Accessibility in events
A toolkit

Generalitat de Catalunya
Agència Catalana de Turisme

Accessibility is essential for 10% of the population, necessary for 40% of the population and comfortable for 100% of the population.

Presentation

The approval of the new Accessibility Code of Catalonia, in force since 1 March 2024, demonstrates a clear will of the autonomous region: to remove more barriers — of a physical, communicative and attitudinal nature — in order to guarantee equal opportunities for all and the non-discrimination of persons with disabilities.

The MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) tourism sector strives to adhere to this important collective commitment. For this reason, the Catalunya Convention Bureau of the Catalan Tourist Board has decided to promote this publication, which is addressed to all stakeholders involved in the organisation of MICE events such as congresses, conferences, conventions, symposiums and general meetings.

The challenge of incorporating the principle of accessibility into events is a golden opportunity to help shape a more inclusive and friendly society which respects diversity and puts the individual at the heart of its decision-making. Making progress in this area will allow us to leave a legacy that brings added value to our activities. This publication sets out the path to follow and presents the tools we have at our disposal to take steps forward as a society. We'll do it together, step by step.

How to easily navigate the document

Content and structure

- There are six chapters, each with different sections, which briefly explain the '**whats**' and the '**whys**'.
- The '**hows**' are explained in the final and longest chapter, called the **Toolbox**. There are 20 tools in total, each of which functions as a standalone body of work.

Usability

- This is an accessible PDF.
- This means that it can be navigated with a screen reader and keyboard, and isn't limited to people who are able to use a mouse.
- You can jump to any section or tool from the Contents page.
- The first six chapters also contain internal links to the corresponding tools.
- Two of the tools (T4 and T5) are checklists. External links are provided to these documents. They can be filled out digitally, which removes the need to print them out as hard copies.
- There are also external links to websites.

Important recomendation

When opening the document, be sure to activate the bookmarks on the left-hand side. These serve as a kind of contents page that allows you to easily navigate between the different chapters, sections and tools.

Contents Page

Contents Page

1

What does making an event accessible entail?

Making a conference or event accessible entails:

- Removing physical, communicative and attitudinal barriers
- Respecting diversity
- Contributing to inclusion

- Focus on the attendee to improve their experience
- Create an environment that is more comfortable and convenient for everyone
- Provide exceptional added value
- Reinforce your corporate social responsibility (CSR)

1.1
Definition of accessibility

According to Law 13/2014 on accessibility, this principle refers to the set of conditions that must be met by an **environment** (space, building, service, means of transport, product, etc.) so that everyone can enjoy it in a safe, comfortable and autonomous way.

space

building

service

means of transport

product
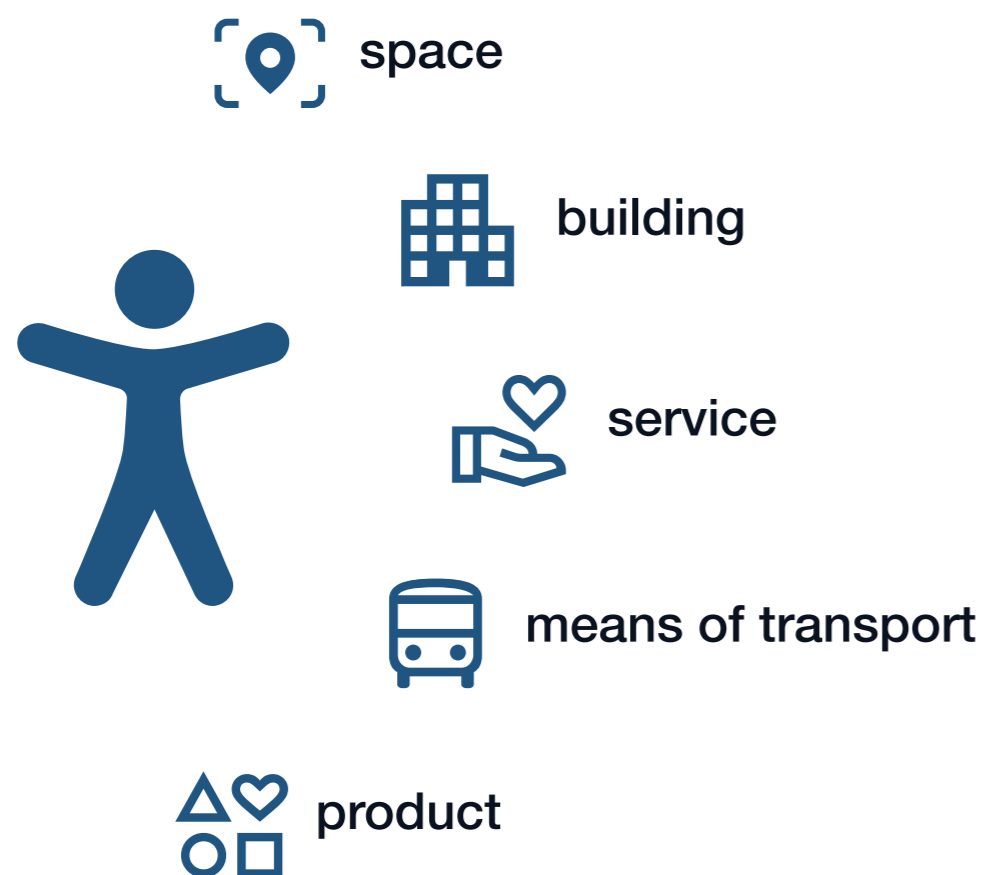
1.2
Key factors in an event's accessibility

- The diversity of attendees and the different ways in which they interact with their environment.

- The barriers that could ruin an attendee's participation in an event.

Accessibility is a right of an event's attendees and a legal obligation of its organisers.

1.3
The accessibility chain

○ It is helpful to think of accessibility as a chain.

○ You must do all you can to make sure that each link of the chain is accessible.

○ Make sure that all the links are well connected.

○ According to the UNE 170001 standard, the accessibility chain comprises reserved spaces, routes, transportation, location, signage, identification, technologies, building and communication.

The accessibility chain comprises:

Reserved spaces

Routes

Transportation

Location

Signage

Identification

Technologies

Building

Communication

1.4
Misconceptions about accessibility

o "It exclusively concerns people with disabilities": While it does concern them, it also concerns many people without disabilities.

o "It is usually at odds with attractive design": This document has been designed with accessible criteria, which disproves this claim straight away.

o "It's expensive": The most essential accessibility measures are totally free, it's just a case of planning for them.

o "It concerns the provision of care and is not suitable for professional conferences": On the contrary, attendee satisfaction will increase.

Everyone has or has had some degree of disability (be it visible, invisible, permanent or temporary) at some point in their life.

1.5
Examples of good practices

- People facing linguistic and/or cultural barriers will appreciate clear signage and the use of pictograms.

- People with food intolerances will appreciate information about allergens and gluten-free foods.

- People who are obese will appreciate the provision of wider seats in the halls, in the restaurant and on the bus.

- People with chemical sensitivities will appreciate the rooms not being scented with a strong-smelling air freshener.

- People who are visually-impaired will appreciate the use of good chromatic contrasts and clear fonts on the event's website.

- People who use crutches will appreciate the existence of seats or ischial supports in the transit areas, at reception and next to the lift.

- People with service dogs will appreciate you offering the dog a bowl of water.

1.6
Figures

1.3 billion people with disabilities around the world = 16% of the population = 1 in 6 people according to the WHO (World Health Organization).

87 million people with disabilities in Europe according to the EU (European Union).

4.38 million people with disabilities in Spain according to the INE (Spanish Institute of Statistics).

1.10 million people with disabilities in Catalonia according to the ESCA (Catalan Health Survey).

According to the Disability Observatory, **80% of disabilities** are not congenital. Rather, **they are acquired** through illness or accident.

1.7
Symbols

Everyone recognises accessible toilets or parking spaces when they are marked with the wheelchair symbol. However, accessibility reaches far beyond the allocation of these spaces. As an organisation, you have a golden opportunity to highlight your commitment to inclusion. You should use the representative symbols of accessibility in all of your publications.

From the wheelchair to the universal access symbol

The symbol most typically associated with accessibility is that of a person in a wheelchair. This is known as the International Symbol of Access, or ISA.

There is an updated version of the symbol that represents a more autonomous wheelchair user in movement. The symbol represents Persons with Reduced Mobility, or PRMs.

The three symbols shown below, meanwhile, represent visual, auditory and intellectual or psychic accessibility.

It is increasingly common to use a symbol that encompasses all accessibility needs. This universal symbol, which focuses more on the person rather than their physical or motor mobility, is most commonly used in digital environments.
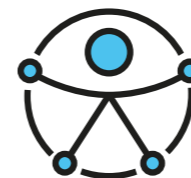
This icon is inspired by the symbol proposed by the UN. It depicts a human body within a circle and represents global reach and equal access for all. It is an adaptation of Leonardo da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man".

For more information about accessibility symbols, go to the following tool:

⚙ T1	T1 - Accessibility Symbols

2

Incorporating accessibility into planning

The best way to incorporate accessibility into the planning of a conference or event is by having the conviction and desire to do so. This is a non-negotiable starting point.

You can only take steps to improve people's experience at your event if you are committed to making it accessible from the very beginning. This is particularly true for people with disabilities or specific needs. This will help us make progress as a society and leave a legacy that will last long into the future.

2.1
Statement of Commitment

The first step of the planning phase is to state your commitment to holding an event that meets the legal accessibility guidelines and requirements.

How can I do this?

You can do it by including a statement along the following lines:

"We are committed to accessibility and inclusion", "We want to ensure that our conference is free of barriers, be they physical, communicative or relational", or "One of our goals is to make the event accessible, which we will achieve by taking into account diversity and the specific needs of everyone in attendance".

You could display this statement or claim on the event website's homepage, showing it as being 'signed' by the president of the convening body.

Alternatively, you could include it in the "About the event" or "Mission and values" section of the website. It is also recommended to mention this Statement of Commitment in the application dossier as an example of social responsibility.

2.2
Naming an access officer

You must designate a member of the organising committee as the event's access officer. Rather than focusing exclusively on accessibility, this individual will be given additional responsibilities to the ones they already have as part of the organising committee.

They don't need to be an expert in accessibility. They must simply understand the content of this manual and apply it across all areas of the organisation. For specific queries or concerns, they are free to consult a specialist.

Given the transversal nature of accessibility, the main function of the access officer is to bring together all issues concerning this principle and ensure that the guidelines are implemented before, during and after the event.

On the following page you will find a table outlining the functions of the access officer that need to be appropriately delegated

Functions of the access officer	
Time	**Functions**
BEFORE	Statement of Commitment
	Ask and identify the specific needs of speakers and attendees
	Select an accessible venue
	Assess the accessibility credentials of service providers
	Anticipate and decide on the necessary technical measures and assistance
	Contract additional services as required Inform and train staff
DURING	Check and monitor the implemented actions
AFTER	Obtain feedback from speakers and participants
	Assessment by the organising body
	Accessibility report

2.3
Importance of the registration form

The best way to identify the specific needs of participants, whether speakers or delegates, is via the event registration form.

The form received by participants must comply with digital accessibility guidelines. For more information, consult Chapter 5 on Communication.

How can I do this?

O   Ask if the participant has any specific mobility, communication or dietary requirements.

O   Set an application deadline.

O   Provide the contact details of the access officer.

Jump to the tool:

🔧	T2	T2 - Registration Form Model

3

Selecting the venue

3.1
Virtual events

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for accessible video conferencing technologies has become more evident. Video conferencing platforms have adapted with this in mind.

To choose the best platform for your event, you should consult the accessibility section of each platform's website. These sections will provide a detailed explanation of what the measures are and how they can be used.

The accessibility requirements for virtual events can be broken down into three main areas:

1. **The features of the platform**

   Make sure that the selected platform has all the features required by the attendees, whether speakers or non-speakers. This means, for example, that it must be compatible with screen readers (audio systems used by people who are blind) and offer subtitling services (for people who do not speak the language fluently or have a hearing impairment).

