How to apply ISO Standard 21902 Accessible tourism for all[1]

Requirements and recommendations for public administrations and tourism destinations

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Requirements and recommendations for public administrations and tourism destinations

Tourism plays a key role in economic development and delivers a series of benefits. However, tourism must be sustainable and inclusive, of all people. **By including accessibility and Universal Design principles from the beginning, investment costs can be kept to a minimum**; by committing to equality, tourism companies become **more sustainable, attract new audiences and can employ people with functional diversity, generating business opportunities and greater product differentiation.**

Inclusive policies make it possible to create a supply of accessible tourism offerings. Moreover, entrepreneurs who apply a 'design for all' approach offer quality services that position them better in the market.

The absence of globally agreed regulatory and guidance tools still makes it impossible to benchmark destinations in terms of their level of accessibility. ISO Standard 21902 establishes a comprehensive set of guidelines for key players in the tourism value chain to support their efforts in making their infrastructure, products and services accessible. The "How to apply ISO Standard 21902" collection of guides highlights the key aspects of this tool for administrations, accommodation establishments, transport facilities and tourism resources and its implementation in companies and services.

Public administrations and destinations that wish to ensure that their tourism offerings are universally designed through their policies and strategies, can use this new international guidance tool as a starting point for developing accessible services, or, for assessing the quality of their existing offer.

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1 ISO 21902:2021 Tourism and related services — Accessible tourism for all — Requirements and recommendations (English original), https://www.iso.org/standard/72126.html. UNE-ISO 21902:2021 Turismo y servicios relacionados. Turismo accesible para todos. Requisitos y recomendaciones. (Spanish translation), https://www.une.org/encuentra-tu-norma/busca-tu-norma/norma?c=N0066245.

Why should we care about accessibility?
Universal accessibility in tourism is about:

1. Equality, diversity and inclusion, regardless of our abilities

2. Understanding the integrity of the value chain

3. Infrastructure, products and services for all people

4. Environments enjoyed by both tourists and local people

5. Improvements in people's comfort, safety and life quality

6. Change of mindset by fostering the sector's interest in accessibility

7. New experiences, revenue streams, innovation and improved business results

8. Consumer loyalty and worker satisfaction

9. Coordination between administrations, private sector and local communities

10. Working together with organisations of persons with disabilities

11. Training and continuing education of professionals in the tourism sector

Why is ISO Standard 21902 relevant to me?
It provides me with tools to:

Eliminate all kinds of access barriers for tourists and locals

Ensure the integrity of the tourism value chain

Raise awareness among the general public

Train tourism officials and professionals

Analyse the offerings of competitors and understand the market

Gain knowledge of the benefits and business opportunities that accessible tourism entails

Optimise customer service at tourist information centres

Improve product design, marketing and promotion

Deliver quality accessible experiences

Design economic and tax incentives for companies to implement accessibility

Save on costs for improvements in coordination by including accessibility in the planning stage

As a public administration or a tourism destination, what are my areas of action according to ISO 21902? We should act in 11 different areas:

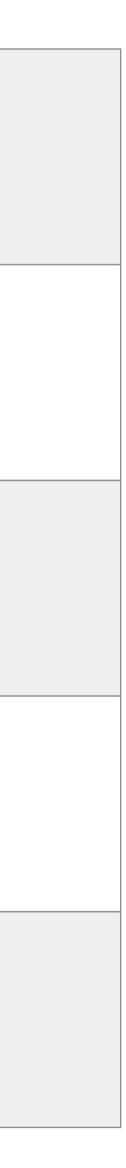| AREAS		ACTIONS
I **AWARENESS AND TRAINING**	The first step before any other action; targeting public officials, entrepreneurs and employees of the tourism industry; key to appreciate the functional diversity of people and the advantages of accessible tourism.	• Raise awareness of the **different abilities of people** • Raise awareness of the **social and economic advantages of accessible tourism and its potential for business development** • **Provide training** to companies, destinations and administrations and train tourism professionals • Move forward with the **labour inclusion** of people with disabilities
II **PLANNING**	Set of actions that encompasses the entire political and strategic framework of accessible tourism; defines specific steps to be taken to make tourism for all people a reality.	• Include accessibility in tourism planning as a **crosscutting** element • Apply **Universal Design principles** • Highlight the role of accessibility in improving **sustainability and competitiveness**
III **ACCESSIBILITY MANAGEMENT**	Formalises the political will and framework for action both at the internal and external level; integrates accessibility into general management; serves to document all procedures and solutions to problems detected or pending improvements.	• Adopt an institutional accessibility policy and strategy • Design protocols to **identify and remove barriers** • Carry out **continuous improvements and maintenance**
IV **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**	Necessary to gain knowledge of the market, behaviour, vacation patterns, as well as socio-economic profiles of customers. Key to producing data and adapting accessible tourism offerings.	• **Conduct market research** to influence policies and strategies with data • Demonstrate how accessibility influences **quality** • **Foster innovation** to create smart destinations whose offerings are constantly renewed

AREAS		ACTIONS
V **LEGISLATION AND STANDARDISATION**	The basis of the public sector's commitment to policies that are inclusive, human rights compliant and aligned with specific standards, designed for the entire tourism value chain.	• Adopt legislation for the **implementation of accessibility requirements** • Incentivise **norms and standards** • Design regulatory guidelines for **infrastructure, products and services** • Establish **penalties** for non-compliance or false advertising
VI **INVESTMENT**	Key role of public or similar institutions in ensuring the existence of accessible infrastructures, products and services; It serves as an incentive for companies to undertake investments in their businesses.	• **Invest in rehabilitation or development** of accessible resources and services • Allocate specific **budget** for accessibility • Encourage recruitment of **specialized staff and suppliers** • Support businesses with **incentives** to boost accessibility
VII **PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**	Essential activity in the tourism market; it responds to the real needs of a wide range of customers, with or without disabilities, and their individual requirements or expectations.	• Work with the private sector and end-users in the co-**design of offerings** • Design product **development, marketing and promotion plans** • Provide search engines for products and services in accessible formats • Support SME promotion networks
VIII **PROVISION OF INFORMATION**	Essential service for customers when planning and booking their trip, travelling to their destination or finding out about possible activities during their stay.	• **Provide detailed information on accessible tourism** resources • Provide information in **accessible formats and media** • Ensure information is **updated, accurate and reliable** • Make sure that **everyone can consult** the accessible tourism offerings
IX **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**	Set of processes that ensure feedback from visitors and their travel companions, implementation of agreed plans, adjustments of strategies and overall quality control.	• Create **monitoring and evaluation indicators** • **Encourage** survey, audit, complaint and feedback systems • **Measure and communicate** concrete achievements • Suggest **corrective actions** to improve measures undertaken

	AREAS	ACTIONS
X **DISSEMINATION OF SUCCESS STORIES**	Good practices in accessible tourism prompt competitors to create/improve and innovate their offerings, in addition to attending to all customers on equal terms.	• **Encourage, reward and disseminate** good practices • Facilitate **replication** of success stories • Inspire peers with solutions that work
XI **CONSTANT CONSULTATION**	Essential in all phases of planning, product development and improvement management; necessary in order to understand specific access requirements of customers with disabilities.	• Work with organisations of persons with disabilities • **Forge alliances** and working groups with all key players in tourism planning • Involve **end-users and technical experts** in all processes

In collaboration with Turismo de Portugal, Turismo Argentina and European Network for Accessible Tourism

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Ministerio de Turismo y Deportes Argentina

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