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**Universal Design and  
Sustainable Tourism**

Webinar, 21<sup>th</sup> February 2025

# Importance of development and branding of accessible and inclusive tourism offer

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## Introduction

- Overview of accessible and sustainable tourism as concepts
- Who, where and how should develop accessible and inclusive tourism
- Benefits of developing such offer
  
- For more details on the topic from the presentation, please contact me or consult the following publication:

*Đurkin Badurina, J.; Kovačić, N; Paleka, H.; Soldić Frleta, D. (2025). Breaking barriers: designing inclusive tourist destinations (in the process of publication)*

## Is tourism right or privilege?

Global code of ethics for tourism (UNWTO,2021) in article 7 states:

*The prospect of direct and personal access to the discovery and enjoyment of the planet's resources constitutes **a right equally open to all the world's inhabitants**; the increasingly extensive participation in national and international tourism should be regarded as one of the best possible expressions of the sustained growth of free time, and obstacles should not be placed in its way;*

...

*Family, youth, student and senior tourism and tourism for people with disabilities, should be encouraged and facilitated*





## Accessible and inclusive tourism? Is there a difference and is it important?

### **Inclusive tourism**

not only makes travel accessible but is focused on creating the welcoming and accommodating environment for people of all backgrounds and abilities

### **Accessible tourism**

making travel and tourism offer available to all by removing (mainly) physical barriers



## Examples of making tourism offer more accessible

### Infrastructure, Facilities & Public Spaces

- Step-free access, ramps, elevators, and wide doorways
- Clear signage in multiple formats (braille, large print, high-contrast text).
- Where possible audio guides, tactile elements and accessible seatings
- Accessible restrooms with appropriate fixtures and assistance features

### Accommodation & Hospitality Services

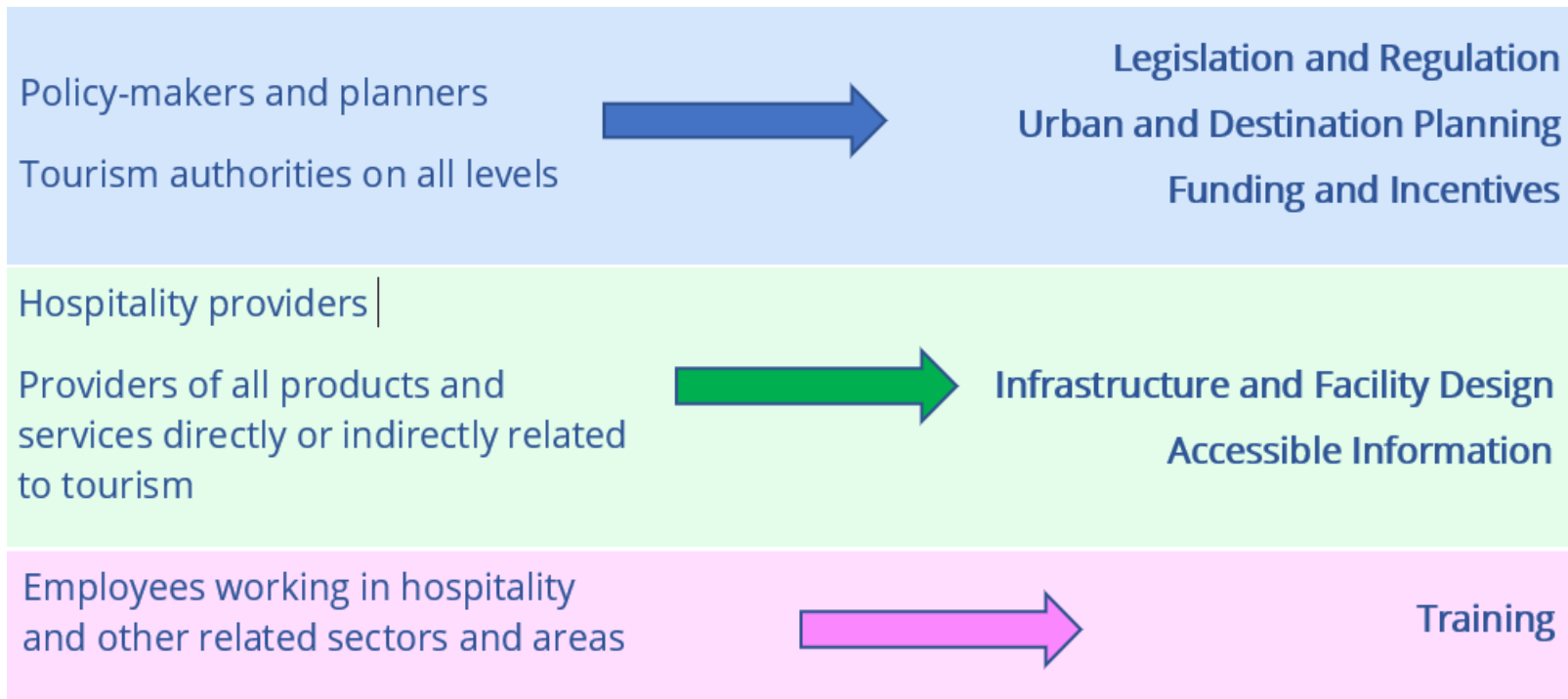
- Rooms with roll-in showers, grab bars, visual alarms, and accessible furniture arrangements.
- Availability of assistive equipment (e.g., hearing loops, wheelchair rentals, adjustable beds).