2. **The content that is shared**

   Make sure that the format of the content shared during the session is accessible. For example, the videos should have subtitles and audio descriptions and the graphic and legibility recommendations provided in the documents must be taken into account.

You must also remember that anticipation is key. For this reason, it's advisable to send the documents well in advance in an accessible format. This is because some participants will need to make their own adaptations prior to the session.

3. **Commitment to accessibility**
   Not only does accessibility benefit everyone, but it is also a legal obligation.

The accessibility challenges faced by persons with disabilities who attend or participate in virtual events will depend on these three factors.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T3	[T3 - How to Make a Virtual Event Accessible](#)

3.2
In-person events

Accessibility should be a determining factor when selecting a venue. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary to ascertain the full accessibility conditions of the event venue. This is true for several reasons:

- To identify and communicate strengths.
- To identify shortcomings and assess whether they can be resolved or if they make it impossible for the event to be fully accessible.
- To guarantee the participation of Persons with Reduced Mobility or other specific needs.

It is recommended to visit the venue beforehand to check the characteristics and degree of accessibility in the following areas:

- External spaces and access points: means of transport and route to the entrance, car park and reception area.
- Horizontal circulation inside the building: flooring, rest areas, signage of spaces and routes, lighting.
- Vertical circulation between the different floors: lifts, stairs.
- Public-access toilets
- Meeting rooms
- Relaxation space
- Venue website
- Restaurant and cafeteria
- Staff
- Emergency exits

On this visit, it is recommended to carry a plan or map of the different spaces so that you can take notes on accessibility-related matters. It is also recommended to document the visit by taking photos and videos.

Tool 4 includes a checklist with key questions that you should ask yourself when choosing an accessible venue. The aim of this questionnaire is to ask the recipient, with no jargon or technicalities, what makes a venue accessible. Alternatively, you could ask the venue's managers to fill in the questionnaire.

Sometimes, venue managers believe that the building fulfils all the accessibility requirements when this is not the case. In this case, you can raise their awareness of any shortcomings so that they can address the issues and implement solutions.

When we are the owners of the venue (for example in the case of a Conference Hall), the checklist will serve as a good self-evaluation tool.

Importance of the Relaxation Space

The venue must have a designated room or area for resting, meditating, breastfeeding, or simply enjoying a moment of calmness and tranquillity. This space must be comfortable and sufficiently isolated from ambient noise. Silence must also be respected. The Relaxation Space may also be referred to as a Quiet Space, a Peaceful Space or a Calm Space.

Jump to the tool:

	T4	[T4 - Venue Assessment Checklist](#)

4

Selecting the complementary services

4.1
Accommodation

Out of all the people who register to attend a conference, there may be some who require the accommodation to be adapted to their needs.

If accommodation reservation is one of the contracted services and the person has informed you of their needs and requirements in advance, you will need to find the most suitable room to make their stay as comfortable as possible.

Examples:

- Obviously, **wheelchair users** will need accommodation that is completely barrier-free with a well-adapted bedroom and bathroom.

- A **person who is obese** (and, therefore, classed as a person with reduced mobility) will require a bed with a firm, reinforced mattress. They will also need the different areas of the hotel to be close together so that they don't need to walk far to get from the entrance to the room.

- A **person with achondroplasia**, or a person of short stature, will appreciate an adapted room with low-level wardrobes and other fixtures.

- A **person who is blind** does not require an adapted room. However, they will appreciate the room number being marked in Braille and being assigned a room that is close to the lift or stairs.

o A **person who is deaf** will appreciate the room having warning or notification lights (doorbell, intercom, emergency alarm, etc.).

o A **person with epilepsy** travelling with their service dog will appreciate the hotel staff being trained on how to accommodate guests with epilepsy. In that case, they will request the guest to show the accreditation that grants their dog access to the hotel.

Jump to the tool:

🔧	T5	[T5 - Accessible Accommodation Assessment Checklist](#)
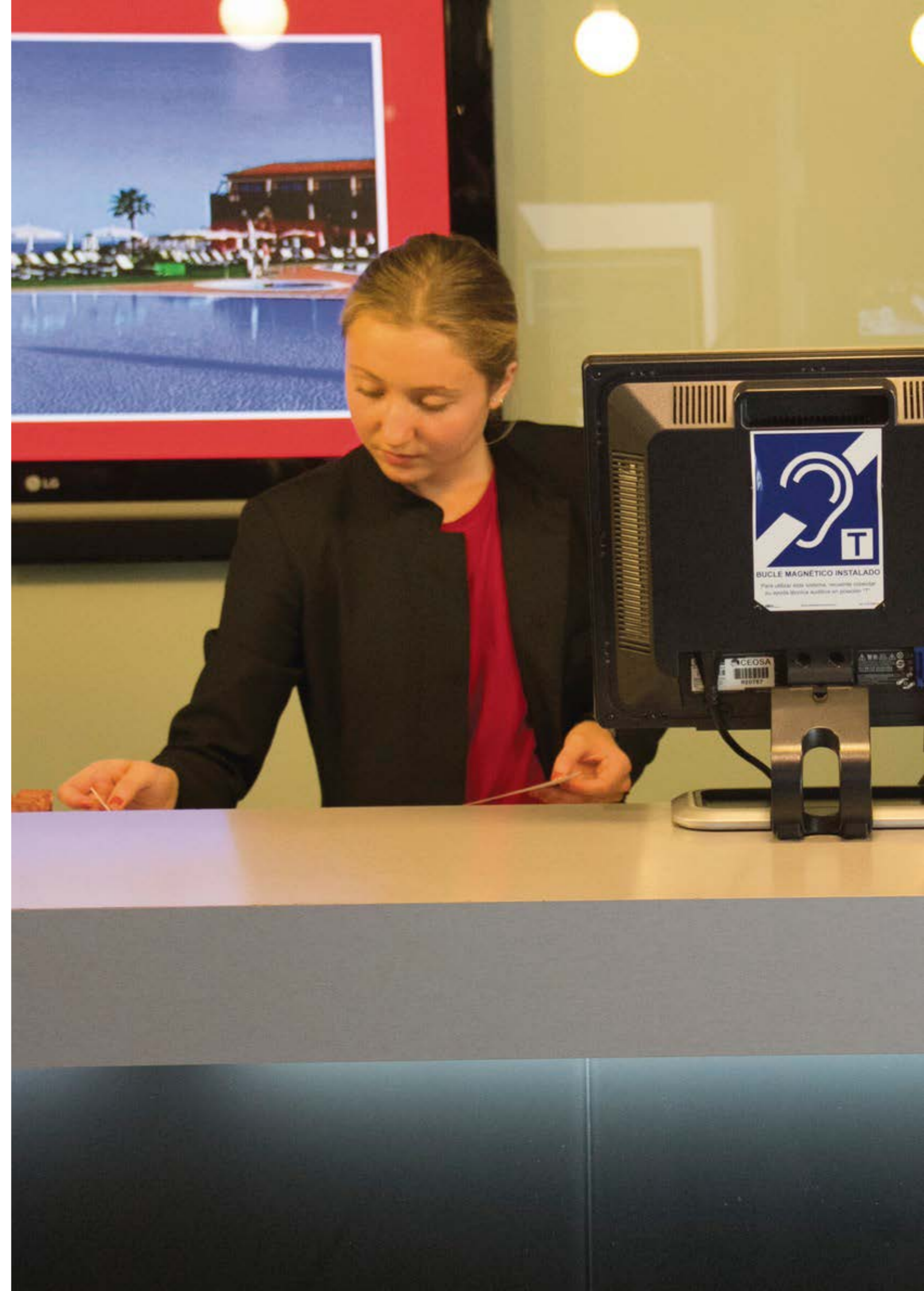
4.2
Transportation

Although most attendees will arrange their own transportation to the host city, some people may require transport-related assistance before and during the event. T2 - Registration Form Model is the best tool for establishing communication, as it has a section that asks specifically about mobility needs.

In order to be clear about the transportation arrangements that you can provide, you must collect information about public transport services, reserved parking spaces and adapted transport.

You must also ensure that the route to the entrance is accessible in terms of distance, width, flooring, lighting and general facilities, particularly for users of wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

o Public transport

Cities with good public transport services are not always accessible. You will need to evaluate the available options in order to inform participants of their accessibility or make alternative arrangements. The first part of the T4 - Venue Assessment Checklist concerns local transportation. Once you've selected the venue, you'll need to compile detailed information on "How to get there".

o Accessible parking spaces

Some Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRMs) may wish to travel to the event in their own vehicle. In this case, they will require accessible parking spaces that facilitate smooth transfer from the vehicle to the wheelchair and vice versa.

o Adapted taxi or vehicle

Public transport is not always accessible to everyone. As such, you should compile information on adapted taxi services and ascertain whether they're suitable for commuting to/from the venue or for transporting the attendee as part of an activity. You'll also need to ascertain whether the service can be used by the person for private purposes.

o Adapted buses and minibuses

Several things need to be considered in order to provide a discretional adapted bus or minibus service. For example, you'll need to check that the transfer areas are wide enough and suitable for wheelchair users.

As for the vehicles, you'll need to speak to the service provider to ensure that they meet the requirements of the wheelchair user.

- **Wheelchair and mobility scooter rental**

  Some venues provide a wheelchair loan service. However, use is sometimes restricted to the venue's premises. You will therefore need to compile information about wheelchair and mobility scooter rental companies before the event. There are many of these companies around. Furthermore, wheelchairs and mobility scooters can sometimes be rented from pharmacies and orthopaedic aids shops.

- **Service dogs**

  Users of service dogs are entitled to use any form of transport, so long as they carry the official permit and the animal is duly identified with a badge. The driver's refusal to let them use their means of transportation is illegal and reportable behaviour.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T6	T6 - Transport Requirements

4.3
Catering services

Restaurants, hotels, convention centres, banquet venues and other businesses offer a wide variety of catering services. The accessibility of these services must be taken into account when planning the event.

As with other topics that refer to accessibility, T2 - Registration Form Model is a helpful tool for asking attendees about their dietary needs, allergies and intolerances. You must also remember to ask speakers, presenters, volunteers and other members of staff.

Some attendees may have to eat outside of the established meal times. These may include people with diabetes, pregnant women or those who have to take medication. You must assign a space that is suitable for these people to eat. One such example could be the Relaxation Space.

In general, the following must be taken into account: circulation space, seats, tables, menu, assistance, allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements and buffets.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T7	T7 - Catering Requirements

4.4
Accessibility resources

There are a series of resources that serve to **remove communication barriers**, which are those that prevent or hinder access to information.

You will have to incorporate these complementary services if you want your event or conference to be truly inclusive and accessible. But why? Because they **add value** and allow the message to reach a much higher number of people than you might think.

Each of these accessibility resources has its own tool detailing what it is, what it is for, who it benefits and how it is implemented.

With the exception of the sign language interpretation service — which should be offered on demand if signing deaf people are in attendance, with the service being provided in the language of their choice — the rest of the resources should be integrated into any event in a standardised manner.

Subtitling
Essential for people who are hearing-impaired but useful for everyone, particularly if the person does not speak the language fluently or if the speech is delivered in a large space. Jump to the tool:

🔧 T8	T8 - Subtitling

Induction loop
This technical tool is essential for users of hearing aids or cochlear implants. Since deafness is an invisible disability, you'll be helping many more people than you realise. Jump to the tool:

🔧 T9	T9 - Induction Loop

Sign language interpreting
A sign language interpreter is a professional who acts as a communication bridge between speakers of two different languages: sign language and oral language; and between two different communities: the deaf community and the hearing community. Jump to the tool:

🔧 T10	T10 - Sign Language Interpreting

4.5
Parallel activities

Audio description
The translation of visual images into words is an essential resource for people who are blind and those who cannot see the images clearly. Jump to the tool:

🔧 T11	T11 - Audio description
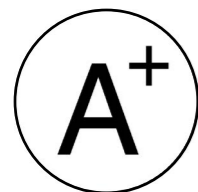
Materials printed in alternative formats
Printed materials often have very small font that is difficult to read. A document printed with larger, clearer and well-contrasted font makes reading easier for everyone. Jump to the tool:

🔧 T12	T12 - Materials Printed in Alternative Formats

When organising an event, accessibility measures are often only considered for the main event.

