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**Tourism and related services —  
Accessible tourism for all —  
Requirements and recommendations**

*Tourisme et services connexes — Tourisme accessible pour tous —  
Exigences et recommandations*

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Published in Switzerland

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

ISO 21902:2021

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/iso/b2c679e8-e795-4766-9d73-ee4f35b3d3fa/iso-21902-2021>

## Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy. At the time of writing, there are around 1,4 billion people travelling the world and the sector is responsible for 1 out of 11 jobs worldwide. However, travelling can be a challenging process throughout the entire tourism supply chain for the 15 % of the world's population who live with some form of disability and people with access requirements.

An improvement in accessibility in the tourism sector would equally benefit elderly people, in particular considering that the share of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 9 % in 2019 to 16 % in 2050. (Source: UN Commission on Population and Development reports, <https://population.un.org/PofilesOfAgeing2019/index.html>)

People with disabilities or other access requirements can face physical, sensory, cognitive and cultural barriers within the tourism sector and in many destinations. When searching for suitable venues and tourism services, it can be difficult to find clear and accurate information on the accessibility of the offer, service or the destination facility. This situation can be improved with more consistently applied standards and better training of tourism professionals.

Some documents exist (e.g. codes, standards and guides) which outline the recommendations and requirements for some of the key aspects of accessibility in different environments and services (e.g. aviation). In addition, there are also standards which refer to Universal Design for transport services and work environments without taking into account the core aspects of travel and tourism. However, the existing standards present gaps and can differ between countries and even between different regions within the same country. This can create unrealistic expectations about the accessibility of services and facilities that the visitor is expecting to find at the destination.

Most studies of accessible tourism have shown that one of the major difficulties for the application of standards is the lack of knowledge among tourism providers about the existing tools and possible solutions. There is a lack of information on where to find guidance and there can be contradictory information in different standards between different countries and regions, while in some countries there are no available standards. Furthermore, tourism providers face difficulties in knowing how to proceed in situations for which no International Standards have been adopted yet.

The public sector has a responsibility to promote universally accessible tourism environments and services for citizens and visitors. This can be achieved by establishing procedures to require accessibility for every project that receives public funding. It is estimated that public procurement makes up between 15 % and 20 % of global GDP<sup>1)</sup>. Thus, public authorities can show leadership in tourism development by requiring Universal Design in public procurement tenders and when awarding contracts for infrastructure, buildings, transportation and equipment. In this way – where public investments are directed towards tourism development – planners, designers, manufacturers and tourism suppliers will be encouraged to create accessible tourism environments and destinations, thus bringing benefits to visitors, businesses and local communities.

Currently there is a relatively low supply of accessible services in the tourism supply chain, while the demand for such services is growing. The development and application of an International Standard will assist travel providers and their suppliers in addressing their current accessibility provisions.

This aspirational document sets out best practice requirements and recommendations. It is possible that for some travel providers in some settings, meeting these requirements will be a disproportionate or undue burden, in which case these travel providers will possibly not be able to apply this document.

A mapping exercise has been completed to inform the development of this document.

This document takes into account the following aspects:

- a) Core requirements and recommendations (applicable to all stakeholders) dealing with design of services, information and communication, training and built environment.

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1) [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement_en)

- b) Separate clauses for different types of stakeholders:
- policies and strategies for the public sector;
  - transport;
  - urban and rural tourist spaces;
  - leisure activities;
  - MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions);
  - accommodation;
  - food and beverage services;
  - tour operators and travel agencies.

This document is addressed to a wide range of stakeholders in order to cover the whole accessible tourism value chain:

- national or regional public administrations [including national tourism administrations (NTAs), national or regional tourism promotion boards, destination management organizations (DMOs), municipalities, public entities in charge of infrastructure polices, development and legislative or regulatory frameworks, organizations or professionals working in the field of cultural heritage management and protection];
- travel and tourism industry stakeholders [investors in destinations and tourism industry, travel and tourism businesses, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across the tourism sector: transportation, accommodation, tour operators and travel agencies, transport manufacturers, hospitality and catering, other tourism providers and trade associations];
- enterprises and organizations from the support sectors: for example, companies entrusted with the execution of construction works within destinations, architects, developers and promoters of support tools and services for people with specific access requirements, and companies or professionals operating in the area of information and communication technology (ICT);
- tourism destinations;
- end users (i.e. tourists and the local population with or without specific access requirements).



# Tourism and related services — Accessible tourism for all — Requirements and recommendations

## 1 Scope

This document establishes requirements and provides guidelines for “accessible tourism for all” with the aim of ensuring equal access and enjoyment of tourism by the widest range of people of all ages and abilities.

This document provides information on the key aspects of policy making, strategy, infrastructure, products and services and is addressed to all stakeholders involved in the tourism supply chain, whether from the public or private sector. It applies at local, regional, national and international levels.

