How to apply ISO Standard 21902
Accessible tourism for all

Recommendations for accommodation, food & beverage and MICE sectors
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 and hospitality establishments, transport facilities and tourism resources and its implementation in companies and services.

Accommodation, food & beverage and MICE companies, that wish to ensure that their offerings are designed in an accessible manner, can use this international guidance tool as a starting point for assessing, developing or adapting their services.

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2 Meetings, Incentives, Conference and Exhibitions
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 accessible tourism value chain
3. Ensuring 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 on 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 fiscal incentives for companies to implement accessibility
Save on costs for improvements in coordination by including accessibility in the planning stage
As a company in the accommodation, food & beverage and MICE sectors, what are my areas of action according to ISO 21902?

We should act in 11 different areas:

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<tr>
<th>AREAS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I. MARKET RESEARCH</strong></td>
<td>The systematic collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data on accessible tourism supply and demand; developing knowledge and fostering innovation with regards to accessibility for all.</td>
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<td><strong>II. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td>Creating a corporate vision and public commitment to ensure quality services for all people; formalizing executive support for systemic action.</td>
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<td><strong>III. ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT</strong></td>
<td>Providing data on the current levels of accessibility and benchmarking against competitors; identifying areas for improvement across the value chain.</td>
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<td><strong>Commission researchers with disabilities to map obstacles</strong> that people with disabilities confront.</td>
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<td><strong>Analyze the common concerns</strong> of customers with disabilities when looking for accommodation or food and beverage services.</td>
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<td><strong>Identify business-led initiatives</strong> and best practices in accessibility.</td>
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<td><strong>Fund research on system change</strong> as a consequence of inclusive training and jobs.</td>
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<td><strong>Understand the contribution of accessibility to sustainability and competitiveness</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Prioritize accessibility as a fundamental requirement for all tourism developments and a key driver of quality</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Define the business advantages</strong> of better access for customers and employees, based on data.</td>
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<td><strong>Update policies</strong> to incorporate disability inclusion and accessibility.</td>
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<td><strong>Integrate accessibility into operations and performance</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Nominate a senior executive as accessibility champion</strong> across the company.</td>
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<td><strong>Estimate how many customers you lose for not being accessible enough</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Allocate budget to implement accessibility improvements</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Conduct an accessibility audit</strong> with the help of technical experts and organizations of persons with disabilities.</td>
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<td><strong>Decide which environments, services and business activities should be prioritized</strong> for accessibility improvements.</td>
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<td><strong>Appoint an expert committee</strong> with disabilities hired to advise on new product development and quality customer experience.</td>
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<td><strong>Assess staff sourcing, hiring, training and development</strong> for inclusion of people with disabilities.</td>
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3 The brief descriptions of the areas do not include official definitions approved by UNWTO, but rather tourism concepts in the context of universal accessibility and accommodation.
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<td>IV PLANNING</td>
<td>Developing a set of actions based on agreed objectives; defining specific steps for different departments to improve companies’ accessibility.</td>
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<td>V COMMON AREAS</td>
<td>A wide spectrum of spaces for common-use and accessible routes that customers need to transit or spend their time in, to be able to enjoy all the facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI GUEST ROOMS AND CATERING FACILITIES</td>
<td>Core services of the hospitality business and tourism experience; many accessibility interventions follow common standards for built environments while others are specific to hospitality services.</td>
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<td>VII MEETING AND CONFERENCE VENUES</td>
<td>Accessibility elements in the provision of conference services, including access to the physical environment and full and equal participation, enable accessible MICE for all. These facilities may be integrated into hospitality establishments or function separately.</td>
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| | ● Take into consideration accessibility when designing any new product or redesigning existing ones  
| | ● Define objectives, targets, and metrics to monitor progress  
| | ● Identify departments that need to participate and collaborate  
| | ● Develop an implementation plan for undertaking specific actions  
| | ● Elaborate tailored-made department implementation plans  
| | ● Forecast costs and benefits in the short, medium and long term  
| | ● Provide conditions of autonomy, comfort and safety for all customers  
| | ● Create accessible routes in the busiest and most frequently used spaces  
| | ● Undertake accessibility improvements in areas used by both front and back of house staff  
| | ● Implement maintenance, evacuation, and safety plans  
| | ● Apply Universal Design principles for the layout of facilities and services in guest rooms and catering establishments  
| | ● Design appealing and comfortable accessible rooms and catering areas that can be enjoyed by any customer  
| | ● Locate accessible rooms and dining areas as close as possible to accessible routes  
| | ● Provide information on allergens in menus, in accessible formats  
| | ● Apply accessibility principles when setting up and selecting conference venues  
| | ● Develop checklists to ensure access to conference infrastructure for physical disabilities and specific features in place for sensory and intellectual impairments  
| | ● Make registration forms simple and include access requirements or dietary restrictions  
<p>| | ● Ensure a satisfactory meeting experience for end-users, by booking accessible rooms, catering, transport and leisure services |</p>
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| **VIII PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT** | Establish protocols to remove barriers impacting both customers and staff  
Apply Universal Design principles in construction and renovation works, as well as the design and procurement of products, communication and other services  
Design accessible experiences in collaboration with end-users, destination management organizations, local attractions and transport services  
Encourage innovation to reflect up-to-date market trends and accessibility solutions  
Request economic and tax incentives from public administrations |
| **IX LABOUR INCLUSION** | Hire staff and suppliers with disabilities  
Develop an intern programme with career development prospects  
Consider reasonable accommodation to offer equitable opportunities  
Commission disability experts to review hiring processes for inclusion  
Organize volunteering opportunities for staff to work with persons with disabilities |
| **X COMMERCIALIZATION** | Do not discriminate against customers with disabilities by setting higher prices  
Provide direct booking options for accessible services  
Work with online booking platforms and travel agencies to familiarize them with the offerings  
Incorporate accessible offerings into overall marketing strategy  
Feature people of different ages and abilities to reflect diversity in your market positioning and product portfolio promotion  
Stand up for the accessibility cause within business or professional associations |
| **XI FEEDBACK AND REVIEW** | Set up opportunities to learn directly from your staff and customers  
Engage consultants with disabilities to test and feedback on accessibility of different environments, facilities, communications and support services  
Review progress against objectives and revise activities to improve outcomes  
Measure and communicate concrete achievements |
In collaboration with Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, International Circle of Hospitality Directors and European Network for Accessible Tourism