But what about the complementary or parallel activities? What if these activities are related to the main event but organised by another entity?

The appropriate accessibility measures must also be in place for parallel events such as dinners, galas, receptions, visits, concerts, speeches and other activities.

Who benefits?

If you want to host an accessible event that everyone can enjoy, you'll need to make sure that the accessibility chain is also fulfilled for parallel activities. Remember that if any link in the chain is broken, the experience cannot be considered complete.

When should measures be applied?

o **Venue:** if the activities are held somewhere other than the main event site, you'll have to check that this new venue meets the accessibility standards established by the organising body.

As for the main venue, it is recommended to visit the secondary venue beforehand to check the characteristics and degree of accessibility and to fill out the corresponding sections in the T4 - Venue Assessment Checklist.

o **Transport:** if the secondary venue is located a certain distance from the main venue, you'll need to revise accessible transportation options from both the main venue and the different accommodation locations. These are presented in T6 - Transport Requirements.

o **Catering:** revise the provisions of T7 - Catering Requirements and make sure that the requirements are met.

o **Various events:** when an event such as a dinner, a gala or a reception, etc., includes speeches, presentations, screenings, award presentations, etc., you'll need to provide the necessary accessibility resources.

In section 4.4 Accessibility resources, you'll find the measures that are required to guarantee the inclusion of all participants.

o **Recreational and sporting activities:** when proposing recreational or sporting activities, focus on those that allow everyone to take part without any barriers to participation. You should also make the accessibility measures offered by the company you outsource to a key factor in your decision.

5

Communicating and raising awareness

Many communication strategies follow these three basic steps:

1. **Knowing**
2. **Doing**
3. **Raising awareness**

Before communicating, you must be knowledgeable about the subject and have achieved something that warrants sharing.

You've already learned about accessibility (Knowing) and have incorporated its principles into the event's organisation (Doing). This chapter will now walk you through the third step, in which you let people know about these good practices (Raising awareness).

5.1
What should I communicate and how?

The best way to raise awareness about the accessibility of your event is via your website and social media pages.

Beyond what has already been said in sections 2.1 (Statement of Commitment) and 2.3 (Registration Form) on references to accessibility on your website, here are some other suggestions:

o   The section of your website describing the venue should include a sentence along the lines of "The conference venue is free of architectural barriers and has the following accessibility resources: Audio induction loop in meeting rooms, relaxation space, wheelchair loan service, ...", etc.

o   The FAQ section should include a question on accessibility along the lines of "Is the conference venue accessible?". The answer should indicate that it is a barrier-free venue that is well adapted to Persons with Reduced Mobility.

You could also include a more specific question about the sessions in the conference room along the lines of "Which accessibility resources are in place for the sessions?". The answer should indicate that subtitling services, amplified sound devices, etc. will be in place.

Remember that in the T4 - Venue Assessment Checklist, affirmative answers indicate good accessibility practices.

o   A photograph of the entrance to an auditorium with a sign indicating the existence of an Audio induction loop system (an ear with the letter 'T') will be well received on social media. This photo should be accompanied with a caption along the lines of "At [Conference name], we take care of our guests who are hearing-impaired".

Everything that follows in Chapter 5 are guidelines and recommendations for better and more accessible communication which allows your message to reach as many people as possible.

5.2
Legibility guidelines

Legibility refers to the form and graphic design of your texts that make them easy and pleasant to read. You should consider the following aspects:

- o Contrast between the font and the background
- o Typography
- o Font size
- o Text alignment
- o Line spacing and kerning

These guidelines are applicable to all types of media and documents, whether digital or printed. If you incorporate them into your texts, you'll make reading easier for everyone. This is particularly true for people who are visually-impaired or dyslexic.

Legibility is one of the two components of the "easy-to-read" principle, which takes into account the formal aspects of graphic design. The second component is readability, which refers to the linguistic aspects of content such as tone, syntax, terminology, sentence length, etc. Remember that a short, clear text reaches a wider audience more easily.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T13	T13 - Legibility Guidelines

5.3
Website and social media

When you seek to raise awareness of something, you need to consider the maximum number of people possible. Of course, this must include people with disabilities. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that they're not your target audience and that they won't interact with your website or social media pages. Remember, there are many types of invisible disabilities. By taking this into account, you'll be able to reach a wider audience.

Website

Holding a conference or event often requires the creation of a new website that has been specifically developed for the occasion. It is therefore a golden opportunity to make it as accessible and usable as possible **from its conception**. It is much easier to incorporate accessibility guidelines when building a new website than it is to remove digital barriers from an existing website.

What is an accessible website?

An accessible website has no barriers and can be navigated by users of all profiles, regardless of:

- o their capabilities
- o their device (computer, tablet, mobile phone, etc.)
- o their browser
- o their environment (noisy, low lighting, etc.)

o   their way of interacting with the website (for example, not everyone can use a mouse or visual cursor). Some people browse exclusively using a keyboard, whereas others use a screen reader, etc.

Can accessibility and attractive design go hand in hand?

Of course they can! All that is needed is for the programming and design to incorporate the WCAG 2.2 guidelines for accessible content established by the WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative), a commission or working group within the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) that oversees the accessibility of websites and digital environments.

Jump to the tool:

| 🔧 T14 | [T14 - How to Make an Accessible Website](#) |

Advantages of an accessible website

o   **Increased usability** or ease of browsing: while a usable page is not always accessible, an accessible page will always be usable. This means that the browsing is easier and more comfortable for all users.

o   **Improved search engine indexing** and SEO positioning: measures such as textual alternatives and a good semantic structuring of the contents make it easier for search engines to retrieve information quickly and accurately.

o   **Widened target audience**: users can connect to accessible pages from any device. This considerably increases the number of potential users.

o   **Brand image**: corporate social responsibility is increasingly becoming an essential requirement.

o   Last but not least... **compliance with the law:** current regulations oblige institutions, public entities and companies that receive subsidies from public administrations to make their websites accessible.

Social media pages

Communication via social media pages is increasingly important in the digital sector. The increased awareness of the importance of accessibility has led social media platforms to incorporate additional measures and mechanisms.

Check the accessibility section on the websites of social media platforms to learn about their measures and how they are applied.

Professional social media pages are usually managed by a person known as a Community Manager (CM). However, this role is often carried out directly by people who have not received professional training. In any case, there are general guidelines that apply to most published content, regardless of the social media platform.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T15	[T15 - How to Publish Accessible Content on Social Media Platforms](#)

5.4
Documents

All event attendees must have access to the content, regardless of their personal, technological or environmental limitations. An accessible website that hosts non-accessible documents cannot be considered accessible. Digital barriers are difficult to detect because documents contain a hidden structure that lies beyond what we see on the screen.

In T16, you'll find recommendations for creating accessible documents in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Following these guidelines, such as indicating the language of the text, will allow screen readers to assign the appropriate voice.

Once the base document has been generated, you need to make sure it remains accessible when you convert it to PDF. A PDF is a standard document that has its own tags and rules which must be applied and reviewed to ensure its accessibility.

Furthermore, search engines will better index and prioritise properly prepared documents over those that are not, which will improve the SEO positioning and reach of your documents.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T16	T16 - Accessible Document Guidelines

5.5
Terminology

Words matter. All terminology has certain connotations and is subject to debate. Just as society evolves, so does the use of words. The embrace of diversity and the adoption of social inclusion policies require the use of positive, respectful and non-connotative terms.

Using appropriate language in the field of accessibility responds, among other things, to:

- putting the person before the disability
- avoiding euphemisms and paternalism
- rejecting outdated, offensive or pejorative terms.

In 2006, the UN International Convention adopted the term **'Persons with disabilities'** to refer to individuals with functional diversity. This is the term that appears in current legal regulations.

In everyday speech, you may have doubts or make unintentional mistakes when referring to disabilities. No one wants to offend anyone and everyone wants to be respectful. The only thing getting in the way is a lack of knowledge.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T17	T17 - Table of appropriate terminology

5.6
Presentations

Presentations and working sessions are the crux of a conference. When the organisation's scientific committee selects the topics and experts to form part of the programme, the focus is often placed exclusively on the content of the conferences and the profile of the speakers. While the 'what' and 'who' are obviously essential, 'how' it is communicated also matters a great deal.

If accessibility criteria are incorporated, communication between the speaker and their audience will be improved. These criteria cover the formal aspects that a speaker must take into account so that their message can reach everyone in as clear and fluent a way as possible.

The recommendations are very simple and easy to implement. The access officer must send these recommendations to the speakers in advance and convince them of the added value they will bring to their presentations.

If the speaker or lecturer has a disability, ask them what support(s) they need and help them where possible during the presentation.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T18	T18 - Recommendations for speakers on accessible presentations

5.7
Support staff

Customer service is a basic pillar of communication. In the case of persons with disabilities, it is even more essential to treat them appropriately and respectfully.

Remember that attitudinal barriers are those that can generate the most frustration. They are also the most avoidable ones. Basic training can help prevent improper attitudes and behaviours. Without this training, you may accidentally say or do the wrong thing, despite having the best of intentions.

If you want your event to be enjoyable for everyone in attendance, you must have a knowledgeable organising committee and a well-informed and trained customer care staff.

O Informed: the staff must know what the accessibility resources are, what they're for and how they are used.

O Trained: interacting with people with disabilities can create uncomfortable situations if you're not used to doing so or aren't aware of the guidelines for interacting with them.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T19	T19 - Recommendations for interacting with persons with disabilities

6

Evaluating for a better future

Evaluating accessibility after the event is essential if you want to move forward and leave a legacy that allows for a better future.

This is the final task of the access officer. Their functions before, during and after the event have already been provided in the table in Chapter 2.2.

The accessibility activities must be evaluated both externally and internally.

1. **Externally:** lget feedback from participants and speakers, especially from those who indicated any specific mobility, communication or dietary needs in the registration form.

   To give participants the opportunity to both assess and express their views, we suggest asking them the following two questions:

   - If you have used any accessibility services or resources, how do you rate them? (Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor)

   - Do you have any comments or suggestions for improvement? (Open answer)

   Below is an illustrative example in table format.

Please score the accessibility of the services from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent)

Score	1	2	3	4
Website usability	○	○	○	○
PRM accommodation	○	○	○	○
Adapted transport	○	○	○	○
Subtitling	○	○	○	○
Induction loop	○	○	○	○
SL interpreting	○	○	○	○
Audio description	○	○	○	○
Special dietary requirements	○	○	○	○
Attitude and treatment of the staff	○	○	○	○

Do you have any comments or suggestions for improvement?

2. **Internally:** the organising committee must conduct a self-evaluation. However, you should also take into account the views and opinions of the auxiliary staff who helped the attendees directly, either at the hospitality desk, in the cafeteria or during the bus transfers. Comments about their personal experience will be highly valuable.

On the other hand, remember that all subsequent actions must also adhere to the accessibility guidelines and recommendations. For example: sending the satisfaction survey, writing up the minutes of the sessions or uploading recordings from the conference to the website.

Finally, you must produce a short internal report that documents everything concerning the event's accessibility. This last step is very important in leaving a legacy that will help to bring about improvements in the future.

Jump to the tool:

🔧 T20	[T20 - Event Accessibility Report](#)

7

Toolbox

T1
Accessibility Symbols

On this page you will find the most important and frequently used symbols concerning accessibility.

First, it is important that you recognise the four main symbols:

The wheelchair, which represents motor or physical accessibility, is used to identify Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRMs).

The eye, representing visual accessibility.

The ear, representing auditory accessibility.

The two faces, representing intellectual or mental accessibility.

The International Symbol of Access (ISA) has traditionally been the wheelchair. However, this symbol only concerns mobility. A new symbol of global accessibility which depicts a person within a circle is being increasingly implemented.

