into account the accessibility requirements of travellers.
* Ask participants receiving travel assistance and guest speakers who work directly with staff on travel arrangements if they have any accessibility requirements.
* Contact DPOs to get advice on the accessibility of public transportation and recommendations on accessible private taxi and coach providers in the meeting city.
* Conduct on-site assessments of common travel routes using public transportation and the walking routes between hotels and amenities (bring checklist, tape measure, and something to note down details).
* Identify accessible private taxi and coach providers.
* Book accessible private coaches and/or taxis for planned or organised travel during the meeting (e.g., from airport to hotels).
* Maintain records of accessibility features and limitations of transportation options to inform and assist participants in their decisions.
* Provide contact information and links to the accessibility pages of public transportation and accessible private taxi websites to participants, including advance booking requirements.
* Identify local providers of wheelchairs and scooters for hire and provide information to all participants on local providers in advance of the event; inform participants that if they hire wheelchairs or scooters, they should inform the accessibility focal point who will update participant information regarding accessibility requirements.
* Check public transportation routes for planned disruptions or diverted routes close to the meeting date and inform participants.
* Provide the venue and hotel names and addresses alongside a Google maps link to the participants.

### Transportation to the meeting city

Although most participants will arrange their own transportation to the city where the meeting is being held, there may be some participants, such as individuals receiving travel assistance or guest speakers, who may work directly with organisers to arrange travel. In these instances, organisers should ask the person travelling if they have any accessibility requirements. Organisers booking flights (and other modes of transportation) should be proactive in requesting accessibility requirements and guard against procedures that may discourage the person from travelling, e.g., due to complex procedures or requiring the person travelling to request changes after flights have been booked to accommodate their accessibility requirements.

Common accessibility barriers for travellers include the choice of airline carrier and transit airports. Some airlines provide a more accessible service than others, and accessibility requirements may involve:

* Size and type of wheelchair.
* Step-free and assisted boarding.
* Stowage of mobility equipment.
* Availability of accessible toilets on planes.
* Location of seating.
* Extra seating.
* Cabin crew support.
* Accommodation of service or guide dogs.
* Accessible emergency information.

In transit, some airports are more accessible than others, and accessibility requirements may include:

* Access to airport wheelchairs.
* Assistance in moving through the airport.
* Gate information in accessible formats.
* Accessible toilets.
* Distance between gates and/or terminals.
* Time between flights.

Due to the complexity of accessibility requirements, experienced travellers with disabilities will know best which airline or transit airport to use, so it is best to follow their advice and preferences. Sometimes a slightly more expensive flight can make a big difference in the comfort and accessibility for the traveller with disabilities, and organisers should be prepared to make these adjustments.

### Public transportation

Cities with excellent public transportation services are not necessarily accessible, and organisers should assess accessibility transportation options, including public transportation, in order to inform participants or to plan for alternatives. Public transportation modes may include underground and over-ground trains, busses, ferries, and trams, as well as shuttles organised by hotels. Public transportation may only be accessible to some persons with disabilities but not all, and some modes may only be accessible in limited locations, such as certain stations or on certain routes. Some transportation providers may claim to be accessible when they are partially accessible, and some providers require several days advance notice to accommodate passengers with disabilities.

Conduct an on-site assessment of common travel routes, such as from the airport to the hotel and back and consult with a local DPO. If an assessment is not possible, provide links to the accessibility pages of public transportation websites and provide information on alternative accessible private transportation services. The public transportation assessment should consider the journey from end-to-end, including access to and within the station or stops, ticketing, boarding and alighting, reasonable assistance by transport staff, and safety while on the mode of transport.