**NOTE** Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, public administrations, accommodation services, catering and restaurant services, transport, tour operators and travel agencies, MICE and leisure activities, as well as service providers from other economic sectors related to tourism, travel and destination management, including their contractors and suppliers.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60118-4, *Electroacoustics — Hearing aids — Part 4: Induction-loop systems for hearing aid purposes — System performance requirements*

## 3 Terms and definitions

[ISO 21902:2021](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/iso/b2c679e8-e795-4766-9d73-ee4f35b3d3fa/iso-21902-2021)

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/iso/b2c679e8-e795-4766-9d73-ee4f35b3d3fa/iso-21902-2021>

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **accessibility**

extent to which products, systems, services, environments and facilities can be used by people from a population with the widest range of user needs, characteristics and capabilities to achieve identified goals in identified contexts of use

Note 1 to entry: Context of use includes direct use or use supported by assistive technologies.

[SOURCE: ISO 9241-112:2017, 3.15]

### 3.2

#### **accessible guest room**

room that has specific characteristics that allow accommodation for persons with disabilities and that facilitates independence, comfort and a safe environment

**3.3  
accessible tourism**

tourism that involves a collaborative *Universal Design* (3.19) process with stakeholders that enables people with access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access, to function independently and with equity through the delivery of accessible products, services and environments

**3.4  
accessible tourism observatory**

monitoring body that carries out systematic, timely and regular analysis of the tourism sector's performance in terms of *accessibility* (3.1) with a view to the continuous improvement of accessible tourism policies and strategies

**3.5  
alternative format**

multiple means of presentation  
different ways of presenting information

Note 1 to entry: Providing different ways of manipulation and control can improve the accessibility of systems.

Note 2 to entry: Alternative formats ensure equal access to the information for the user.

**3.6  
assistance dog**

dog specifically trained by professionals to perform tasks to mitigate the limitations of a person with a disability

Note 1 to entry: There are three recognized categories of assistance dog: guide dogs, hearing dogs and service dogs for persons with disabilities (see <https://assistancedogsinternational.org/>).

Note 2 to entry: Other type of animals can sometimes be assimilated in this category.

**3.7  
destination management organization  
DMO**

leading organizational entity which can encompass the various authorities, stakeholders and professionals and facilitates tourism sector partnerships towards a collective destination vision

Note 1 to entry: The governance structures of DMOs vary from a single public authority to a public or private partnership model with the key role of initiating, coordinating and managing certain activities such as implementation of tourism policies, strategic planning, product development, promotion and marketing and convention bureau activities.

Note 2 to entry: The functions of DMOs can vary from national to regional and local levels depending on the current and potential needs as well as on the decentralization level of public administration. Not every tourism destination has a DMO.

[SOURCE: United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), *UNWTO Tourism Definitions*, available at <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284420858>]

**3.8  
disability**

physical, mental, intellectual or sensory *impairments* (3.10) which in interaction with various barriers can hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others

[SOURCE: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 2, available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>]

**3.9****hearing enhancement system**

piece of equipment, product system, hardware, software or service that is used to increase, maintain or improve listening capabilities of individuals with hearing impairments

Note 1 to entry: Hearing enhancement systems amplify audible communication and can be helpful to people who have hearing loss. They include a direct wire system, an induction loop system, an infrared system or a radio frequency system. All of these systems transmit a signal. Special-purpose receivers are required for infrared and radio frequency systems, while hearing aids equipped with a T-switch can receive the signal from an induction loop system. Receivers can be equipped to be compatible with hearing aids.

[SOURCE: ISO 21542:2021, 3.14]

**3.10****impairment**

limitation in body function or structure such as a significant deviation or loss which can be temporary or permanent, slight or severe and can fluctuate over time

[SOURCE: ISO 21542:2021, 3.16]

**3.11****organization**

person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives

Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to, sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, association, non-governmental organisation (NGO), charity or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.2.1, modified — Note 1 to entry has been modified and Note 2 to entry has been deleted.]

**3.12****participation**

person's involvement in a life situation [ISO 21902:2021](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/iso/b2c679e8-e795-4766-9d73-ec4f35b3d3fa/iso-21902-2021)

[SOURCE: WHO, *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)*, 2021]

**3.13****reasonable adjustment**

reasonable accommodation

necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights and fundamental freedoms

Note 1 to entry: In order to avoid confusion, reasonable adjustment is the term used in this document.

[SOURCE: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 2, available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>, modified — 'reasonable adjustment' is now the permitted term.]

**3.14****requirement**

need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.6.4, modified — Notes to entry removed.]

### 3.15

#### **resting area**

non-supervised area designed to accommodate persons who need to rest and relax during a tourism activity

Note 1 to entry: This type of area is intended for people who need to take medication, those who have chronic pain or fatigue or people with autism, Asperger syndrome or epilepsy who need to relax and calm down for a while. This area is not intended for the treatment of people with illness or other conditions that possibly require medical attention.

