



DCAD ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES 2014

Accessibility and Disability in IGF meetings

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1 Introduction

The Internet Government Forum's (IGF) **Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability** (DCAD) would like to provide the following guidelines to the IGF Secretariat on how to improve accessibility at IGF meetings and to eliminate barriers. The intention is to help the IGF Secretariat to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities and to include persons with age related disabilities during IGF meetings. This requires the staff of IGF to understand certain procedures and to include those requirements as mandatory in all host agreements.

2 Accessibility considerations when organizing IGF meetings:

2.1 Be aware of attendees' needs and requirements

- **There should be a space on the online registration form to record if a person has any access requirements or specific needs. The registration form should be in accessible format.**
- This form will be useful for planning the meeting and knowing who is attending, so that security and other staff can plan accordingly. Also, there should be a question asking if they require a reasonable accommodation to access the event and have a process in place for responding to this request. In this way, organizers can anticipate the need for CART (Real Time Captioning), sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices (ALDs), alternate print formats, etc. Please see [ANNEX 1](#) for an example of the form. CART transcription (Real Time Captioning) is most useful because it provides a record of the meeting which is useful for persons with hearing related disabilities and for persons with visual disabilities who can later hear when transcribed into DAISY format. It is also useful for those whose mother tongue is not the language of the meetings in question.

2.2 Choose an accessible environment for the meeting

2.2.1 Meeting Location

- **Determine whether the location of the meeting** (building, city, surroundings) **is accessible for persons with disabilities before booking the event:** Determine whether there are enough accessible solutions for accommodation, restauration and transportation in the area where the meeting will be organized. The appropriateness of the place can be easily determined by investigating if other successful accessible meetings were held there before. All facility entrances should be accessible for wheelchairs and/or motorized scooters and have steps that are visually marked for those with sight difficulties. Never use a building with stairs where there are no public lifts or elevators for access. All public lifts or elevators should have Braille indication of the floors and, if possible, there should be audio-floor indicators or audio description so that persons who are visually impaired will know which floor they are on. All lifts should be clearly sign-posted for everyone.

2.2.2 Meeting Venue

- **Choose the right venue:** It is essential that persons with disabilities can move around freely without needing to be escorted through security checkpoints unless requested or needing to wait for an elevator key. If the door or entrance is not automatic or difficult, then a staff member should be placed to assist. This applies to moving between meeting rooms, exhibition, and dining venues, as well as to the toilets. Accessible toilets should be clearly marked (in Braille also) and on the same floor as the meeting rooms. If facilities are all on different levels, it makes it difficult to get from one place to another using a wheelchair (or as a blind person). If guide or service animals are used, then there should be an outdoor designated area available nearby to walk and water them, with disposal areas for waste. All conference information should be readily available and there should be an "Accessibility Desk" manned by trained staff. Other features that should be considered or made more accessible are for example: parking and drop off areas; public transport in proximity; security personnel should be trained to work with the local police and under no circumstance should access entrances be blocked, especially if there is only one accessible entrance. Training should be provided to all security and especially those who man the drive-in entrances.

2.2.3 Meeting Rooms

- **Choose accessible meeting rooms:** The plenary and workshop rooms must have accessible entrances with side aisles free and unblocked so persons using wheelchairs can easily pass. There should be reserved seating spaces for persons who use wheelchairs and motorized scooters or who are accompanied by guide or service animals. Seating needs to be reserved also for persons with disabilities to be near captioning and/or sign language interpreters. There should be two screens, on either side of the stage, one for captioning and one for slide and video presentations. If the room is large, a second set of screens will be necessary so that not only persons with disabilities, but also persons with age related disabilities, can see the material at a distance. There should always be two screens facing the presenters on stage, one for captioning and the other one for presentations so that persons with disabilities and other presenters can see all the presentations. Stages, door entry systems, stands, and podiums need to be accessible for persons using wheelchairs as well (e.g., using ramps). The inclination of ramps must not exceed 8-10% to enable access and to avoid hazardous situations. There should be enough quality lighting for persons who have visual difficulties. Also, there should be enough time given between sessions for people to move between meeting rooms especially when there are several floors involved. Staging according to specific needs is important (e.g., you would avoid a podium for a speaker in a wheel chair).

2.2.4 Technical Accessibility

- **Technical Accessibility:** All technical aspects of making a meeting accessible, including remote participation, need to be tested in advance. The microphones should be hand-held in most circumstances; however, in the case of a person who can't use his/her arms or hands, there should be provisions made with either a microphone that can be attached to the speaker (sometimes called Lavalier wireless or a pin lapel microphone) or a staff member who facilitates. Special provision should be made for persons with disabilities who can't access the remote participation tools. As an example: persons who are blind can't access remote participation tools presently used by IGF, because they use a screen reader which requires another audio stream. This causes the participant to switch back and forth from the audio of the meeting when they navigate the webpage. They often can't find how to dial-in or are not able to use the "raise hand" tool, using the screen reader without disconnecting from the meeting. Until the designers of remote participation tools solve this problem, it is required that IGF staff makes arrangements for special call-in facilities.

