Model Policy
ICT Accessibility

G20
Global
Smart Cities
Alliance

This policy is considered foundational to the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance policy roadmap's principles of **equity, inclusion and social impact.** You can find supplementary content on our website[1] to provide practical support for adopting and implementing this policy.

Foreword

ICT products and services are the most scalable and used tool of our modern societies. Cities all over the world are using ICT to inform and serve citizens. At the same time this digital transformation is generating a massive amount of data that can be used to increase the efficiency of the city.

As cities digitally transform, it is fundamental they ensure the accessibility of all products and services or risk widening the digital divide and excluding a significant percentage of the population. Disability – whether temporary, situational, or permanent—is something that can affect people at any time. Designing with and for people with disabilities leads to greater innovations for everyone. ICT accessibility is not only important for persons with

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[1] Visit https://globalsmartcitiesalliance.org/

disabilities but also benefits the increasing elderly population, migrants that do not speak the native language, and persons with low literacy.

Procurement policies are a critical lever in increasing accessibility. They set out the expectation, standards and criteria for how goods and services will be purchased, and through this the city can ensure the acquisition of universal designed products and services to safeguard the equitable development and participation of all.

In some countries, national legislation exists which mandates that procurement or development of ICT be made accessible to persons with disabilities and older persons (US Rehabilitation Act section 508; EU Directive on Public Procurement 2014 along with EN 301 549). In many cases, this legislation extends beyond the traditional definition of disabilities and may also incorporate socio-economic variables such as language or literacy in order to increase access and the associated benefits that can be derived from these technologies.

A city-wide procurement policy or code of conduct, which dictates the standards and criteria for public procurement and development for the city and city agencies, can:

a. clearly document and ensure the city's compliance with national legislation on accessibility and procurement, and development if it exists (e.g. in the US and across the EU); or

b. define a clear approach for ensuring the city develops inclusive and accessible smart city tech and services that demonstrates conformance to a globally recognized standards, even if national legislation does not exist.

Procurers and vendors need to have a common understanding of what accessibility characteristics are expected from ICT products and services.

An accessible ICT should be intuitive and usable by the highest number of users with the widest set of characteristics. Accessibility and inclusion policies including international procurement standards offer precise and testable descriptions of each accessibility feature.

A universally designed product or service takes into account the different ways a user may interact with it. A person using a wheelchair, or a small person should be able to reach it. A person who is blind should be able to use or interact with a touch screen or read electronic content with the use of an assistive technology, and in some cases the service can offer a reading option. A person with a hearing disability or a person who is deaf will need the inclusion of a visual equivalent as an alternative to the audio content, a flashing light for example to indicate a mobile message or the inclusion of subtitles for audio content.

Many mainstream solutions in the global ICT market already conform with globally recognized standards. Those solution providers often highlight accessibility as an added value of their products and services. City procurers need to include these requirements in their acquisitions.

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Model Policy

This wording has been adapted from the G3ICT & ITU Model ICT Accessibility Policy which was originally intended for national governments. The policy wording has been adapted for use by cities.

Definitions

Accessibility refers to the extent to which products, systems, services, environments and facilities can be used by people from a population with the widest range of characteristics and capabilities, to achieve a specified goal in a specified context of use.

Accessibility requirements means a precise and testable description of each feature of the ICT solution to be procured.

Assistive technology means hardware or software added to, connected to, or incorporated within, a system that increases accessibility for an individual.

Accessible technology means products, solutions, services based on technologies (product and/or hardware and/or software) that are B2C accessible, usable and inclusive for all.

Functional performance statements refers to a series of statements intended to describe the functional performance of ICT enabling people to locate, identify, and operate ICT functions, and to access the information provided, regardless of physical, cognitive or sensory abilities, without reference to a specific solution. Any differences in ability may be permanent, temporary or situational.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) encompass a wide range of hardware and software, devices and computers, formats and systems that enable communication through electronic means. This includes devices and systems used for the storage, processing and retrieval of electronic information to the array of devices and software used to retrieve this information, as well as those used to communicate, in real-time, with other people.

Persons with disabilities means individuals who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Older persons with functional disabilities are also regarded as persons with disabilities.

User means a person who interacts with the product, service or environment.

1. Introduction to accessible ICT public procurement / development policy

1. This policy may be cited as the "Accessible ICT public procurement policy", and shall come into effect upon publication in the [official government publication].

2. Objectives

1. [City] is committed to ensuring all persons with disabilities and older people have access on an equal basis with all other citizens to all government programmes, products, services and information. Essential to meeting this objective is that all Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) provided by and maintained by, or on behalf of, public authorities and/or used by public authority staff is accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. [City] also aims to maximize accessibility to other user communities with barriers to use. This includes technology solutions provided to the city with the intention of serving the public.

2. The objective of this policy is to provide an enabling framework to support the public procurement / development of accessible ICTs.

3. Roles and responsibilities

1. The [relevant unit or body] are the lead authorities in charge of promoting, implementing and enforcing, the Accessible ICT public procurement / development policy for [city].