### Digital Accessibility & Information

- Websites and booking platforms compliant with **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**.
- Detailed accessibility information available in multiple formats.
- Easy-to-use customer support channels for special requests.



## Who is „responsible” for creating accessible and inclusive tourism offer?



## Where to start from in creating (more) accessible and inclusive tourism?

- Focus on the process, not the product!
- Application of **universal design** and its principles in creating new infrastructure, products and services
- Reasonable adjustment of existing elements, depending on the possibilities and the context of each particular situation



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## How to do it?

Framework for the development and promotion of an  
accessible and inclusive destination





## Step 1: Improve usability of tourism products and services

- Modernisation and innovation of the products and services in response to the interests of modern tourists
- Special emphasis on information, communication & promotion channels





## Step 2: Enable accessibility & ensure inclusiveness

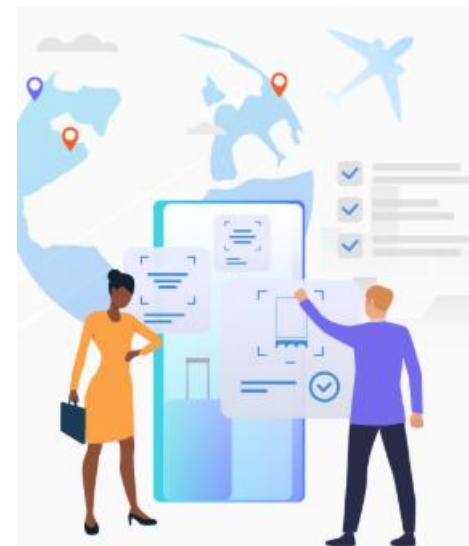
- Enable physical accessibility and assistance for people with certain impairments such as: physical, sensory, communicative, intellectual/mental and “hidden” restrictions of functionality
- Ensure desired experience and welcoming feeling for all users, regardless of their particular state/disability, age, cultural, economic and educational background
- Small steps are ok!





## Step 3: Integrate & promote tourist offer in accessible manner

- ✓ Provision of **all** information in a way that is understandable and accessible to all.
- ✓ Cooperation with the networks of people with different impairments and disabilities
- ✓ Education of employees and providers of different tourism-related services for communicating and meeting the needs of various groups of people.



## Labels for accessible tourism

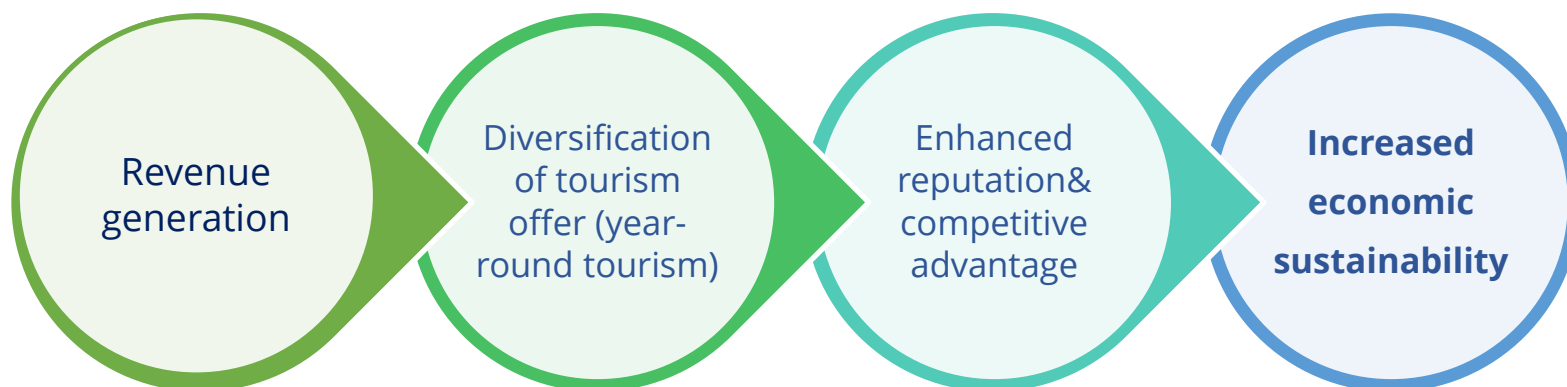
- Labels aim to provide standardized, reliable information to tourists while promoting best practices within the industry.
- In terms of accessible tourism they can be efficient tools for promotion and recognition of quality IF

**The complete and up-to date information is provided on the scope of accessibility**





## Economic benefits of developing accessible and inclusive tourism



## Overall benefits for society and impact on sustainable development





## Instead of conclusion

*"Freedom, in general, may be defined as the absence of obstacles to the realisation of desires." (Bertrand Russell)*

Removal of barriers to the development of inclusive tourism offerings contributes to the achievement of freedom for a significant number of people with disabilities interested in travelling

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

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