Consideration should be given to the journey from the point of origin to the station or stop. These same considerations apply to the journey from the station or stop to the final destination. Key accessibility features to look for include:

* Short walking distances between all points.
* Safe and accessible road crossings.
* Sufficient lighting.
* Non-slip surfaces and use tactile paving.
* Pathways that are wide enough to navigate.
* Working lifts and / or non-slip ramps of a 1:12 gradient with handrails as an alternative to stairs and steps.
* Signage with clear contrast and large font.
* Ticket machines or windows that can be operated or accessed by people with sensory disabilities or people who use a wheelchair.
* Wheelchair accessible ticket barriers.
* Level access or access via a ramp or lift to the train, bus, tram or ferry.
* Assistance provided by staff to board, alight, and navigate through stations.
* Sufficient space for wheelchairs to be secured on the mode of transport.
* Priority seating for persons with disabilities on the mode of transport.
* Both visual and vocal announcements of all stops.

Information should be provided to participants on routes and times when services may be too crowded, which can create a hazardous situation for some persons with disabilities. Just prior to the event, organisers should check for any service disruptions, such as planned works on transportation lines, as diversions can create additional barriers.

Once the assessment has been completed, organisers can provide information to participants regarding potential barriers in accessing public transportation. Participants should be provided with links to the accessibility pages of public transportation websites and contact information, including information on requirements regarding advance notification to the transportation service to provide assistance.

### Taxis and car service

Often, public transportation is not accessible for all. Therefore, all participants should be provided with information on accessible taxi and car services.

Some wheelchair users need to remain in their wheelchairs throughout their journey. This requires a van or minivan with a suitable ramp or lift that is equipped to secure the wheelchair safely while in motion. It will also require assistance by the driver to operate the ramp or lift and to help in securing the wheelchair. Some people who use manual wheelchairs are able to park their wheelchairs close to the side of the taxi and hoist themselves into the taxi seat. This requires assistance from the taxi driver to park the taxi close to the kerb and to assist in folding and stowing the wheelchair in the taxi.

Organisers should provide:

* A range of accessible taxi options for participants with disabilities.
* Information on availability of the service (e.g., 24-hour service).
* Information on advance booking requirements (e.g., 48 hours in advance).
* Link to the websites.
* Full contact details.
* Descriptions of any limitations to the service.

Local DPOs may be able to provide recommendations to help organisers choose the most reliable taxi service providers.

### Private hire coaches and busses

Private hire coaches and busses are used to transport a large group. If organising a private hire coach, consider the pick-up and drop off points to ensure there is a level, unobstructed pathway to the coach that is sufficiently wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. Coaches should either be level or have a built-in lift that will accommodate all wheelchairs since wheelchairs come in a variety of sizes.

Organisers should check that:

* All wheelchairs are compatible with the lift size, entrance, and space on the coach.
* The combined weight of the passenger and wheelchair do not exceed the maximum weight capacity of the lift.
* The driver is able to assist in boarding and alighting and is able to ensure that the lift may be used at the chosen stops.
* There is sufficient space on the coach for the number of people using wheelchairs.

Where accessible coaches and buses are not available, it may be necessary to hire a private taxi for participants who are unable to access the private coach, and this will require coordination and advance planning.

### Walking to meeting sites and accessing amenities

Meetings are often organised so that participants can walk between venues and easily access amenities. Assess the public paths between meeting venues, hotels, shops, and restaurants to determine accessibility. This includes distance, safety of road crossings, lighting, surface and width of the pathway, ramps, signage, pathway traffic, and whether there are any stairs or other obstacles so that participants can be provided with advice and information regarding accessibility of the surrounding areas. These considerations are particularly important if meeting venues are far apart and if participants are expected to arrange their evening meals outside of the hotel. In addition, certain weather conditions, such as snow or heavy rain can make an accessible journey inaccessible if there is insufficient drainage or pathways are snow-laden or icy.

Choose meeting sites, including the meeting venue, hotels, restaurants and shops, so that they are nearby and accessible, and be prepared to organise accessible shuttles or taxis (even a short distance) if there are obstacles to participants accessing meeting venues, hotels, and amenities. Ensure there is at least one accessible restaurant available – either at the venue, hotel, or nearby.