### 3.16

#### **stakeholder**

individual, group, organization or authority involved in the *accessible tourism* (3.3) value chain

Note 1 to entry: Stakeholders can be grouped into the following major categories:

- national or regional public administrations [including national tourism administrations (NTAs), national or regional tourism promotion boards, destination management organizations (DMOs), municipalities, public entities in charge of infrastructure polices, development and legislative or regulatory frameworks, organizations or professionals working in the field of cultural heritage management and protection];
- travel and tourism industry stakeholders [investors in destinations and tourism industry, travel and tourism businesses, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across the tourism sector: transportation, accommodation, tour operators and travel agencies, transport manufacturers, hospitality and catering, other tourism providers and trade associations];
- enterprises and organizations from the support sectors: for example, companies entrusted with the execution of construction works within destinations, architects, developers and promoters of support tools and services for people with specific access requirements, and companies or professionals operating in the area of information and communication technology (ICT);
- tourism destinations;
- end users (i.e. tourists and the local population with or without specific access requirements).

### 3.17

#### **tourism destination**

physical space with or without administrative and/or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight, consisting of a clustering or co-location of products and services and of activities and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of analysis of tourism

Note 1 to entry: A destination incorporates various stakeholders and can network to form larger destinations. It is also intangible with its image and identity, which can influence its market competitiveness.

[SOURCE: United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), *UNWTO Tourism Definitions*, available at <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284420858>]

### 3.18

#### **Universal Design**

design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design

Note 1 to entry: Universal design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups or persons with disabilities where this is needed.

Note 2 to entry: Terms such as Universal Design, accessible design, design for all, barrier-free design, inclusive design and transgenerational design are often used interchangeably with the same meaning.

[SOURCE: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 2, available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>]

**3.19****usability**

extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use

[SOURCE: ISO 9241-210:2019, 3.13, modified — Notes to entry removed.]

**3.20****verbal communication**

sounds and words used by somebody to communicate a message to someone else

**4 Core requirements and recommendations****4.1 General****4.1.1 General consideration**

The requirements and recommendations of [Clause 4](#) are applicable to all tourism service providers, together with those requirements and recommendations established for the specific activity in the relevant clause of this document.

EXAMPLE A restaurant will conform to the common requirements of [Clause 4](#) plus the requirements indicated in [Clause 11](#), the specific clause relevant to restaurant services.

Tourism service providers shall make the necessary changes in order for their offer to be inclusive and accessible for all, taking into consideration the principle of reasonable adjustment.

In addition to this core clause, this document includes specific clauses for tourism service providers, such as but not limited to:

- policies and strategies for the public sector;
- transport;
- urban and rural tourist spaces;
- leisure activities;
- MICE;
- accommodation;
- food and beverage services;
- tour operators and travel agencies.

It is important that the whole tourism value chain is accessible.

**4.1.2 Legal requirements**

The tourism service provider shall:

- a) identify the legal requirements applicable to the services offered;
- b) determine how these requirements apply to the services offered;
- c) ensure that these applicable legal requirements are taken into account when offering its services.

NOTE Data protection regulation is relevant when collecting and sharing information provided by the tourist.

## 4.1.3 Specific consideration

If a person with a disability is accompanied by an assistance dog (or other service animal depending on jurisdiction), the provider of goods or services shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. Whenever the destination country does not have a legal requirement for allowing assistance dogs to enter premises, the policy of the tourism service provider about guidance and assistance dogs and other pets should be indicated at the entrance and other formats of customer communications.

In the entrances of places where leisure activities are undertaken and in other spaces where people wait, priority access should be given to people with reduced mobility and any other needs that create a difficulty in waiting (e.g. people on the autistic spectrum, people with mental health problems).

## 4.2 Design of accessible services

### 4.2.1 General

Tourism service providers should adopt a holistic approach, ensuring that all parts of the tourist experience use a Universal Design approach in the processes to be inclusive and accessible for all. This can result in a gap analysis (i.e. identification of the weakest link) of the supply chain which identifies the needs of diverse customers with respect to the kind of disability or impairment they have – since the chain is not stronger than its weakest link for the tourist with disabilities.

This means that all the “touchpoints” of customer service should be accessible, from the initiation phase involving customer information and booking or reservation processes to the preparation and execution of the journey, the design and organization of services offered at the venue and the overall management of customer relations.

The emphasis on designing accessible services is to ensure that, firstly, each supplier adequately addresses customers’ access requirements and, secondly, that suppliers cooperate with each other, upstream and downstream in the value chain, to deliver an unbroken chain of accessibility for the customer.

Tourism products and services should be designed in accordance with the Universal Design principles (see [Annex A](#)) and guidelines (see [Annex B](#)).

### 4.2.2 Product development

The design of accessible tourism services shall:

- a) take into account the various access requirements that meet the needs of tourists, including persons with disabilities;
- b) be provided in an equitable way or through reasonable adjustments where necessary;
- c) take into account the safety and security of users.

Accessible tourism services should:

- allow flexibility and choice;
- be in sufficient supply for the number of customers (e.g. accessible menus, accessible areas in venues, hearing loops)
- be available without surcharge wherever reasonable.

NOTE Providing a paid service can be better than providing no service at all.