4. Defining accessibility as an attribute in the procurement of ICT

1. It is recommended that applicable functional performance statements, such as those specified in the global standards in Annex A, are quoted or clearly referenced in any Call for Tenders.

5. Accessibility in the preparatory study

1. Where a procuring authority conducts a preparatory study prior to initiating a public procurement exercise, it shall include accessibility as per recognised standards in Annex A as a consideration in the study. The procuring authority may do this by considering the business needs the procurement is intended to fulfil and the needs of all potential end users, including among the public and public sector employees, in particular end users with disabilities. Standards such as the global standards in Annex A have been developed to identify for the procurer a diverse set of user needs.

6. Use of standards for formulating accessibility requirements

1. Procuring and Development authorities shall use appropriate and internationally recognized ICT accessibility standards that are appropriate for use in the procurement of accessible ICT, including for off the shelf products and for the development of products and services, that are developed, delivered and maintained for the use of the public or (city) employees

2. In the specification of Mandatory Requirements and Award Criteria, procuring authorities shall, to the greatest extent, refer to the global standards in Annex A .

3. The [relevant unit] shall monitor standardization developments and update this list according as relevant standards are finalized or updated.

7. Verification of conformance with accessibility criteria in the Call for Tender

1. The procuring authority shall ensure that suppliers demonstrate their conformance with accessibility standards or, where relevant, their capability to deliver accessible ICT products or services.

2. Depending on the type of product or service (such as web development or software development) to be procured, and where accessibility comes about in the value chain of the technology components of a project, verification may take place pre-award or post-award.

3. Evidence that may be requested in the Call for Tender include: a brief narrative description of the suppliers' experience in the IT accessibility domain signed by an authorized representative of the supplier; or an attestation that the supplier conforms to the criteria or standard

4. Examples of relevant attestations that may be requested are:

    a. A supplier's self-declaration of conformity, with supporting information on how the conformity assessment was carried out; or

    b. A certificate, issued by an independent third party, as conformance verification (Third Party Certification).

5. In most cases, a self-declaration of conformity may be sufficient, proportional, and practical.

6. Where the procuring body chooses to carry out verification in-house, and where the requirements are based on standards, the test methods (if any) specified in the standard shall be used. Other forms of testing that may be used include user with various disabilities testing, automated testing using specialised testing tools and validators. A suitably briefed and qualified team shall carry out the evaluation process.

8. Accessibility in Contract Management

1. The procuring body shall establish a protocol to ensure that the Contract sufficiently enables the procuring body to verify during the lifetime of the contract that the delivered product or service fulfils specified accessibility requirements and statutory requirements. The accessibility and statutory requirements and the verification process should be specified in the contract.

9. Exemptions

1. The [relevant body] may define a set of conditions whereby certain types of ICT are exempt from the application of this policy.

2. All exemptions to the inclusion of accessibility as a requirement in the public procurement of an ICT product or service not covered through 15.1 may be made through an application in writing to the [relevant body] outlining a description of the ICT to be procured and the rationale for the exclusion of accessibility as a criterion in the procurement of these ICTs.

10. Training / awareness and Capacity Building

1. An awareness / training programme should be planned and delivered to all relevant stakeholders in the city, e.g. procurement officials, business decision makers. This programme should be focused on understanding the mission of achieving inclusion, the impact on the city, its citizens and ICT vendors, what ICT and accessible technology are and the accessible ICT public procurement policy.

2. To support effective implementation of the Accessible ICT public procurement policy, best practices examples, practical resources, toolkits, training materials and other relevant materials shall be made available to all public sector staff via a central website or intranet, or by other means, as appropriate.

11. Monitoring and evaluation

1. The [relevant unit or body] shall ensure that all the measures outlined in the current policy are adopted by all city authorities procuring ICTs for use by the city or by employees of the city, except for ICT products and services exempted under section 9.

12. Periodic review

1. This policy shall be reviewed at least every 2 years.

Annex A: Standards

The following standards are deemed as suitable for use in formulating accessibility requirements for the purposes of achieving conformance with the functional performance statements:

- U/S/ Access Board. "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Standards and Guidelines" for Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996241
- European Standard EN 301 549- "Accessibility requirements for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe"
- ISO/IEC 40500 (2012): "Information technology --W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and its revised version 2.1 may be referenced for procuring web technology, web development or web contents and services.

They may be used in:

- Defining accessibility requirements for the mandatory requirements in the Call for Tender
- Defining sub-criteria for the award criteria in the Call for Tender
- Defining accessibility requirements for use in the specification of functions and performance of the product or service to be developed to be included in the contract and the Call for Tender

Acknowledgements

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About the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance

Established in June 2019, the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance unites municipal, regional and national governments, private-sector partners and cities' residents around a shared set of principles for the responsible and ethical use of smart city technologies. The World Economic Forum, the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation, serves as secretariat for the Alliance.

Through the Alliance, global experts from government, private-sector partners and civil society, are compiling and analysing policies from around the world to identify model policies necessary for successful, ethical smart cities.

You can find more model policies and more details about the Alliance at:
https://globalsmartcitiesalliance.org/

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