Some participants with limited mobility may wish to hire a mobility scooter or wheelchair during the event. Provide information to all participants on local wheelchair and scooter rentals in advance of the event. This may increase the number of people using wheelchairs, so organisers should liaise with participants renting wheelchairs and scooters in order to make adjustments for them during the event.

## Chapter 9 - Programmes and Presenters

### Actions to take

* Organise the agenda to allow for time to transverse between meeting rooms.
* Organise the agenda to allow for breaks (20 minutes for every 90 minutes of meeting time and one hour minimum for lunch).
* Involve persons with disabilities in meeting sessions and topics concerning disability; contact a local DPO if necessary.
* Give guidance to all presenters on how to make presentations accessible and set and communicate a deadline to submit presentations before the meeting.
* Review all presentations for accessibility; communicate the modifications that are made to the presenters.
* Share all presentations and handouts with participants, sign language interpreters, and captioners prior to and during the event.
* Provide presentation materials in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, or on a flash drive for blind participants and those with low vision.
* Create accessibility cards and distribute to participants with clear instructions on how to use them to both participants and presenters.
* Remind and prompt presenters regarding the guidance on accessible presenting just prior to speaking and during their presentations, if necessary.
* Provide support in holding the microphone to presenters or speakers, if needed.
* Deploy timekeepers to ensure break times are not cut short.
* Ask all participants to evaluate the accessibility of the meeting and provide feedback on how the meeting’s accessibility can be improved in the future.
* Make sure the evaluation, whether online or in paper form, adheres to accessibility standards.

### Presentations and presenters

Tips for creating inclusive presentations:

* When designing a PowerPoint or other visual presentations, each slide should have a title and use plain language in a large Sans Serif font with no more than six lines of text per slide. The minimum font size should be 24-pt or larger.
* Use photos or images to help explain key points.
* Do not use acronyms or jargon.
* Use examples to explain difficult-to-understand concepts.
* Avoid using tables or graphs as much as possible.
* Avoid using more than two different fonts, and do not use italics or all caps, but instead bold for emphasis.
* Add good contrast between the text and slide background so that people with low vision can read the slide.
* Avoid using only colour coding for conveying or distinguishing information.
* When using audio-visual media, provide captions for all audio content, including sounds (refer to Chapter 5 on Communications and Materials).
* Provide a text alternative for all non-text elements that convey information.
* For deafblind people, consider including descriptions of sounds and images on a separate platform.
* When using audio-visual media, provide captions or alternative formats for all audio content, including sounds. For deafblind people, this may include descriptions of sounds and images.

Tips for presenters to be inclusive:

* Speak naturally and at a regular pace.
* Check that the captioner and sign language interpreters are able to hear you well for transcription and interpretation.
* Explain and describe graphics and pictures for blind people and those who have low vision.
* Avoid jargon, idioms, and acronyms. Speakers should refer to the full name of an entity and not assume knowledge of abbreviations.

For presenters with disabilities, someone may need to assist them in setting up the presentation on a computer and in changing slides. For discussion, allow enough time for everyone to speak, remind people to introduce themselves before asking their questions, and only have one person speak at a time. Be respectful and patient if someone needs more time to talk, and do not finish their sentence for them. Support in holding a microphone for someone if needed.

### Planning the agenda

Planning for agenda items or topics on disability within meetings should involve persons with disabilities to either lead the session or at least advise on the session. This is to ensure that the discussion accurately represents the views and experiences of persons with disabilities and to ensure a more inclusive perspective and process.

Structurally, the agenda should be well organised with breaks included at appropriate times. Breaks should last at least 20 minutes long and should be taken approximately every 90 minutes. There should be adequate time for a lunch break of at least an hour.

Organisers should keep on schedule and respect the space and time for each session. This is important since many persons with disabilities, for example, need to plan transportation to and from events, resting times, or take medication with food. In addition, organisers should allow sufficient time for sign language interpretation and captioning.