2.2.5 Background Noise

- **No background noise:** It should be checked that there is no background noise, such as noisy heating and ventilation systems or background music.

2.2.6 Other Facilities

- **Ensure whether other facilities are accessible:** All luncheon, dinner and reception venues should be easily accessible to wheelchairs. There should be reserved seating with appropriate table height for wheelchair users for both meals and coffee/tea breaks. All condiments should be placed at accessible height. Also, trained staff should be provided to help persons with disabilities obtain meals in buffet situations. There should be provision for an alternate menu for persons with food allergies and food restrictions. There also should be a specific area on the registration form to deal with food sensitivity.

2.2.7 Clear Signage

- **Provide clear signs:** Internally and externally, to all entrances, rooms, lifts, toilets, café and other facilities, including temporary signs giving directions and identifying meeting or event areas, where it is appropriate.
- **Arrange fully accessible and clearly signed emergency exits and evacuation procedures:** This will help persons with disabilities to exit the venue in case of emergency, including alternative procedures where lifts may not be in operation.

2.3 Provide information about the event, building and other facilities

2.3.1 Venue Accessibility

- **Provide information on the accessibility of the venue:** For example, a map can be provided with a description of how to move around between the meeting rooms and other facilities, or about the availability of accessible restrooms. Nowadays, technology allows for mapping on mobile platforms.

2.3.2 Accommodation

- **Provide information on reasonably priced accessible hotel accommodation in advance:** An adequate contingency of accessible rooms needs to be blocked for the attendees who need them in order to avoid that they are given away to other guests who are not disabled. In addition, the accessible rooms must be conveniently located to the conference site, in nearby hotels. This information should be mentioned on the IGF website. When IGF staff negotiate room allocations, this needs to be discussed with the hotels.

2.3.3 Meeting Dates

- **Confirm the dates of the session as soon as possible:** It is more difficult for persons with disabilities to make travel arrangements on short notice. Therefore, the dates should be announced as soon as possible.

2.4 Provide accessible information

2.4.1 Meeting Materials

- **Ensure that the information material is accessible:** All information required for the meeting or event should be prepared in alternative formats in sufficient time for it to be sent out to participants, in their preferred format, at least ten days before the meeting or event, preferably two weeks in advance. If documents are available on a CD or USB flash drive in accessible format or posted on an accessible website, then a person using a screen-reader can access the documents, as well as someone using a refreshable Braille display on their laptop. It is suggested that there be an option for a person to request information electronic in advance in accessible format as many tablets do not have standardized access to CD or USB ports. It is also suggested to put an open source screen-reader feature on the website to help persons who do not have a screen-reader or refreshable Braille display. It should be noted that frequently documents need to be reformatted appropriately prior to use of a Braille printer.

2.4.2 Meeting Presentations

- **Make presentations accessible:** Check that any presentations and paperwork, produced by visiting presenters, will be available in accessible formats to send out in advance of the meeting or event. Presenters are responsible for the accessibility of their presentations, demos and videos and of any material for distribution. Where diagrams or visual images are used at a meeting, they should be described to participants. Speakers should avoid using abbreviations, jargon, technical or specialist terms (without explanation) during their presentations, which may not be understood by participants or ensure that these terms are clearly explained during the presentation. Speakers and participants asking questions need to identify themselves each time they take the floor, so that the captioners can identify them as well. It is essential to avoid having two persons speak at the same time.

2.4.3 Videos

- **Make videos accessible:** It is imperative that all videos projected at the conference must include open captions to allow attendees with hearing disabilities and non-native speakers to understand the contents.

2.4.4 Web Site

- **Make sure that the website is accessible:** The website including the available documents (e.g. registration form) should be accessible and well tagged or formatted according to the W3C standards. Also, the conference webcast proceedings should be made accessible when posting them on the web, including the captioning.

2.4.5 Sign Language

- **Provide sign language interpretation, when attendees require it, in the language of the participant:** It is good practice to book sign language interpreters, as early as possible as there is shortage of qualified sign language interpreters. Do not use international sign as a substitute for appropriate sign language as the vocabulary is small and not well understood. Book the sign language requested of the participant requiring it. One needs to have two sign language interpreters per sign language so each one can take alternate breaks. There should be an appropriate number of interpreters in order to ensure a good functioning of the ceremony.

2.4.6 Aids to Listening

- **Ensure that listening devices are accessible:** Enable the listening devices to plug in neck loops, as well as headphones, in order to allow persons with hearing difficulties to follow the discussions in the meeting rooms.

