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# Guide for addressing accessibility in standards

*Guide pour l'intégration de l'accessibilité dans les normes*

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# Contents

Page

**Foreword** ..... **v**
**Introduction** ..... **vi**
**1 Scope** ..... **1**
**2 Terms and definitions** ..... **1**
**3 Accessibility** ..... **3**
3.1 General ..... 3
3.2 Accessibility and standards ..... 4
**4 Accessibility in the standards development process** ..... **4**
4.1 General ..... 4
4.2 Considerations by standards bodies ..... 4
4.3 Considerations related to the standards development process ..... 5
4.3.1 Stage 1: Define the standards project and determine the applicability of this Guide ..... 5
4.3.2 Stage 2: Ensure the standards development committee is well equipped to implement an accessible process with equitable participation ..... 6
4.3.3 Stage 3: Develop the content of the standard ..... 6
4.3.4 Stage 4: Issue the draft standard for public review and vote and revise the standard as needed ..... 7
4.3.5 Stage 5: Publish the standard ..... 7
**5 How to apply the Guide** ..... **7**
5.1 Two approaches to addressing accessibility in standards ..... 7
5.2 Other sources of information ..... 8
5.3 Verifying and validating that accessibility is adequately addressed ..... 9
**6 Accessibility goals** ..... **10**
6.1 General ..... 10
6.1.1 Structure of the goals ..... 10
6.1.2 Identifying user accessibility needs ..... 10
6.1.3 Applying user accessibility needs to generate requirements and recommendations ..... 11
6.2 The goals ..... 11
6.2.1 Suitability for the widest range of users ..... 11
6.2.2 Conformity with user expectations ..... 12
6.2.3 Support for individualization ..... 13
6.2.4 Approachability ..... 14
6.2.5 Perceivability ..... 15
6.2.6 Understandability ..... 15
6.2.7 Controllability ..... 16
6.2.8 Usability ..... 17
6.2.9 Error tolerance ..... 18
6.2.10 Equitable use ..... 19
6.2.11 Compatibility with other systems ..... 20

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**7 Human abilities and characteristics ..... 21**
7.1 General ..... 21
7.1.1 Description ..... 21
7.1.2 Diversity of human abilities and characteristics ..... 21
7.2 Sensory abilities and characteristics ..... 21
7.2.1 General ..... 21
7.2.2 Seeing functions ..... 22
7.2.3 Hearing functions ..... 23
7.2.4 Touch functions ..... 24
7.2.5 Taste functions and smell functions ..... 25
7.3 Immunological system functions ..... 26
7.3.1 Description ..... 26
7.3.2 Impairments and limitations ..... 26
7.3.3 Design considerations ..... 26
7.4 Physical abilities and characteristics ..... 26
7.4.1 General ..... 26
7.4.2 Body size ..... 27
7.4.3 Movement: Functions of upper body structures and fine hand use abilities ..... 28
7.4.4 Movement: Functions of lower body structures ..... 29
7.4.5 Muscle power and muscle endurance ..... 30
7.4.6 Voice and speech ..... 31
7.5 Cognitive abilities ..... 32
7.5.1 Description ..... 32
7.5.2 Impairments and limitations ..... 32
7.5.3 Design considerations ..... 33

**8 Strategies for addressing user accessibility needs and design considerations in standards ..... 34**
8.1 General ..... 34
8.2 Developing standard-specific requirements and recommendations based on user accessibility needs and design considerations ..... 34
8.2.1 Provide multiple means of information presentation and user interaction ..... 34
8.2.2 Set fixed parameters to accommodate the widest range of users ..... 35
8.2.3 Set adjustable parameters to accommodate the widest range of users ..... 35
8.2.4 Minimize unnecessary complexity ..... 36
8.2.5 Provide individualized access to a system ..... 37
8.2.6 Eliminate unnecessary limits or constraints on user interactions with a system 37
8.2.7 Provide compatibility with assistive products and assistive technology ..... 38
8.2.8 Provide alternative versions of a system ..... 38

**Annex A** (informative) **Global trends supporting accessibility ..... 39**

**Annex B** (informative) **The *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICF) as a resource for terminology ..... 41**

**Annex C** (informative) **Questions to aid in achieving the accessibility goals ..... 43**

**Bibliography ..... 47**

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# Foreword

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

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft Guides adopted by the responsible Committee or Group are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as a Guide requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/IEC Guide 71 was prepared by the ISO/IEC JTAG (Joint Technical Advisory Group) at the request of the ISO/TMB and the IEC/SMB. It was subsequently adopted by ITU-T Study Group 16 as ITU-T Supplement 17 to the H-Series of Recommendations.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC Guide 71:2001), which has been technically revised.