### Accessibility cards

Organisers can provide participants with colour-coded accessibility cards, which is a good way to empower participants to modify and manage meeting content and discussions so that it is more accessible. Audience members can use colour-coded cards with presenters to indicate that they understand, do not understand, or would like more information. The cards should be in different colours and also cut into different shapes for participants who are blind. The cards can be defined as the following:

* Green cards mean that participants agree with what the speaker is saying.
* Yellow cards mean that the speaker should slow down.
* Red cards mean that participants do not understand what the speaker is saying, and the speaker should repeat or clarify.

### Meeting evaluation

Organisers need to ensure that all meeting evaluations are accessible, whether sent electronically or given in person. If sent online, provide versions in both Word and PDF format so blind individuals and those who have low vision can use the format with their assistive software, such as screen readers. If provided in person, have large print and Braille versions available (see Chapter 5 on Communications and Materials). If organisers are using an online survey tool, it must be checked for accessibility before using. It is important to ask all participants to evaluate the accessibility of the meeting and to provide feedback on how the meeting’s accessibility can be improved in the future.

## Chapter 10 - Conclusion

This toolkit provides guidance on organising meetings and other events so that accessibility and inclusion are considered at the planning stages and implemented on the day of the event. The toolkit sets out an approach to accessible meeting planning and identifies accessibility standards for each element of meeting planning. In addition, it provides advice on how to apply reasonable accommodations where accessibility standards do not adequately support the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

By considering the interrelated concepts of accessibility, inclusion, reasonable accommodations, and universal design; prioritising accessibility standards to be implemented incrementally; providing reasonable accommodations on an individual basis; and taking a flexible, supportive, pro-active, and accommodating approach, meetings and other events will be accessible and inclusive for all.

## Annex I – Invitations and registrations

Any official documents sent prior to or after the meetings should be accessible, including invitations, which is in line with the [UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system](https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_6_english_0.pdf) recommendation 5 (a). This recommendation calls for the executive heads of United Nations system organisations to make it mandatory for organisers of meetings and conferences to ensure, by December 2021, that the participation of persons with disabilities is fully supported by registration processes that are accessible for persons with diverse disabilities.

Invitations to events should be shared with adequate time in advance to arrange for accessible travel, accommodation and other accessibility needs. For example, extra time may be required to book sign language interpreters and CART providers.

Invitations should include an accessible online registration form, and this form should have a section requesting reasonable accommodation requests for participants. It should include a section for open-ended responses and not only a checklist for various accommodation requests due to unique accommodation needs. However, you may use a combination of list and open-ended question for further details or unmentioned accommodations listed.

A contact person with an email and phone number should be included in the invitation for possible follow-up and clarification questions. If participants are downloading forms to fill in and either post or email, they should have the option to download in both Word and PDF formats. Invitations with a registration form should be shared online and should conform to WCAG 2.0 standards.

### Recommended questions to use in the conference registration form:

Examples of questions related to accessibility requirements to include in the conference registration form are provided in the table below:

| Question text | Response option text |
| --- | --- |
| Will you be attending the conference with a support person or assistant? | * Yes
* No
 |
| [IF YES] If yes, for planning purposes, please provide your support person’s contact information: | * Name:
* Phone number:
* Email address:
 |
| Please indicate your sign language or CART requirements from the list below:  | * None required
* International Sign
* Australian Sign Language (or a different national sign language if in another location)
* Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART)
* Other (please specify)
 |
| Please select any additional accommodations that you require from the list below. If you require something that is not listed, please indicate your request by selecting “Other” and providing us with specific information about your request in the comments box.  | * None
* Accessible electronic copies of materials in advance
* Materials in Braille (grade 1 or 2)
* Materials in large font
* Wheelchair access
* Other (please specify)
 |
| Please tell us any other accessibility adaptations we can provide to facilitate your full participation in the conference. Please be as specific as possible. A conference organiser may also contact you to discuss and plan your requirements further.  | [open text box] |