The two most commonly used versions are:
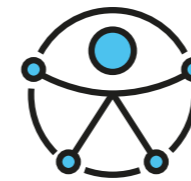
The new symbol proposed by the UN, inspired by the "Vitruvian Man", which encompasses all accessibility needs.

A stylisation of the above, which is primarily used for accessibility in digital environments.

There are also icons for different accessibility resources.
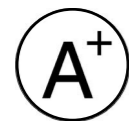
A letter 'A' with a '+' sign, for the use of large print format and optical aids.

6 dots, for the braille reading and writing system.

A hand, for tactile elements and everything that can be touched.

A screen with subtitles, for subtitling.

The letters 'AD' with sound waves, for audio description.

A dog in a harness for service dogs, not just guide dogs for the blind.

An ear with sound waves, for personal sound amplification.

An ear with the letter 'T', for induction loop.

The letters 'SL' within a hand, for sign language.

Of all these symbols, only two are universally recognised: the ISA (wheelchair) and that proposed by the UN ("Vitruvian Man").

Some symbols that are not universally recognised but are still widely used include: the one of the ear, the one of the ear with the letter 'T', the six dots for braille, the 'AD' for audio description and the stylised "Vitruvian Man". As for the rest, several graphic versions exist that have not been universally adopted. For example, visual accessibility is sometimes represented by the figure of a blind man with a cane instead of a simple eye. Sign language is also occasionally represented by a symbol depicting two hands.

If you implement any of the aforementioned accessibility measures, you should raise awareness of them by using the corresponding symbols.

Where can I use these symbols?

o The symbol of the letter 'A' with the 'plus' sign can be used in the conference programme if it uses enlarged letters.

o The stylised "Vitruvian Man" symbol can be used on the event's website if it meets accessibility requirements.

o The symbol of the dog in the harness can be used at the hospitality desk, accompanied by the sentence "Service dogs are welcome here".

o The symbol of the ear with the letter 'T' can be used at the entrance to the rooms if they have an induction loop system in place.

T2
Registration Form Model

The registration form is a good place to set out the accessibility measures that you will implement during the event, if you already know what these will be. It also represents a direct point of contact with potential participants (both speakers and delegates) where you can inquire about their specific needs.

An **opening paragraph** can be effective. For example:

> "We want this event to be as inclusive and accessible as possible for everyone in attendance. To ensure that we can meet your specific needs, you are kindly asked to fill out this registration form. Your answers will help us make the appropriate adjustments so that you can enjoy the event".

IWhen asking **questions** in the registration form, you'll need to find the right formula to identify the person's needs so that you can try and address them. It is therefore useful to ask the attendees which events or activities they are planning on attending so that you can factor in any adjustments.

When asking if the attendee has any additional requirements, you will need to refer to three main areas: mobility, communication and diet.

These questions may be:

o   A general and open question which leaves space for the attendee to answer. For example:

> "If you have any specific mobility, communication or dietary requirements, please let us know in the box below."

o   More direct and specific questions tailored to each section, informing the attendee of what you can offer them and leaving room for comments. For example:

1- Do you have any specific mobility requirements? Tick the ones that apply:

- Accessible parking space reservation
- Accessible hotel room
- Wheelchair loan
- Travel assistance
- Adapted transport
- Other mobility-related needs (please specify).

2- Do you have any specific communication requirements during the conference?
Tick the ones that apply:

- Subtitling

- Induction loop

- Sign language interpreting

- Audio description

- Large print format

- Braille printing

- Others (please specify)

3- Do you have any specific dietary requirements?
Tick the ones that apply and provide details in the space provided:

- Allergy to...

- Intolerance to…

- Vegan diet

- Vegetarian diet

- Kosher cuisine

- Halal cuisine

- Others (please specify)

4- Do you have any other accessibility requirements that are not mentioned in the form? For example, do you rely on an access dog or need to travel with your personal assistant? If yes, please specify.

You must also set a **deadline** for requests for adaptations. For example:

"To allow us to properly attend to your needs, please return the completed form to us by [state date 2 weeks prior to the event's start date]".

Finally, you will need to provide the **contact details of the access officer**. Provide an email address (which can be a generic "info@" or "accessibility@" address), a telephone number and, if possible, the name of the accessibility officer. For example:

"If you have any additional comments or questions, please contact [access officer's name] by sending an email to [email address] or calling them at [telephone number]."

You can also include a **closing sentence** which lets them know that you'll be in touch. For example:

"We'll contact you to confirm the definitive arrangements."

"Our access officer will get in touch with you to confirm arrangements."

Requirements of speakers

Speakers may also have specific requirements. Besides asking about their technical requirements insofar as projection, sound, internet access, etc. are concerned, you should also ask them if they have any accessibility requirements for the presentation as well as any dietary or mobility requirements. For example:

"Do you require any specific accessibility adaptations for your presentation?

Tick the ones that apply:

- Wheelchair-accessible stage
- Furniture requirements (table, seat, lectern, etc.)
- Subtitling
- Induction loop
- Sign language interpreting
- Audio description
- Others (please specify)

If you have any additional comments or questions, please contact [access officer's name] by sending an email to [email address] or calling them at [telephone number]."

T3
How to Make a Virtual Event Accessible

In order to make your events more inclusive, you need to make sure that virtual meetings are also accessible to everyone.

Accessibility must not, therefore, be an afterthought. Rather, it should be a fundamental part of the planning process from the very beginning.

Previous steps

o Choose an accessible platform (e.g. Zoom or Microsoft Teams) that supports persons with disabilities:

- It must be compatible with assistive devices such as screen readers.

- It must be navigable with just the keyboard, without the use of a mouse.

- It must allow screen scaling.

- It must allow the use of subtitling. The host or administrator must activate the subtitling feature at the beginning of the session. The user can then decide whether or not they want to use it.

- Remember that auto-generated subtitles are of a lower quality than those produced by a professional linguist. A considerable progress has been made with English and Spanish auto-generated subtitles.

- This system allows you to record the subtitles generated during the call and review them afterwards, giving you a final video that is accessible enough to upload to your website or social media pages.

O When you announce the event, you must communicate the chosen platform and highlight its accessibility features.

O The registration form is a good place to ask if the attendee has any other requirements. Here, you can also add the contact details of the access officer. You must also set a deadline for these requests.

O You should plan who will monitor and track accessibility during the meeting. This will often be the host or the moderator.

O Some people require access to the materials in advance so that they can adapt to them as necessary. In this case, you should share all the material before the meeting (PDFs, PowerPoint presentations, Excel spreadsheets, graphs, videos, etc.).

O You should provide a short list of good practices for moderators, hosts and speakers:

- Speak through a headset mic, not an open mic. This will make it easier for everyone to hear you. This is particularly relevant for people with hearing loss or with little knowledge of the language, for professionals such as interpreters and for the speakers themselves when taking questions from the audience.

- It is advisable to choose environments and backgrounds that are as neutral as possible. It is considered helpful to use a blurred background. This will help to capture the attendees' attention and prevent distractions. It will also make it easier to read the subtitles.

- When a person speaks, their camera must always be on and their face must be well lit. This will help to improve communication and let the audience know who is speaking. For attendees who are hard of hearing or not fluent in the language, this is particularly helpful for lip reading.

- Regulate the volume and speed of oral expression. This will make it more accessible for the general public, particularly those who are hard of hearing or not fluent in the language. It will also give interpreters more time to do their job.

- Speakers are encouraged to follow the "6 second rule", which states that 6-second pauses are a good way to give the audience time to process the information. This approach makes the session easier to digest. It is particularly recommended when opening a new document on the screen and when listening to or answering questions.

- Describe the images contained in the presentations (PDFs, PowerPoint presentations, Excel spreadsheets, graphs, videos, etc.). This will ensure that they are understood by people who are blind or visually-impaired, as well as those who have poor signal on their device or a screen that is too small to display images in high quality.

- Include audio descriptions for videos. Videos containing nothing but images and background music are frustrating for blind people as they cannot understand them.

- Include subtitles for videos. Besides subtitling the session itself, you must also include subtitles for audiovisual materials for people who are hard of hearing or not fluent in the language.

When you are online

o Introduce the meeting by explaining the agenda and expected duration of the meeting, describing the available accessibility features and explaining how to activate them (for example, "turn on subtitling").

o Establish rules that improve accessibility for all participants, such as:

- Muting their microphone when they're not talking.

- Having their camera turned on (if they're comfortable with it).

- Regulating the volume and speed of their interventions.

- Explain that everyone should feel free to apply the "6-second rule" to encourage reflection, and that they shouldn't feel pressure by the periods of silence.

o To facilitate access to the documents that are shared on the screen, you could also share them in the chat space.

o If the chat space is used in debates or discussions, you should read the comments out loud so that everyone can hear them.

o Make sure that people asking questions verbally use a microphone so that everyone can hear them.

Recommendations for the future

- Assess the event along with the organisers and review the comments submitted by participants.
- Identify what worked well and what didn't.
- Incorporate the comments when planning the next virtual event.

By prioritising accessibility and actively involving members with disabilities, you can create virtual events that are inclusive, welcoming and which allow all attendees to fully participate.

Relevant links:

- Selecting an accessible remote platform
- Accessibility on the Zoom platform
- Accessibility on the Microsoft Teams platform

T4
Venue Assessment Checklist

This tool, just like T5, is an Excel spreadsheet with an external link. This means that it can be filled out without the need to submit a hard copy.

It is a questionnaire consisting of 87 clear and direct questions that are categorised based on whether they concern spaces (outdoor environment, hall, toilets, meeting room, etc.) or topics (website, staff).

It is a simple, jargon-free didactic tool consisting of easy-to-answer "yes" or "no" questions. The more "yes" answers, the more accessible the venue is.

Important: The "Meeting rooms" section must be filled out separately for each meeting room.

Open the T4 - Venue Assessment Checklist spreadsheet.

1	Generalitat de Catalunya Agència Catalana de Turisme	CCB Catalunya Convention Bureau
2	**7_T4_Venue Assessment Checklist**	
3	This checklist has four columns: √ Spaces and questions √ Yes √ No √ Comments All "Yes" answers correspond to good practices The more "Yes" answers, the more accessible the venue is. This will help us decide between different venues.	
4	**Name of the venue**	
5	**Address**	

T5
Accessible Accommodation Assessment Checklist

This tool, just like T4, is an Excel spreadsheet with an external link. This means that it can be filled out without the need to submit a hard copy.

It is a questionnaire consisting of 82 clear and direct questions that are categorised based on whether they concern hotels (reception area, rooms, adapted room bathrooms, restaurant, cafeteria, etc.) or topics (website, staff).

It is a simple, jargon-free didactic tool consisting of easy-to-answer "yes" or "no" questions. The more "yes" answers, the more accessible the accommodation is.

Open the
T5 - Accessible Accommodation Assessment Checklist
spreadsheet.

1	Generalitat de Catalunya Agència Catalana de Turisme	CCB Catalunya Convention Bureau
2	**7_T5_Accessible Accommodation Assessment Checklist**	
3	This checklist has four columns: √ Spaces and questions √ Yes √ No √ Comments All "Yes" answers correspond to good practices. The more "Yes" answers, the more accessible the accommodation is. This will help us decide between different accommodation options.	

T6
Transport Requirements

This section will explain what information you need to obtain about each of the commonly-used means of transport.

Public transport

The most common means of public transport are metro, bus and tram. These are required by law to be accessible for persons of reduced mobility (PRMs). You will need to evaluate the most frequent routes, such as from the airport or hotel to the event venue.

What should I focus on?

- Short walking distances between all points.
- Safe and accessible crossing points (e.g. those with acoustic traffic lights).
- Lighting, non-slip flooring and routes.
- Wide pavements along the route.
- Lifts and/or ramps with handrails as an alternative to stairs and steps.
- Well-contrasted signage with large, clear lettering.
- Ticket vending machines that are accessible for people with sensory disabilities or in wheelchairs.
- Ticket validating machines that are accessible for people in wheelchairs.
- Same-level ramp or lift access to the train, bus or tram.