2.5 Train and inform assistance staff

2.5.1 Staff and Volunteer Training

- **Train assistance staff:** An “Accessibility desk” must be operative and staffed supporting the conference organization (e.g. registration etc.). Staff must be trained to handle difficult situations for persons with disabilities. Also, staff or volunteers should be available to direct people to the relevant parts of the venue. Organizers should also check that support staff including reception, catering and security staff, are briefed or aware of good practice, especially when using another organization’s venues such as hotels and conference venues. Staff should be clearly identifiable and not rely only on conference badge.

2.5.2 Registration Process

- **Make registration process accessible:** All reception areas and procedures at meetings and events should be accessible for persons with disabilities. Also registration for persons with disabilities should be processed with priority.

2.6 Allow anyone to provide feedback and comment

2.6.1 Encourage Feedback

- **Feedback** by participants is encouraged and should be use as part of the learning process.

2.7 DCAD Involvement

- For the convenience of the meeting organizers, DCAD provides in ANNEX 2 a short verification list for the day of the event, to make sure that all preparations have been implemented according to these guidelines. DCAD

believes very strongly that it should be involved in the planning of the next IGF meeting directly with both IGF and the next country host. Also, DCAD should be included on the next negotiation regarding the license of the next remote participation tool. DCAD is also willing to arrange accessibility awareness training in all areas of conference planning.

ANNEX 1

This annex provides an example of what could be added to a conference registration form:

- If you have special dietary requirements please indicate here.
- If you have a service animal please indicate here.
- Other

If you require disability accommodation, please select the accommodation needed below:

- Need Sign Language Interpreter: [Yes ___ No ___] - [if Yes, which language? _____]
- Need Real Time Captioning: [Yes ___ No ___]
- Need Braille printouts of conference information in advance: [Yes ___ No ___]
- Need documents on CD: [Yes ___ No ___]
- Need wheelchair access: [Yes ___ No ___] *(Not needed on form if you have selected a venue that is accessible and if the airport shuttles are accessible, however information on accessible transportation and services needs to be provided, e.g. accessible taxis, shuttle services, or public transportation, including railway).*
- An assistant will be accompanying me: [Yes ___ No ___]
- Other _____]

ANNEX 2

Verification list for the meeting day:

1. On the day and before the meeting or event, check for internal signage and directions.
2. On the day and before the meeting or event, check room layouts.
3. On the day and before the meeting or event, check registration arrangements, as appropriate
4. On the day and before the meeting or event, check that all equipment works, including induction loops.
5. Control communication guidelines for facilitators and participants.
6. Verify introductions and information on emergency exits, toilets etc.
7. Agree on ground rules
8. Verify accessibility of presentations
9. Allow for accessible feedback and decision making processes
10. Make sure all security personnel are briefed on what information is available regarding possible attendee and provide any accessibility awareness training.

ANNEX 3

For IGF information, the DCAD provides in this annex some online resources for planning accessible meetings:

- [ITU tutorial on accessibility](http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/accessibility/tutorial/index.html), website at <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/accessibility/tutorial/index.html>
[Online webcast of the tutorial “Making ITU Accessible: Web Design, Web Conferencing and Real Time Web Captioning”](http://www.itu.int/ibs/ITU-T/200804tutorial/index.html) at <http://www.itu.int/ibs/ITU-T/200804tutorial/index.html>
- [Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings and Conferences, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat](http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/Library/Detail/catalog6998) (French/English) at <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/Library/Detail/catalog6998>
- [Planning for accessible meetings, Disabled Women's Network in Ontario](http://dawn.thot.net/accessible_meetings.html) at http://dawn.thot.net/accessible_meetings.html
- [Access Checklist, Disabled Women's Network in Ontario](http://dawn.thot.net/access_checklist_full.html), it provides an helpful guide, website at: http://dawn.thot.net/access_checklist_full.html (French/English)
- [Planning Accessible Conferences and Meetings, State of Michigan](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Planning_Accessible_Conferences_and_Meetings_59735_7.doc), website at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Planning_Accessible_Conferences_and_Meetings_59735_7.doc
- [Meeting information and communications technology access and service needs for people with disabilities, background paper](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/study_groups/SGP_2006-2010/events/2007/Workshops/documents/05-successpolicies.pdf), online at: http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/study_groups/SGP_2006-2010/events/2007/Workshops/documents/05-successpolicies.pdf
- [Guidelines for Accessible Meetings and Events: Disabled People’s Network Steering Group Community Network for Manchester, April 2005](https://www.google.ch/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CDEQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mdpag.org.uk%2Fguidelines-Sept2006-1.doc&ei=OwviU5XrA8Sm0AXU0oG4Aw&usg=AFQjCNH-pH7MnefxdkjSP_Xrgf38pvE-AA&sig2=htHP1uFGEm-AbzJB1Q2Jfg&bvm=bv.72197243,d.d2k)
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