**Note:** These suggestions have been informed by the following resources: Meetings and Events Australia (date unknown), [*Accessible Events: A guide for meeting and event organisers*](http://www.meetingsevents.com.au/downloads/Accessible_Events_Guide.pdf); National Disability Team and JISC TechDis Service (date unknown), [*Accessible Events: A good practice guide for staff organising events in higher education*](https://www.tcd.ie/disability/assets/doc/pdf/Accessible_Events.pdf); Vera Institute of Justice (2014), [*Designing Accessible Events for People with Disabilities and Deaf Individuals: Registration tip sheet*](http://www.institutefornativejustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/registration_tip_sheet.pdf).

## Annex II – Accessible Meeting Checklist

This checklist can be divided between teams and taken to site visits, to plan meetings, and to ensure that standards are considered when making decisions, included in planning, and monitored during the delivery of meetings and events. It can be rearranged and changed into different formats to suit the needs of the organisers.

Place an X for each standard that is met or enter the number, if requested. Use the notes sections to provide information, advice, or details on how further accommodations can be made and so that information can be relayed to participants requiring details.

### Planning Meetings and Events

* Provision of accessibility built into vendor / contractor TORs
* Sign interpreters booked
	+ How many?
* Number of national sign language interpreters coming with participants
* Number of personal assistants or guide interpreters coming with participants
* Number of service or assistance dogs coming with participants
* CART providers or captioners booked.
	+ Remote or on-site?
	+ How many captioners?
* Volunteer job descriptions checked for accessibility and inclusion
* Volunteer application, including online form, is accessible
* Reasonable accommodations for volunteers with disabilities identified and communicated to team leaders and volunteers with disabilities
* Staff and volunteers receive training on disability and accessibility
* Volunteer teams briefed on reasonable accommodations they are responsible for implementing
* Accessibility focal point contact details given to all participants
* Event budget includes direct and indirect accessibility costs

Notes:

#### Communications and Materials

* Web information on the event adheres to WCAG 2.0 standards
* Invitations sent with enough time to arrange accessible travel
* Online registration form adheres to WCAG 2.0 standards
* Online registration form asks for reasonable accommodations requests
* Downloadable registration forms (e.g., lodging, side events, etc.) are available in Word and PDF
* Display screens booked for CART / captioning for each room.
	+ Number of screens per room.
* URL for link to captioning shared with participants reading on own devices.
* Space reserved for CART providers in meeting room
* Space reserved for sign language interpreters in meeting room
* CART transcripts requested in advance from provider
* Seats reserved for participants with disabilities, who require or request it
* Notetakers briefed
* Accessibility guide sent to participants in advance of the event
* Meeting documents follow standard guidance on accessibility (e.g., Sans serif font, 12+ font size, high colour contrast, etc.)
* Number of copies in:
	+ Braille grade 1
	+ Braille grade 2
	+ Large print
	+ Easy read
* Videos include audio descriptions and captions
* Media player for video supports accessibility features

Notes:

#### Meeting Venue

* Site visit conducted
* Location close to lodging options
* Number of accessible parking spaces
	+ Estimated distance from venue
* Estimated distance from public transportation stop / station
* Step-free, easy access from venue to public transport stop
* Step-free entrance to venue.
* Is there a separate entrance for wheelchair users?
* Sufficient, accessible space in lobby / entrance area
* Step-free access throughout venue to reach all public and meeting areas (reception, dining, break, and lounge areas and amenities).
* All ramps have handrails, non-slip surfaces, and are a reasonable gradient.
* Meeting rooms and public areas are on the same level.
	+ If not, number of lifts.
	+ Lift door width 90 cm wide or wider.
* Entrance door and doorways to public spaces and meeting rooms 90 cm wide or wider.
* Door handles at regular height.
* Floors are slip free.
* Carpets are not deep pile or too thick.
* Reception desks accessible height for wheelchair users
* Stairs are even height, have handrails, and colour contrast
* Security features, such as key pad or key cards, switched off
* Visible signage in large font with colour contrast
* Accessible emergency exits
* Clear, accessible evacuation plan for people with disabilities
* Unobstructed accessible toilets close to meeting rooms with 150 cm rotation space, handrails, easy grip flush controls and sink taps, and easy reach towels / hand dryer.
* Meeting rooms are close to public areas
* Quiet space available
* Meeting rooms are well-lit, have access to block natural light glare, and have lighting controls
* Meeting room has good sound quality (low background noise)
* Sound system in place and tested on the day of the meeting.
	+ Number of microphones.
	+ Number of portable translation headsets.
	+ Hearing loop in all rooms being used and tested on the day
* Seating set up to allow for easy navigation of meeting rooms
* Speakers’ area has step-free access.
* Microphone is height adjustable.
* Venue staff available to serve breaks and lunches to participants with disabilities and are briefed on the day.
* Low tables and seating available at breaks
* Food is clearly labelled
* Exhibition space has room to manoeuvre (150 cm rotation space).
	+ Seating available.
	+ Background noise minimised.
	+ Sufficient lighting.
	+ Displays are adapted for accessibility.
* Side event and special event spaces have step-free access, room to manoeuvre, good lighting, low background noise, signage, and accessible toilets.
* Accessible transportation arranged for any off-site but linked events.

Notes:

#### Hotels

* Site visit conducted
* Online registration meets WCAG 2.0 standards
* Location close to meeting venue.
* Number of accessible parking spaces.
	+ Estimated distance from hotel
* Estimated distance from public transportation stop / station
* Step-free, easy access from hotel to transport stop
* Step-free entrance to hotel.
	+ Is there a separate entrance for wheelchair users?
* Sufficient, accessible space in lobby / entrance area.
* Low desk for check-in.
* Step-free access throughout hotel amenities (reception, dining, etc.).
* All ramps have handrails, non-slip surfaces, and are a reasonable gradient.
* Number of lifts.
* Lift door width 90 cm wide or wider.
* Entrance door and doorways in public spaces and guest rooms 90 cm wide or wider.
* Door handles at regular height.
* Floors are slip free.
* Carpets are not deep pile or too thick.
* Stairs are even height, have handrails, and colour contrast
* Visible signage in large font with colour contrast
* Accessible emergency exits
* Fire alarms emit an audible sound and visual strobing light
* Clear, accessible evacuation plan for people with disabilities
* Free moving space of 90 cm between furniture and 150 cm rotation space
* Tactile distinction on key cards
* Wall- or ceiling-mounted hoists for bed and bath
* Portable hoists for bed and bath
* Temperature controls, lights, plug sockets at easy reach
* Accessible toilet with 150 cm rotation space, handrails, easy grip flush controls
* Accessible sink with easy grip taps and easy reach towels
* Roll-in level shower with wall-mounted seat and handrail.
* Accessible bathtub with handrails and transfer plan.
* Hotel staff available to serve buffet meals
* Some dining tables at accessible height (not bar height)

Notes:

#### Transportation

* Accessibility requirements for flights requested for participant travel that is centrally organised
* Budget reserved for reasonable accommodations for flights
* Site visit conducted of main public transportation routes between airport, hotel, and venue
* Accessibility web page and public transportation contact details shared with participants
* Step-free access for all points of the journey (including within stations) for public transportation
* Accessible taxi service options identified and communicated to participants with contact details and service limitations
* Private hire coaches have step free access for wheelchair users.
	+ Number of wheelchairs each coach can accommodate.
	+ Accessible taxis booked due to inaccessible coaches.
* Step-free, safe walking route to venue.
* Distance from hotel to venue.
* Step-free access to surrounding amenities.
* Mobility scooter and wheelchair rental providers’ contact details shared with participants