- Sufficient space for wheelchairs to be anchored and secured inside the vehicle.
- Marked priority seating for people with disabilities.
- Visual and acoustic announcements of stops.
- Schedules and frequencies.

Who benefits?

The information collected shall be useful for all participants. You will have to specify this information in the communication on "How to get there", including the links to the websites and apps of transport service providers.

Accessible parking spaces

You should stress that accessible parking spaces are reserved exclusively for holders of the official Parking Card for people with disabilities, which is for individual use only.

What does the card allow?

The card is designed to facilitate travel, personal autonomy and the integration of Persons with Reduced Mobility. When the original card is displayed in a visible place, it gives the holder the right to:

- Travel in any vehicle.

- Stop the vehicle momentarily at any point on public roads, as long as doing so does not impede the movement of other vehicles or pedestrians.
- Park for as long as needed in parking spaces with restricted hours and loading and unloading areas.
- Use the card in all municipalities in Catalonia, the rest of Spain and the member states of the European Union.

What should I do?

Make sure that the venue, hotel, restaurant, recreational space, etc. has reserved parking places and ensure that they are well signposted and appropriate. You must inform the establishment about the number of reservations and the name of the card holders.

Applicants must be informed of:
- The address of the entrance to the car park.
- The procedure (if there is one).
- The location and number of the reserved place.
- The cost (if there is one). To avoid any discrimination, you must offer the same conditions that you offer to the rest of the attendees.
- Telephone number and email address of the contact person.

Adapted taxi or vehicle

While some people will want to blend in with the group, others will prefer to travel separately so as not to attract attention or be an inconvenience to others.

In the second case, you will need to procure an adapted taxi or vehicle for the journeys or activities. Either way, you will need to ask the person directly about their preferences, and be careful not to discriminate or offend them when discussing the transport issue.

What should I focus on?
- Different taxi or accessible vehicle options, with complete details and links to the company's website or app.
- Information on service availability (e.g. 24-hour service).
- Information on advanced booking requirements (e.g. 48 hours in advance) and any service limitations.

Remember that not all wheelchair users can transfer from the wheelchair to the vehicle. Their ability to do so will determine the type of adapted vehicle required.

For participants who wish to use this service on their own accord, inform them accordingly as you would for any other means of transport.

Adapted buses and minibuses

The company must guarantee that its buses and minibuses meet the needs of your users.

Very importantly, it must also guarantee that its drivers have received training on how to deal with people with disabilities and that they are familiar with the vehicle's specific adaptation mechanism.

What should I focus on?

- That the lifting platform, the entrance and the space inside the bus are big enough.

- That the total weight of passenger + wheelchair does not exceed the platform's maximum weight capacity.

- If you use adapted buses or minibuses, you must ensure that the transfer areas are large enough for wheelchair users. Lastly, when planning the times, remember that each stop takes time and will extend the duration of the journey.

Wheelchair and mobility scooter rental

There may be times at which organisers need to rent a wheelchair or a mobility scooter.

Who benefits?

- PRMs who don't use a wheelchair in their day-to-day life, but who require one for longer distances when they travel.

- PRMs whose wheelchair or mobility scooter has been damaged or lost by the transportation company.

- People who have acquired short-term injuries but want to participate in the scheduled activities.

- Participants in activities that take place over long distances they cannot cover on foot.

What should I focus on?

- Different rental options with full details and links to the company's website or app.

- Material type, availability and booking requirements.

- Rates and timetables (collection and return).

In any case, you will have to contact the individual and make the necessary adjustments to the transport logistics.

T7
Catering Requirements

When a place is accessible, all of its spaces are comfortable and welcoming for everyone. Removing barriers and anticipating people's needs are key to making sure that everyone feels welcome in the dining and interaction spaces. Here are some essential guidelines for achieving this:

Circulation space

Make sure that the spaces between tables, buffets carts, bars and seating areas are wide enough for users of wheelchairs, mobility scooters, crutches or service dogs to pass through. Remember that chairs tend to stick out more when they are occupied.

When a wheelchair user has to sit at a table in a restaurant or dining hall, make sure that the route from the entrance is completely accessible and unobstructed.

Seats

Dining areas should have seats for users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters evenly distributed throughout the room. Whenever possible, try not to relegate PRMs to a single area. Instead, try and include them with the rest of the group.

For special moments such as coffee breaks, cocktail receptions and standing meals in which food is served on high tables, you must provide lower tables and seats for those who require

them. For those who prefer to remain in their wheelchair or mobility scooter to eat, you can easily remove a seat to naturally accommodate them at a table.

If the person decides to transfer to a seat, you will need to provide a storage location for their mobility vehicle. It is very important to ask permission from the person before moving their wheelchair, mobility scooter, crutches, etc. out of the way of other users and waiters. You must tell them exactly where you will leave it.

Tables

There must be under-table clearance measuring 70 cm high by 60 cm deep, as this will allow the wheelchair user to get close enough to the table. The table must be no higher than 85 cm off the ground so as to ensure a good view from the wheelchair.

Wheelchair users are not able to reach anything that is more than 70 cm from the perimeter of a table. Particular attention should be given to this when presenting the food in buffet settings.

Menu

When it comes to serving meals, it is advisable to have a written menu both at the table and at the beginning of the buffet line. This will help people with dietary restrictions and/or preferences make decisions.

You will need to add indications for the dishes, detailing what they contain in terms of ingredients and possible allergens.
The food menu must be printed on non-glossy paper in large, well-contrasted font and, if necessary, include braille.

Assistance

Some people with disabilities may need assistance, especially in buffets. You should ask the person if they need assistance beforehand and wait for them to tell you what they need.

Make sure that the waiting staff are duly trained on how to interact with people with disabilities, and ensure they are well equipped to answer detailed questions about the food and its preparation process.

o   **People who are blind**

People who are blind or visually-impaired may need waiters to read them the menu and serve them food at the buffet. They may also need directions on where to sit or to be escorted to the toilet door.

o   **People who are deaf**

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may need written notes or other methods to communicate and obtain information about items on the menu.

o   **PRMs**

People with disabilities affecting their strength, dexterity or mobility, or those who rely on service dogs, may need help carrying trays, food or drinks from the buffet to their table.

o   **service dogs**

Remember that some people with disabilities may be accompanied by an service dog that, when duly accredited, has the right to enter all public spaces. Make sure that all event and facility staff are aware that service dogs are allowed in public spaces, hotels, convention centres, restaurants and other places where food is served.

Allergies, intolerances and diets

The number and variety of special dietary requests has grown significantly in recent years. These may be issued by attendees with food allergies and intolerances, as well as those who need to follow special diets for medical, health, religious or other reasons.

Dietary needs may include avoiding common allergens (milk, soy, egg, wheat, peanuts, nuts, fish and shellfish), as well as adhering to vegan, vegetarian, kosher or gluten-free, sugar-free or fat-free diets.

It is the responsibility of the participant to notify you in advance, through the registration form or the access officer, of their dietary needs. This will allow you to make the appropriate arrangements. If you cannot meet their request, you must let them know at the earliest possible opportunity.

Participants can be issued with some sort of identifying element that indicates their dietary requirements, allowing the waiting and room staff to identify and serve them accordingly.

Buffets

The buffet format can be a good option for all audiences, as long as there are enough staff to meet the needs of all diners in attendance. You must also take the following recommendations into account:

- Buffet tables must be no more than 85 cm high and 70 cm deep. This will allow wheelchair users to view, select, reach and serve themselves the food.

- You must ensure that plates, cups and other tableware, as well as food and drinks, are placed within reach of people of short stature or who use mobility devices.

- Avoid multi-level food presentations.

- Keep food warmers as low as possible.

- Avoid the use of chafing fuel, as this can cause reactions in people with chemical sensitivities.

- Group foods by type, such as starters and salads, main courses, desserts, etc. Avoid placing foods for those with special dietary needs, such as gluten-free, in their own specific sections. Many dishes will be suitable for everyone.

T8
Subtitling

What is it?

Subtitling is an alternative and complementary system to oral communication. Subtitles are the transcription of the audio content of a video which consists of text, sound and image, shown at the bottom of the screen.

Who benefits?

Subtitles are a must for people who are hearing-impaired who cannot hear spoken communication. Subtitling is very useful for everyone, as the written support reinforces and facilitates the understanding of the oral speech.

Subtitles are also useful for:

o   Those who don't understand the language fluently.

o   Instances when the sound is not clear enough.

o   Those in very noisy or very quiet environments.

o   Those who do not have good signal.

What types of subtitles are there?

In terms of language, there are two main types of subtitles:

o   **Intralinguistic subtitles,** which are in the same language as the original.

o   **Interlinguistic subtitles,** which are translated from another language.

Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) is generally intralingual, and also includes indications of context-relevant sound information such as noises, music, etc.

In terms of context, there are two types of subtitling:

- **Live** subtitling (or simultaneous subtitling), which is used at events, conferences, etc.

  The professional subtitler transcribes the words of the speaker or lecturer in real time. This can be done both on-site and online.

  It is similar to a simultaneous translation on a technical level, meaning you need to provide a space and a good audio equipment for the professional subtitlers. You will also need the appropriate equipment to broadcast the subtitles. These will appear at the bottom of the screen that the speaker's face is shown on while they are speaking. This allows their lips to be read in real time, which is especially useful for oral deaf people who read lips and facial expressions to better understand what is being said.

- **Deferred** subtitling, for audiovisual materials.

  In this case, the subtitles are added afterwards. As an alternative to subtitling professionals (who are always a guarantee of quality), AI applications and audiovisual content platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo allow you to add subtitles automatically.

97

AI-generated subtitles in Spanish and English have an acceptable quality.

In any case, it will always be necessary to review and edit subtitles to resolve possible errors, which are often caused by poor sound quality.

When adding subtitles to the video, you'll have the option to add:

- **Closed** captions: The user can turn them on or off depending on their needs.
- **Open** captions: These are embedded in the video and cannot be turned on or off by the user.

How are they used?

The general guidelines to take into account are:

- Subtitles should be centred at the bottom of the screen, in a static position.
- Sound effects must be displayed in the top-right of the screen.
- They must span no more than two lines of text, with a limit of 37 characters per line.
- The font should be as readable as possible.
- Size-32 Arial, Verdana or Helvetica sans-serif fonts, using both upper and lower cases, are recommended.

- For good contrast, it is recommended to use light colours on dark backgrounds.
- The maximum number of characters per second (cps) is 15.
- To be readable, a subtitle must be on the screen for at least 1 second and at most 6 seconds.
- Ensure as much synchronisation as possible between subtitles, images and sound.

The UNE 153010 standard for subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, of May 2012, regulates the quality and homogeneity of subtitles.

Relevant links

- O [How to add subtitles on Vimeo](#)
- O [How to add subtitles on YouTube](#)
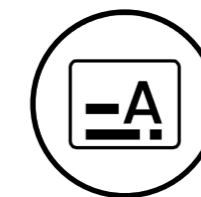
T9
Induction Loop

What is it?

The induction loop is a sound amplification system that connects to an audio output, transforms the signal into a magnetic field and sends it directly to cochlear implants or hearing aids set in the 'T' (standing for "Telecoil") position.

Not only is the sound amplified, but it is also clear, isolated from ambient noise and free of echoes or reverberations.

Who benefits?

This system is essential for hearing aid users. It works sending the amplified and isolated sound straight from the microphone to the attendee's hearing aid or cochlear implant.

The symbol that indicates the existence of an induction loop is the ear with the letter 'T'.

What types are there and where are they used?

Perimeter or fixed installation
This is a fixed device connected to one or several microphones which is/are connected to an induction cable that runs through along part or all of the room's perimeter. This system is ideal for conference rooms and auditoriums.

For this type of installation, you'll have to:

- Check that it works correctly with the sound and room technicians.
- Inform speakers and participants of its existence.
- Place a sign at the entrance to the room with the corresponding symbol.
- Activate the system for all sessions in which microphones are used.

When the room does not have a fixed system, you can also arrange for sound and audio technicians to install a temporary induction loop in a specific part of the room.