For the purposes of obtaining feedback and information about experiences in using this Guide, users are encouraged to share their views on ISO/IEC Guide 71:2014. Please click on the link below to take part in the online survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/guide71

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# Introduction

The purpose of this Guide is to assist standards developers (e.g. technical committees or working groups) to address accessibility in standards that focus, whether directly or indirectly, on any type of system that people use. It provides guidance for developing and writing appropriate accessibility requirements and recommendations in standards. However, while its intended audience are standards developers, this Guide contains information that can also be useful to other people, such as manufacturers, designers, service providers and educators.

The second edition of this Guide, retitled "*Guide for addressing accessibility in standards,*" builds upon the edition published in 2001, titled "*Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities*". This edition takes account of developments in thinking and practice which have taken place since 2001 and takes a more inclusive approach. This edition also sets out to improve the usability and adoption of the Guide itself. This Guide, like its predecessor, is intended to be part of the overall framework that standards bodies can use in their efforts to support the development of systems that suit the needs of diverse users.

It is an important goal for the whole of society that all people, regardless of their age, size or ability, have access to the broadest range of systems. Issues of accessibility to and usability of systems have become more critical as the number of people (such as older persons, children, persons with reduced abilities and persons with disabilities) with diverse user accessibility needs has increased.

Based on their individual abilities and characteristics, people's accessibility needs vary substantially and change throughout the course of their lives (i.e. as they advance from childhood to adulthood and on into old age). Impairments can be permanent, temporary or vary on a daily basis, and sometimes they are not fully recognized or acknowledged. In addition, although some limitations can be minor in nature, combinations of limitations can pose significant problems for individuals attempting to interact with systems. This is the case particularly where user accessibility needs and accessibility requirements were not recognized during development of those systems. Standards that include accessibility requirements can support development of systems that can be used by more users.

While much progress has been made worldwide in the development of accessibility standards relating to information and communications technology and the built environment, the development of accessibility standards related to other sectors has not always kept pace. However, the requirements of national and international anti-discrimination legislation have become increasingly stringent. Additional recommendations are contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[36] particularly in Articles 4, 9, 21 and 30), in the UN Committee of the rights of persons with disabilities, General Comment 2[37] and emerging national and regional procurement regulations.

International Standards of ISO and IEC and ITU-T recommendations can play an important part in avoiding market fragmentation and achieving harmonized accessible systems rather than those that meet only national standards and are incompatible with those produced in other nations.

The *IEC/ISO/ITU Joint Policy Statement on Standardization and Accessibility*[25] sets out the basic principles for ensuring that the needs of older persons, children and persons with disabilities are incorporated in the standards development process, providing justification on human rights and economic grounds. One of the core points of the Joint Policy Statement is "accessible or universal design", which aims at ensuring that products, systems, services, environments and facilities can be used by persons from a population with the widest range of characteristics and abilities. In this second edition, the Guide is intended to supplement the Joint Policy Statement by providing a set of accessibility goals and describing human abilities and characteristics to assist standards developers in identifying accessibility needs of diverse users in diverse contexts of use.

The guidance provided in this Guide is general. The Guide recognizes the principle that standards should normally not be design-restrictive. The Guide therefore suggests ways of determining user accessibility needs without providing specific solutions. It is important to realize that one-size-fits-all solutions seldom meet every person's needs and that accessible features can benefit the majority of the population. Optimal solutions vary greatly depending on the specific users and contexts of use. Additional sector-related guides might need to be developed for specific product or service sectors.

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# Guide for addressing accessibility in standards

## 1 Scope

This Guide provides guidance to standards developers on addressing accessibility requirements and recommendations in standards that focus, whether directly or indirectly, on systems (i.e. products, services and built environments) used by people. To assist standards developers to define accessibility requirements and recommendations, the Guide presents:

— a summary of current terminology relating to accessibility;

— issues to consider in support of accessibility in the standards development process;

— a set of accessibility goals (used to identify user accessibility needs);

— descriptions of (and design considerations for) human abilities and characteristics;

— strategies for addressing user accessibility needs and design considerations in standards.

## 2 Terms and definitions

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

**2.1**
**system**
product, service, or built environment or any combination of them with which the user interacts

**2.2**
**user**
individual who accesses or interacts with a system

[SOURCE: ISO 9241-11:1998, 3.7, modified — "Accesses" has been added to the definition, "person" has been replaced by "individual".]

**2.3**
**diverse users**
individuals with differing abilities and characteristics or accessibility needs

**2.4**
**user accessibility need**
user need related to features or attributes that are necessary for a system to be accessible

Note 1 to entry: User accessibility needs vary over time and across contexts of use.

**2.5**
**impairments**
problems in body function or structure related to a significant deviation or loss

Note 1 to entry: Impairments can be temporary or permanent; progressive, regressive or static; intermittent or continuous.

[SOURCE: ICF 2001, WHO, Clause 6, section 4.1]

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