Notes:

#### Programmes and Presenters

* Persons with disabilities leading or consulted on sessions focused on disability
* Agenda provides for breaks approximately every 90 minutes and breaks are at least 20 minutes long
* Presentations and handouts shared with participants, sign language interpreters, and captioners prior to event
* Presenters are briefed on how to make slides and visual aids accessible
* All slides are checked prior to meeting for accessibility
* All videos are checked prior to meeting for accessibility
* Volunteers are briefed on supporting Q&A sessions to be accessible
* Sessions are kept to time, including breaks, on the day of the meeting
* Accessibility cards are provided and explained to presenters and participants
* Meeting evaluation asks about the accessibility of the meeting

Notes:

## Annex III – Glossary

**Accessibility:** A precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently, actively participate in society, and have unrestricted enjoyment of all rights and freedoms on an equal basis with others. The extent to which products, systems, services, environments and facilities can be used by people with diverse requirements, needs, characteristics and capabilities to achieve identified goals in identified contexts of use.

**Accessibility features:** Any accessible technology, assistive technology, or specialty hardware and software that are either built-in or added on to products. The purpose of these features is to make technology easier to use by meeting a user preference, a user need, or facilitating a user interaction with the technology.

**Accessibility focal person:** A person designated to address accessibility concerns before, during, and after the meeting, but it may be a shared responsibility coordinated between two or more people for very large meetings. The focal point should serve as the main contact for accessibility needs and reasonable accommodation requests, as well as for questions and complaints during the meeting or event, including on call.

**Accessible formats:** Information available in formats such as, but not limited to, Braille, tactile graphics, large print, text-to-speech, oral presentation, electronic files compatible with screen readers, captioned or signed video for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or icons and animations, 3D models for persons with intellectual disabilities.

**Alternative text (alt-text):** The content of images, graphs, and charts that should be added to every image that conveys meaning in communications materials, including online articles, resolutions, and PowerPoint presentations.

**Assistive devices and technology:** Devices used to assist a person with a disability, e.g., wheelchair, loop systems, or computer-based equipment. Specific examples of assistive technology include computers with assistive devices including screen readers, Braille and other assistive keyboards; portable DAISY players, hearing aids, bone conduction headsets, specialised mice, and Braille notetakers.

**Audio description:** Additional audible narrative, interleaved with the dialogue, which describes the significant aspects of the visual content of audio-visual media that cannot be understood from the main soundtrack alone.

**Autism spectrum disorder:** Characterised by barriers to social interaction, communication, learning, sensory and / or neuro-developmental processing. It is an umbrella term for autism, Asperger syndrome, and pervasive developmental disorders.

**Braille:** System of embossed characters for persons who are blind or partially sighted, formed by using a Braille cell, a combination of six dots consisting of two vertical columns of three dots each.

**Braille display:** Hardware connected to a computer that echoes screen text on a box that has cells consisting of pins that move up and down to create Braille characters.

**Communication:** Includes languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means, and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology.

**Communication access real-time translation (CART) / Captioning:** A person who is either physically present in the room or connected remotely via the internet types down word for word (verbatim) what is being said during the meeting in real time, which is displayed on a screen or device.

**Organisation of persons with disabilities (DPO):** Representative organisations of persons with disabilities in which persons with disabilities constitute a majority of the overall staff, board, and volunteers at all levels of the organisation. They are non-profit organisations that work at the national or community level to advocate for and advise on disability policies and often provide disability-related services. Organisations that provide disability services but are not led by persons with disabilities are not DPOs.

**Easy read:** Information designed specifically for people with intellectual disabilities that may include plain language and pictures.

**Guide interpreter:** A person trained to facilitate communication as well as orientation for deafblind people.

**Hearing loop/audio induction loop:** A special type of sound system for use by people with hearing aids and/or cochlear implants. The hearing loop provides a magnetic, wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid when it is set to ‘T’ (Telecoil) setting.