Portable or desktop loop

This system requires no installation. It consists of a visible amplifier placed on the table and a microphone for the speaker to speak into. This conveniently marked system is activated at the user's request and improves communication within a one-metre radius.

This device is ideal for one-to-one interactions e.g. at reception, the information point or the hospitality desk. It can even be used for meetings at a table involving two or three participants.

Individual or necklace loop

This necklace-shaped device is designed for individual use and replaces headphones. It facilitates accessibility to multimedia devices such as FM receivers, simultaneous translation receivers, audio guides, sound players, mobile phones, etc.

It connects directly to the device's headphone outlet via a standard 3.5 mm minijack.

T10
Sign language interpreting

Sign language is the language of the community of deafand deafblind signers. It is based on visual and gestural communication.
It is a language with its own grammar and alphabet. In the case of Catalonia, the LSC or Catalan Sign Language is used. This official language was approved by the autonomous region's parliament in 2010.

The other official language used in the rest of Spain is the LSE or Spanish Sign Language.

Many countries or territories have their own sign languages. For example:

- o   BSL - British Sign Language
- o   ASL - American Sign Language
- o   LSF - Langue des signes française
- o   DGS - Deutsche Gebärdensprache

There is also International Sign (IS), which is a kind of auxiliary lingua franca which shares a base with other languages.

Which professionals are involved?

Sign language interpreters are skilled professionals in sign and oral language who are capable of transmitting a message from one language to the other and vice-versa. Signing deaf people rely on their skills in order to communicate.

How is it implemented?

In order to optimise understanding, you must adopt the following measures:

- Place the interpreter in a visible and well-lit location.
- Place the interpreter to the left or right of the speaker, ensuring that they can be seen at all times.
- Reserve seats right in front of the interpreter for those who rely on sign language interpretation.
- If there are screens broadcasting what takes place on stage, the face of the person speaking must be displayed at all times in order to facilitate understanding.

For more information:
Law 17/2010 on Catalan Sign Language (CA)

T11
Audio description

What is it?

Audio description is a communication support service that consists of translating visual images into verbal language. This service allows everyone in attendance to understand the content that is being projected onto a screen, for example.

Presentations tend to lean heavily on visual content. You must therefore identify the relevant visual elements and work out how to explain them in words.

Who benefits?

These verbal descriptions are essential for people who are blind, and useful for people who are visually-impaired or who are located too far from the screen to make out all the details.

Audio descriptions are regulated by the UNE 153020 standard established in 2005, which sets forth a code of good practices and the basic requirements for creating Audio descriptions in all areas.

When should they be used?

At any time, especially once you know that there are people who are blind or visually-impaired in the audience or when the audience is very large. Some other recommendations include:

o Briefly **describe** yourself when introducing yourself to the audience.

o When projecting **slides with text**, read the text aloud and include any relevant information about the visual content of the slide.

o You will also need to describe **tables**, infographics, charts, graphs, diagrams, sketches, etc. It's generally recommended to describe the slide's content in order, from left-to-right and top-to-bottom.

o When projecting **slides with images**, you should only provide a simple explanation of what is shown on the screen.

o In the case of **video** screening, important visual information must be included in the video's audio. If it is not included in the audio, you will need to describe it during the screening or consider not screening it at all.

T12
Materials printed in alternative formats

In the digital age, one would think that all documents are accessible. However, this couldn't be further from the truth. You can find out why that is the case in Chapter 5, which focuses on communication.

At events, lots of printed materials cannot be accessed by all attendees.

You must provide alternative formats for people with strained eyesight, those who are blind or visually-impaired or when the event is held in a low-light environment. These alternative formats include documents and elements in **large print, raised images** and **braille**.

What are they for?

In the case of events, these are printed materials that facilitate communication, such as:

- Identification cards
- Invitations, tickets, programmes and dossiers
- Plans and temporary signage
- Accessibility information
- Food and menu information

All of these elements are important in ensuring the autonomy of the attendees at a conference or related activity.

What formats are there?

Most materials are printed in a small font which a large part of the public find difficult or impossible to read. In order to make materials more accessible for everyone, you should consider:

- **Large print**: write in size-18-or-larger font and follow legibility recommendations on contrast, colours, paper type, etc., as described in T13 - Legibility Guidelines.

  You should apply these recommendations to all communication materials. Generally, you will need to trim texts down so that they only contain essential information, as this will make reading faster and easier for everyone.

- **Raised images**: in unfamiliar locations, all attendees will appreciate being given a **map** of the facilities, rooms, services, etc. A raised map in contrasting colours, large print braille and a clear legend, improves everyone's understanding of the different areas. These features will make it easier for attendees to read the information quickly and find their bearings, and will be particularly helpful for people who are blind or visually-impaired.

o **Braille:** while people who are not visually-impaired read everything that they see, those who are blind rely on braille for personal and autonomous reading.

Ensuring that people who are blind can access content in their preferred format must be an absolute priority.

Where should they be used?

These formats must be considered as early as the **registration form.** This will give you time to produce the materials in the required formats and hand them out to attendees upon their arrival.

Having accessible materials at the **hospitality desk** is also recommended. These documents are a useful way of presenting information to attendees when standing up or in low-light conditions. They are therefore practical for all members of staff, particularly those who face the public.

You should use these materials to describe the food and drink served at the **catering** facilities, ranging from the coffee area to the canteen. This will be particularly useful at the buffet carts.

T13
Legibility Guidelines

In graphic design, 'legibility' refers to the formal characteristics that make a text easy and pleasant to read.
These guidelines or recommendations apply generally to both printed documents and signage as well as digital texts (websites, PDFs, etc.).

o **Colour contrast**

Reading is easier when there is a good colour contrast. Black font on a white background, or dark colours over a light background, are considered good combinations.

Some examples of well-contrasted colour combinations include white and dark blue; black and yellow; green and white; and red and white.

BLACK ON WHITE	WHITE ON BLACK
YELLOW ON BLACK	WHITE ON BLUE
WHITE ON RED	BLUE ON WHITE
RED ON WHITE	WHITE ON GREEN

Texts with a negative contrast (white text on a black or dark background) mustn't be very long. These combinations are only recommended for titles, quotations or sentences. For better clarity, leave a little more space from letter-to-letter and line-to-line than in texts presented with a positive contrast. This is because the light letters in the negative contrast have to "compete" more with the darker background colours.

o **Font type and size**

- Sans-serif fonts are more recommended than serif (or Roman) fonts. Some of the most recommended sans-serif fonts include Arial, Verdana and Helvetica.

- Italics is useful for emphasising single words, but is not recommended for continuous reading because the slant hinders legibility.

- Underlining strings of words in the middle of a sentence is not recommended either, as readers might confuse this for a hyperlink.

- Avoid writing long sentences entirely in capital letters, as this would remove some helpful reading queues such as differences in letter height.

- The font should be size 12 or above, although this may vary depending on the font chosen. Larger fonts may be used depending on the case. For example, size-16 or 18 fonts with a minimum inter-line spacing of 1.5 are suitable for dossiers.

- Reading distances must be taken into account when designing signage.

Sign font height according to reading distance

Distance	Minimum height	Recommended height
>5.00 m	7.00 cm	14.00 cm
4.00 m	5.60 cm	11.00 cm
3.00 m	4.20 cm	8.40 cm
2.00 m	2.80 cm	5.60 cm
1.00 m	1.40 cm	2.80 cm
0.50 m	0.70 cm	1.40 cm

o   Alignment

Contrary to how text is often formatted, it should be aligned to the left and not right-justified. A text is more legible when it does not occupy a perfectly square or rectangular block. Rather, the right-side of the text should zigzag according to the length of the last word in each line. This helps the reader to jump more easily from one line to the next and avoid getting lost in the text.

o   Line spacing and kerning

In order to be more legible, texts need room to breathe. According to the digital accessibility guidelines, there must be an inter-line spacing of 1.5 points within a paragraph, and an inter-paragraph spacing of at least 6 points.

You will also need to regulate the kerning to make sure that the text is not too visually dense. When there is not enough space between the letters, it can be harder to read the text.

All of these measures help to make reading easier for everyone, especially people who are visually-impaired or dyslexic.

T14
How to Make an Accessible Website

Digital accessibility is regulated by law. It requires compliance with a number of technical principles when designing, maintaining and updating a website.

Whose responsibility is it?

In principle, three main figures are involved in the construction of a website:

- The content creator: responsible for collecting or creating texts, images, videos and audios and presenting them on the page, usually through a content manager.

- The designer: responsible for the digital appearance and organisation of the elements.

- The developer and/or programmer.

You must make sure that each figure is aware of the accessibility requirements and principles and ensure that they apply them from the start.

WAI guidelines

In the area of programming and digital design, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) produced by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) must be applied. These guidelines are updated on a periodic basis.

In Spain, the standard that incorporates and applies these guidelines is UNE-EN 301549. This standard is based on the European regulations on functional accessibility requirements for ICT products and services.

These guidelines apply to desktop and laptop computers, tablets and mobile devices. By complying with these guidelines, your online content will be more accessible for all audiences.

There are 3 levels of compliance with online accessibility:

- Level A: Priority 1 or basic compliance.

- Level AA: Priority 2 or optimal compliance.

- Level AAA: Priority 3 or excellent compliance.

The recommended compliance level is AA (double A).

The use of the AA logo indicates that all Priority 1 and 2 checkpoints established by the WAI have been met.

The WCAG Guidelines are based on 4 principles: perceivable, operable, understandable and robust. These are found across the 13 guidelines and 78 compliance criteria.

What is the purpose of the 4 principles?

1. **Perceivable:** ensuring that information is easily perceived by sight, hearing (with a screen reader) or touch (braille).

2. **Operable:** ensuring that the website can be navigated, that data can be entered and that the content can be interacted with in different ways (keyboard instead of mouse).

3. **Understandable:** ensuring that content with good structure, layout and wording can be processed and understood.

4. **Robust:** ensuring that the content can be reliably interpreted by a wide range of technologies, such as browsers (very important for improving SEO), devices (PC, tablet, smartphone, etc.) and assistive technologies (screen reader, braille line, etc.).

1. How can I make it more Perceivable?

First principle: ensuring that the information is easily perceived.

Images

○ **Alt text:** All images that form part of the content of a page must have an alternative text, or "Alt text".

- When an image is decorative, the Alt text field can be left empty. However, it still needs to be there.

- When the image provides information that would not otherwise be obtained, it must be described with an appropriate Alt text.

- When the image contains an embedded text, you must transcribe the written content in the Alt text.

- When an image is complex, such as a graph or a statistic, you must present it in the Alt text and provide a separate detailed description.

- When the image is a link, you must describe its destination. This allows links to be interpreted even when out of context.

○ **Captcha:** Distorted images, image puzzles, etc. which are used to determine that the user is a human and not a robot. You must make the Captcha accessible with an Alt text, explaining its purpose and the alternative, non-image-based

method (e.g. audio). You must also ensure that it can be controlled with the keyboard.

○ **Image carousel:** Be mindful of image descriptions and ensure that 'stop', 'start', 'fast-forward' and 'rewind' controls can be accessed from the keyboard. You must also comply with the rest of the accessibility conditions: colour contrast, Alt text, well-described links, etc.

○ **Media:** Ensure that videos have subtitles, audio descriptions and transcripts, and that they meet accessibility requirements.

Graphs

In T13 - Legibility Guidelines, you'll find detailed explanations that also apply to the website. Remember to consider all pages and not just the home page.

○ The **size** of the text must be flexible. You should be able to enlarge it by up to 200% without this altering its structure or design.

○ **Adequate contrast:** You can check that the page has an appropriate contrast by using any of the free tools available online.

○ **Colour to convey information:** Colour should not be the only way of conveying information in graphics, buttons, links, etc. Instead, you should split graphs into different sections, add text to buttons and bold or underline links, etc.

2. How can I make it more Operable?

Second principle: ensuring that the website can be navigated, that data can be entered and that the content can be interacted with in different ways.