**Hoist:** A device used for lifting or lowering a person from one point to another, usually a short distance, such as from a wheelchair to a bed. They may be mounted to a wall or ceiling or mobile and on wheels.

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICT):** An umbrella term that includes any information and communication device or application and its content. This encompasses a wide range of access technologies, such as radio, television, satellite, mobile phones, fixed lines, computers, network hardware, and software.

**Intellectual disability:** Characterised by barriers to reasoning, learning, problem solving, and changes to daily life

**Mobility scooter:** An electrically powered scooter designed for people with physical disabilities, often used on a limited basis to aid in walking a long distance.

**Paratransit:** A transportation service, typically involving buses or vans, that provides transportation as needed for persons with disabilities or older persons. It often is provided as a supplement to fixed-route bus and rail systems by public transit agencies.

**Personal assistant / assistance:** A person who performs a range of supportive tasks for a person with disabilities in order to ensure their independence. Depending on the requirements of the persons with disabilities, they may assist with mobility or getting from place to place, personal care (e.g., feeding, washing, dressing), the use of personal belongings (e.g., getting a laptop out of a bag, packing a suitcase), paperwork (e.g., filling in forms), communication (e.g., repeating or clarifying what has been said), managing anxieties, and other tasks, as needed.

**Physical disability:** Characterised by barriers to mobility, physical capacity, dexterity, or stamina which limits independence.

**Plain language:** Clear, straightforward expression, using only as many words as are necessary.

**Psychosocial disability:** Characterised by pervasive issues with mental health and barriers between psychological and social or cultural factors. Psychosocial disabilities are invisible, can be episodic, and are prone to stigma and social exclusion.

**Reasonable accommodation:** Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden to the organisation, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**Sans Serif font:** A category of typefaces that do not use serifs, small lines at the ends of characters. Popular sans serif fonts include Helvetica, Avant Garde, Arial, Geneva, and Verdana. Serif fonts include Times Roman, Courier, New Century Schoolbook, and Palatino. The best option for accessible websites and documents is a popular font with a clean, sans serif aesthetic.

**Screen reader:** A software program used to allow reading of content and navigation of the screen using speech or Braille output. Used primarily by blind and partially sighted people. JAWS and NVDA are examples.

**Sensory disability:** Characterised by barriers to communication and / or accessing information through sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste, and / or spatial awareness.

**Service, guide, or assistance dog:** A specially trained dog to help a person with a disability. Service dogs come in a variety of breeds and sizes, and they usually wear a vest or harness to identify them as service dogs.

**Signage:** Signs that indicate directions or locations both inside and outside buildings.

**Sign language interpreter:** A person certified in interpreting between a spoken and a signed language. Sign languages are natural languages that have the same linguistic properties as spoken languages. They have evolved over the years in different deaf communities and vary greatly between countries and regions. International Sign exists but is not universally understood by all sign language users. Sign language interpreters often work in pairs or small groups for long events to allow for periods of rest and to support the other interpreter in case something is missed.

**Step-free:** Access via lifts, ramps, or level surfaces so that you do not need to use stairs or escalators and avoiding gaps between surfaces, such as a train and platform.

**Transcript:** A text only version of what has been said during a meeting or in a video, usually not real time and generally limited to speech only. They are not a recommended substitute for captions but can help to revisit the content later.

**Transfer plan:** A bench, chair, or other device or surface to enable the user to sit on in order to ease into a bathtub. The user usually sits on the bench or chair, which straddles the side of the tub, and gradually slides from outside to inside the tub.

**Transit airport:** An airport used as a connection point between two flights before reaching the final destination. This usually requires passengers to change planes, and sometimes carriers. It may require the change of terminals within the airport.

**Universal design:** The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

**Web accessibility:** is web-based content with which persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, interact, and contribute.