Keyboard
Make sure that the menu is fully accessible with the keyboard, and that all actions that can be executed with the mouse can also be executed with the keyboard. You must be able to navigate through the elements using the "Tab" key and activate the links with the "Enter" key or the spacebar.

Time
Some people need more time than others to assimilate or respond to content. If you set any time limits, these should be easy to stop, increase or delay.

Content visibility
It can be difficult for devices such as screen readers to find or locate content. With this in mind, you should:

- Provide a mechanism that allows the user to skip blocks of content that are repeated on each page.

- Ensure that browsing is easy and user-friendly.

- Provide mechanisms that allow the user to browse through different sections of the page, using headings that appear at the beginning of each section. Use a clear structure and present information in a logical order, allowing for a better understanding of the hierarchy of the contents.

- Limit the number of links per page, being sure to avoid those that don't contain any content such as "Click here" or "Read more".

- Make the links stand out visually by underlining them, for example.

3. How can I make it more Understandable?

Third principle: ensuring that content with good structure, layout and wording can be processed and understood.

Easy to read
You must ensure that your editors are familiar with the legibility guidelines: align text to the left, avoid excessively long texts, don't abuse capital letters or italics, visually distinguish links, etc.

Page language
Make sure that the primary language is configured for all pages, as this is the language that screen readers process the content in. You must also indicate any changes in language (e.g. foreign-language quotations), preferably visually.

Appearance and placement of common elements
All pages have common elements that are repeated, such as menus, buttons, footers, etc. You must use standard tags that provide semantic information for each of these elements (e.g. html tags). For better user experience, these elements should be easily identifiable by their appearance and location on the page.

Forms: assistance and error control
While online forms allow procedures to be carried out remotely, you should make them accessible by taking into account:

o **Tags:** All fields must include a clear and descriptive tag so that the user knows what data they need to enter. For screen readers, each tag must be explicitly associated with a field.

o **Related information:** Grouping related fields makes them easier to locate. One such example is address information e.g. street, name, number, floor, post code, city, etc.

o **Instructions:** you must include instructions on how to fill out a form. You should specify the required fields and provide details about the format. In addition to the field name, tags can also include instructions e.g. "Date (dd/mm/yyyy)". If the instructions are very long, you could add them beneath the tag as a supplementary explanation.

o **Validation and error detection:** Automatically detect whether information is valid and warn the user when errors are detected e.g. in the date format. Display the error in the appropriate tag for easy access, highlighting it both visually and for the screen reader.

o **Notifications:** Once the whole form has been filled out, the user needs to know whether or not the information has been correctly submitted. The notification must be accessible. A solitary green traffic light symbol, for example, would not be sufficient.

o **Simplicity:** the shorter and simpler the form, the better. If the list is very long, a person who is blind would need to listen to all of the options before deciding on their chosen answer.

4. How can I make it more Robust?

Fourth principle: ensuring that the content can be reliably interpreted by a wide range of technologies.

A robust website is designed and developed in compliance with WAI standards and follows best coding practices.

All components used in the construction of a page must follow the functions and features set forth in the Accessibility Guidelines. If the website is built properly, all browsers, devices and assistive technologies will be able to read and navigate all of its content.

The website must be verified with different technologies to make sure that it is fully accessible and works properly in different environments and platforms.

A robust website facilitates future updates and modifications, because a stable and well-organised foundation allows the website to grow and evolve.

What is a Website Accessibility Statement?

Under European Union law, you are obliged to prepare, periodically update and publish a Website Accessibility Statement indicating the compliance of your website(s) and mobile application(s) with minimum accessibility requirements.

This statement must be published on the website, and must include the following information:

- O Degree of compliance with the applicable regulation.
- O Detail of inaccessible content.
- O Mechanisms for reporting non-compliance with accessibility requirements, requesting information or making a complaint.
- O Complaint procedure.

Relevant links

- O Website Accessibility Statement models (CA)
- O First steps to making a website accessible (CA)

T15
How to Publish Accessible Content on Social Media

Texts and structure

- You should use short texts with clear and simple language, being sure to avoid complex sentences, jargon and idioms. This is especially relevant for people who are not fluent in the language.

- Note that screen readers cannot interpret abbreviations (for example, "sq" instead of "square") or signs (for example, "@" instead of "a").

- Use decorative fonts and special characters sparingly, since screen readers sometimes struggle to interpret them.

- When you make a call to action (CTA), be sure to give it meaning. For example, the standard "More information" CTA doesn't tell us anything when it isn't in context. Instead, you could put "Conference programme" or "Conference registration form" to explain the content of the link. Remember that some networks establish a character limit for these links.

Emoticons or emojis?

Emoticons are combinations of keyboard signs or letters that represent facial expressions or moods. For example: ":)" represents a smiley face. However, these are not considered accessible as screen readers cannot interpret them. It would be read by a screen reader as "colon, closed bracket".

Emojis, on the other hand, are small digital images or icons that represent an emotion, an object or an idea. Their meaning is already tagged for screen readers. While these are accessible, you take care when using them:

- Use them sparingly and don't repeat them. If you use three smiley faces one after the other, they will be read three times.

- It is better to place emojis at the end of the text so as not to hinder legibility.

- Don't use them instead of words.

- Choose emojis that have good colour contrast in both light mode and dark mode.

- Consider the context, as emojis can be misinterpreted. This is particularly relevant if there are attendees from other countries.

- Pay attention to the colour of the emoji, as skin tones are also included in the description that is read aloud by screen readers.

Hashtags

- Write hashtags in both upper and lower case. By capitalising the first letter of each word, it will be easier for the user to decipher the hashtag. For example, #internationalaccessibilityconference is harder to read than #InternationalAccessibilityConference.

- This system, known as CamelCase, tells screen readers that the capital letter marks the beginning of the word.

Images

Studies have found that posts (such as tweets) containing images are shared 150% more than posts that don't contain images. For this reason, many social media platforms give their users the opportunity to add text to an image. This information will be useful for both search engines and screen readers.

- The explanation of the image in the Alt text helps puts everything into context and ensures that nothing goes unreferenced.

- The Alt text must be objective, descriptive and between 200-250 characters.

- The description should highlight the image it accompanies, referencing the action, movement, relationships, visual details and anything else that makes the image stand out.

- Search engines and screen readers will not be able to read text or characters that are included within the image. You will need to type out the written content of an image in the Alt text description field.

- You can always add a link to a document or website containing additional information or a transcript of the content. You could take this approach for tables containing data or infographics.

Colour

- Check colour contrast when sharing graphs, infographics or images with text. The contrast between the background and the text should be 4.5 to 1.

- Avoid green-red and blue-yellow colour combinations, as these are hard to read.

- It is difficult to read texts that are overlayed on images. Instead, it is recommended to use an opaque or solid background.

- In the case of graphs, use sections rather than colours to differentiate the data. To ensure good readability for people who are visually-impaired or colour blind, you should be able to read it as if it were in black and white.

131

Links

- Use short URLs.

- Describe the content the link leads to: audio, video, photo, etc.

Videos

- All videos must be uploaded with audio descriptions and subtitles or a link to their transcript, ensuring that people who need it can access the video's content in text format.

- Screen readers use a text-to-speech (TTS) engine that translates the text displayed on the screen, including image descriptions, into speech. If a video only includes visuals and background music, screen readers won't detect them. This will make them inaccessible to people who are blind or visually-impaired.

Relevant links to the accessibility resources of the most used social media platforms:

- Instagram

- X (Twitter)

- Facebook

- YouTube

- LinkedIn

133

T16
Accessible Document Guidelines

When creating accessible documents, you will need to focus on three main aspects: structure, content and format. By following the guidelines or creating templates that incorporate these premises, you will standardise accessibility and make the documents more accessible for all audiences.

How to create an accessible Word document

When you create a Word document, every element you introduce will be tagged in one way or another, even if you don't see it. If you use the tools and features provided by Word properly, you can build an accessible document.

o   Metadata

This is the most information contained in the Word document. While it might be hard to grasp at first, it is quite simple in reality. You just need to go to: File > Info > Properties > Advanced properties.

You will see a series of fields for data such as the title, the subject, the authorship and other relevant data. Remember to add keywords, as this information makes it easier for search engines to index.

o   Titles and styles

Create documents with clear heading and title structure and logical keyboard navigation without changing the order or jumping through the different levels of titles (1, 2, 3, etc.).

To make the tagging and hierarchy work easier, it is recommended to use styles: These are found under Home > Styles, where a table will be displayed with different text and title styles of different levels, both predefined and modifiable. You must apply the appropriate style for each part of the document.

By choosing a style, you will include the tags that structure the document and allow for keyboard navigation through the different titles without having to read the entire document, similar to skimming through a contents page.

o   Page language

Make sure that the primary language is configured for each page, as this is the language that the screen reader will process it in. Review > Language > Language > Set proofing language, and choose the one you want.

You must also indicate any changes in language (e.g. foreign-language quotations), preferably visually. In this case, highlight the word or passage in the text and select the new language in lower margin.

o **Lists**

Don't hyphenate bullet points manually. Remember that these must be tagged: Home > Paragraph and then choose the most appropriate option from the Bullet Library or the Numbering Library: Bulleted list (rounded, squared, etc.), Numbered list (numbers, letters, etc.) or Multi-level list (hierarchical structure).

o **Tables**

Don't create tables manually using tabs. Rather, go to Insert > Table and select the desired number of rows and columns.

Tables must be uniform. They must have the same number of cells in each row and column. Avoid tables with split cells, combined cells or blank rows and columns.

For proper structure, there must be a header or title for the content of the columns in the top row. To tag the headers: Table design > Show in favourites. Then, with the right button: Table properties > Alt text, and add a title and description.

o **Graphs**

In T13 - Legibility Guidelines, you'll find explanations about colours, contrasts, font size and type, alignment, etc., that make documents more accessible.

o **Alt text**

As with websites, the images in a document must also have an Alt text. In Word, you can do this by right-clicking on the image and selecting "View Alt text". A field will open up where you can insert the description. Alternatively, you can click "Mark as decorative" if the image is decorative.

o **Links**

Remember to describe where the link leads. You can do this easily in Word by right-clicking and selecting "Edit link". A new window will open up. At the top, fill in the "Text" field with whatever you want to replace the meaningless URL address with. For example: "[Conference name] accessibility measures".

o **Checking the document's accessibility**

You can do this easily in Word by going to: File > Info > Check for issues > Check accessibility.

Relevant links:

o [How to create accessible Word documents (CA)](#)

o [Microsoft Word accessibility](#)

How to convert a Word document into an accessible PDF

The first step is to make sure that the source document is already accessible and well prepared. As explained in the previous section, this can be easily done in Word.

Once the initial document has been confirmed as accessible, you'll need to save it in PDF format. File > Save as > Browse.

- o In the "File type" dropdown, select PDF (.pdf).
- o Then, make sure that the "Open the file after publishing" box is checked and click "Options".
- o In the "Include information" section, make sure that all the options are checked except for "Word bookmarks". In "PDF options", all boxes must remain unchecked.

Once accepted, the new PDF document will open up. You will find the bookmarks in the left-hand margin, which will give you an index of all the headings inserted throughout the document. If they're not all there, it means you didn't configure it properly. It is recommended to check the navigation by skipping through the document with the tab key.

How to create an accessible PowerPoint presentation

PowerPoint presentations are useful documents, but they pose quite a challenge when it comes to accessibility and usability. You can ensure that they are accessible by using the tools and features provided by PowerPoint.

- o **Metadata**

    As with any other document, it is important to fill in the metadata that will facilitate the identification of screen readers and the indexing of search engines. You just need to go to: File > Info > Properties > Advanced properties.

    A series of fields will open up where you can include the title, the subject, the authorship, the keywords and any other relevant data.

- o **Initial design**

    PowerPoint has a collection of accessible templates that you can use. When you enter PowerPoint, go to File > New and a search field will appear. Type "accessible" to see all of PowerPoint's accessible templates. Choose one that suits you and create the presentation.

- o **Slide format**

    Once you've selected the template, follow the default format and introduce modifications where necessary. You

can also select the predefined slide formats offered by PowerPoint by going to Home > New slide. A drop-down menu will appear where you can select the best format for each slide.

Ο Slide design

PowerPoint also allows you to design the page colours, font, etc. You'll find a range of different options under the Design tab. Simply by clicking on the options shown in the horizontal bar, you'll see how the slides will appear for each option. It is also possible to change the background colour and the size of the slide.

Ο Font type and size

Remember that sans-serif fonts such as Arial, Verdana and Helvetica are the easiest to read.

As your presentation will probably be projected onto a large screen, it is recommended to use a font size of no smaller than 24.

Ο Colour and contrast

Provide an appropriate colour contrast on each of the slides.

You mustn't use colour as the only way to convey content. You can check this by switching the slides to black and white. This can be done by going to View > Grayscale.

Ο Animations and transitions

You should avoid animations and automatic slide transitions because:

- They can be distracting.
- They can make screen readers re-read the slides.
- They might be displayed in the wrong order.
- They may not give the audience enough time to read the content of the slide.

Ο Embedded media

Make sure that any videos embedded in your slides have audio descriptions, subtitles and accessible controls.

If an audio-only file is embedded, make sure that a transcript is included.

Ο Views

On the left side of the screen, you'll usually see thumbnails of all of your slides including their design elements.

If you switch to Outline View, you can check the order in which the slides will be read by a screen reader as well as the title and text of each slide. To switch to this view, go to View > Outline View. Note that tables, graphs and images will not be displayed in Outline View. Instead, only the titles are displayed.

o **Alt text**

Images that provide context must have an Alt text. Redundant, decorative images that do not add value to the presentation, however, do not require one.

To add, modify or delete Alt text, hover over the image, right-click and select "View Alt text".

o **Links**

Remember that the text of a link must clearly describe where it leads. It is recommended to make links stand out visually. One such example is to underline them. You can easily do this in PowerPoint by right-clicking and selecting "Edit link". A new window will open up. At the top, you'll need to fill in the "Text to display" field with the description.

o **Checking the PowerPoint's accessibility**

You can check the PowerPoint's accessibility by going to Review > Accessibility > Check accessibility. A report will be generated which will tell you how to review and improve the presentation's accessibility.

More information can be found at:
How to create an accessible PowerPoint

How to convert a PowerPoint document into an accessible PDF

Once the initial document has been confirmed as accessible, you'll need to save it in PDF format. File > Save as > Browse.

o In the "File type" dropdown, select PDF (.pdf).

o Next, press the "More options" button. Make sure that both boxes in the "Include non-printing information" section are checked. In "PDF options", all boxes must remain unchecked.

o Select "OK" and save the changes.

All accessibility options applied to the PowerPoint (such as Alt text, hypertext, reading order, etc.) will also be saved in the PDF file.

T17
Table of Appropriate Terminology

Inappropriate expression ❌	Correct expression ✔	Comments ⚠
Invalid

Handicapped

Deficient

Hampered

Disabled

Crippled | **Person with disability**

You can also use: Person with functional diversity | Put the person before the disability.

Don't turn the adjective into a noun.

Some people and organisations prefer the term "functional diversity" to the term "disability". |
| Special person

Person with different abilities | Person with disability | Avoid euphemisms and paternalisms. |
| Disabled-access ramp

Disabled access

Disabled toilet

Handicapped toilet | Accessible entrance

Adapted entrance

Accessible toilet

Adapted toilet | Avoid using obsolete terms. |

Inappropriate expression ❌	Correct expression ✔	Comments ⚠
Deaf-mute	Person who is deaf or hearing-impaired	Some people also accept deaf as a noun.
Physically limited person	Person with reduced mobility (PRM)	The acronym PRM is widely accepted as a noun.
Paralysed, disabled	Person with a wheelchair or Wheelchair user	
Autistic	Person with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder)	
Mentally ill, oligophrenic	Person with mental disorder or Person with mental illness	
Mentally handicapped

Imbecile, mongo, retard | Person with intellectual disability

Person with Down syndrome | Avoid using offensive, obsolete and outdated terms |
| Normal person | Person without a recognised disability (or simply Person) | There is no such thing as a normal person. Everyone is different and unique in their own way. |

Inappropriate expression ✗	Correct expression ✓	Comments ⚠
Suffers with a disability	Has a disability	
Has a birth defect	Has a congenital disability	Avoid emotive language.
Confined/relegated to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user	
Sign language	Sign language	There is a law that recognises sign language as such.
Braille translation	Braille transcription	Braille is not a language, but a reading and writing system.
Sonotone	Hearing aid or cochlear implant	Refrain from mentioning trademarks.
Sign language translator or Sign interpreter	Sign language interpreter	
Dwarf	Person with achondroplasia or Person of short stature	

For more information:
Inclusive language guide (CA)

T18
Recommendations for Speakers on Accessible Presentations

Before. When preparing a PowerPoint or similar file to project:

- Use a sans-serif font such as Arial, Verdana or Helvetica.
- Use a minimum font size of 24.
- Ensure good contrast between the font and the background.
- Refrain from using paragraphs of text. Instead, prioritise short sentences such as headlines or keywords.
- Don't overlay text on top of an image.
- Use bold text, but not block capitals or italics.
- Use minimal text in graphs, drawings and images.
- Refrain from using animations and special effects.
- Remember to include subtitles with all videos.

In T16 - Accessible Document Guidelines, you'll find a section entitled "How to create an accessible PowerPoint presentation" which provides a simple breakdown of how to design an accessible presentation.

During. When delivering a presentation:

- If there is a sign language interpreter, make sure that they are ready and in position before you start speaking.
- Verbally describe what is projected on the screen. This will be appreciated not only by people who are visually-impaired, but also by those who are not looking at the screen at the time or who are too far away to read it clearly. All graphic or textual information displayed on the screen should be addressed in the speech.
- Always use the microphone. This is a vital piece of equipment for interpreters and users of hearing aids.
- If you haven't been introduced before you start to speak, introduce yourself to the audience. People who are blind or visually-impaired will appreciate this.
- Always speak facing the audience. People who are deaf and read lips will appreciate this.
- Speak naturally and slowly. Not only will subtitling professionals and interpreters appreciate this, but everyone in the audience will benefit.

- ○ Avoid using acronyms and abbreviations in your speech. Instead, use the full name of the things you talk about.
- ○ Use simple and direct language. This is more effective than using long statements filled with subordinate phrases.
- ○ Give clarifying examples to explain complex concepts.
- ○ In the Q&A section, remind people to introduce themselves before asking a question and make sure they don't speak when they don't have the microphone. However, remember that some people may reject the use of the wireless microphone because they are electrosensitive. In these cases, repeat the question to the audience before you start to answer it.
- ○ If you ask the audience to raise their hands to show their support for a statement or position, verbally report the results. For example, "I see that about half the room have their hands up".

T19
Recommendations for Interacting with Persons with Disabilities

Interacting with people who have specific needs due to their disabilities is not such an easy task.

These guidelines and recommendations are especially important for public-facing members of staff, but they are also useful for everyone.

The two golden rules:
- ○ **Ask before you help**
  - Don't prejudge or assume that the person needs help.
  - Before acting, ask if and how you can help.
  - Let the person do things at their own pace and do everything they can do for themselves.
  - Don't decide on their participation in an activity on their behalf.
- ○ **Act naturally**
  - Don't act in a paternalistic or overprotective way.
  - Speak directly to the person with the disability, not to their companion or assistant.

Remember that some attendees will be accompanied by their service dog and that they are obliged to carry and present the corresponding accreditation when required to do so. They also have the right to access all event spaces with their service dog, keeping it by their sides at all times.

When interacting with a Person with Reduced Mobility:

O Check that the circulation spaces are free of obstacles and remove any moveable objects from their path.

O When giving directions, tell the person about the distance and conditions of the route. You could offer to help, accompany or lend a wheelchair to the person, if necessary.

O If the person uses a wheelchair or is of short stature, find a seat so that you can talk to them at their level. Sit in front of them, not next to them.

O Pay attention to their abilities. Despite being a wheelchair user, they may still get around relatively easily.

O Avoid touching or moving the wheelchair and refrain from leaning on it or hanging things on it without the user's permission. After all, the chair is part of their personal space.

O When accompanying someone with walking difficulties (or someone who relies on crutches, a walking stick, a walking frame or a mobility scooter), walk at their pace.

O Offer to help carry or transport their items or luggage.

When interacting with a person who is deaf:

(The guidelines are valid for interacting with people who are oral deaf and those signing through an interpreter)

O Before you start speaking, get the person's attention by lightly touching them on the arm or shoulder or by making a hand gesture.

O Wait for them to look at you before you start talking to them.

O When talking to them, look them in the eyes and make sure that your face is well lit (never backlit).

O Look at them, not at the sign language interpreter who is accompanying and interpreting for them.

O Speak naturally, vocalising well but without exaggerating. Don't rush, but don't speak too slowly either.

O Repeat the message if your interlocutor did not understand it. You'll be able to formulate the message in a different way.

O Don't pretend that you've understood the person who is deaf if you haven't.

O Remember that facial expressions can be helpful when communicating with people who are deaf. If you struggle to make yourself understood, you can always opt to write the message down.

When interacting with a person who is blind:

- The first thing you need to do is identify yourself (your name and role). Don't touch them before you speak to them.

- Speak with a normal tone of voice. Most people who are blind can hear perfectly well. When more people are involved in the conversation, you may tap them lightly on the arm to let them know that you are talking to them.

- You should look at the blind person and speak to them directly, rather than their companion or assistant.

- Body language (head and hand movements, facial expressions, gestures, etc.) only has meaning for those who can see.

- There's no need to avoid words like "see", "look", "vision", etc. Feel free to use these words as you would in your day-to-day speech.

- When accompanying a blind person, offer them your arm. They will normally grasp it just above the elbow and follow you half a step behind.

- When sitting down, guide their hand to the back of the chair and briefly describe the context of where they are sitting ("at the end of a long table", for example).

- Give clear and precise directions (e.g. "three meters ahead"). Words or expressions like "over there" or "a bit further" aren't helpful.

- If you need to leave the blind person momentarily, you must let them know in advance. It is better to give them a point of reference (the wall, a bench, etc.).

- There's no need to show affection to their service dog. It is there to work, so it would be inappropriate to distract it. The dog is there to help the blind person. Only they should interact with the animal. When walking, position yourself on the opposite side of the person to their service dog.

Lastly, remember:

- Before assuming anything, apply the "three 'A's rule": Ask, ask and ask.

- Acting naturally is essential.

- Remember that the person always comes before the disability (which may be visible or invisible). So, focus on the person and not their disability.

T20
Event Accessibility Report

As a final step, you should document everything concerning the accessibility of the event in a brief report containing:

- Name of the conference or event, location and dates.
- The references to accessibility published on the conference website and the section(s) in which they are published. For example, a sentence or paragraph from the Statement of Commitment contained in the "About the event" or "Mission and values" sections; the questionnaire in the registration form; FAQs, etc.
- The service providers (transport, catering, parallel activities, etc.) and their strong points in terms of accessibility. For example: "[Bus company name] has [number] adapted vehicles, and the drivers are well aware of what they need to do to accommodate passengers in wheelchairs."
- The specific accessibility resources that have been implemented (subtitling, induction loop, audio description, materials printed in alternative formats, etc.) and the providers of these services. For example: "The induction loop wasn't working, but [Company name]'s sound technician was able to fix it quickly."
- External feedback from participants and speakers, with a survey summary and comments or suggestions for improvement.

- An internal self-evaluation carried out by the organising committee, including an identification of good practices and points to improve.
- Corrective actions and points of improvement that should be taken into account in the future.

You must add the following as annexes to this report:
- T4: Venue Assessment Checklist.
- T5: Accessible Accommodation Assessment Checklist

This report, produced by the access officer, will help to leave a legacy and set the minimum standards for organising accessible events in the future.

Credits

www.linkedin.com/showcase/catalunya-convention-bureau/

www.facebook.com/catalunyaexperience/
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