

REGIONAL COMPETITION FOR ACCESSIBLE EUROPE

Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe

ITU-EC Forum for Europe “Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL”
23-25 March 2021

Following the success of the 2019 edition, ITU and European Commission have joined efforts to organise the third edition of “**Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL**”, which will take place virtually from **23 to 25 March 2021**. The organisation of this event is supported by the Government of Portugal and is conducted as part of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. As an integral part of this Forum, a **Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe** is launched. Shortlisted candidates will receive the opportunity to present their solutions during the ITU-EC Forum for Europe “Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL” where winners will be announced.

Background

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have a vital role for ALL people’s empowerment and represent an enabler for an inclusive society. For Persons with Disabilities (PwD), ICTs are essential barrier removers which help them live an independent life, participate in cultural events or political processes, benefit from education or entertainment, or obtain a job.

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), the international community works to identify and remove accessibility barriers to enable human development and social inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwD). Competent Institutions at an international, regional and national level promote innovative solutions that leverage the opportunities of ICT to foster equal inclusion of all and reduce the digital divide, with particular attention for Persons with Disabilities.

At the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17) held in Buenos Aires in 2017, **ITU committed to making ICT Accessibility a priority for the period 2018-2021**. Moreover, at the Plenipotentiary Conference held in Dubai in 2018, ITU Member States recognised Digital Inclusiveness as a key strategic target, setting the goal that accessible telecommunications/ICTs for Persons with Disabilities are established in all countries by 2023.

The Regional Competition on Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe promotes the goals and objectives of ITU, as well as Sustainable Development Goals, in the specific context of Europe. The competition aims at fostering the research and development of new digital solutions which seek to bring more social inclusion and interaction as well as comfort and quality of life to the daily routine of persons with disabilities, in line with **SDG 10** (reduced inequality). Simultaneously, it aims at fostering the innovation ecosystem with a focus on ICT Accessibility, in line with **SDG 9** (industry, innovation and infrastructure).

Competition

The third edition of the **Regional Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe** seeks submissions from individuals and teams across the private, public, non-profit and academic sectors. It is expected that new concepts of digital applications or interfaces are developed for use by persons with vision, hearing, speech, cognitive and physical disabilities. Albeit not exclusively, these may include services accessible through the web, software integrated into mobile devices, or hardware and peripherals for specific uses. Below are the competition’s specifications:





<p><u>Requirements</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solution must be in the final stage of development, or have been finalised within the past three years, and originate from Europe region (list of countries available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Pages/Contact/Geneva.aspx); • The solution must be based on information and communication technologies, be compatible with most known operating systems and with widely available assistive accessibility devices or systems/platforms; • The solution must possess a clear aim to benefit people with disabilities and specific needs.
<p><u>Categories</u></p>	<p>Competitors will be required to qualify their project in 1 of the following 5 categories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing; • Persons with visual impairments; • Persons with speech impairments; • Persons with cognitive and intellectual disabilities; • Persons with physical disabilities.
<p><u>Submission</u></p>	<p>To enter the contest please submit all information about your solution at the following https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Accessible-Europe-Competition-2021 (the estimated completion time is 10 minutes). The form is organised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General information about participant and project; 2. Solution description: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Solution Overview: Up to five high-resolution pictures of the solution, containing the main components (screen pictures or device pictures) of the solution. b. Components Description: A description of the components and the interfaces, hardware and software, and the standards used or developed for the solution. (max 2500 characters) c. Main Use Case Scenario: A detailed description of the solution’s main use case, the actors involved, the sequence of actions, the input and outputs, etc. (max 5000 characters) 3. Practical Information: Access to the solution or application plus instructions (where applicable) and plan for business development.
<p><u>Deadline</u></p>	<p>The contest will accept submissions until 10 January 2021, 11:59 PM CET (GMT+1).</p>
<p><u>Other Information</u></p>	<p>All submissions will be automatically considered for the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2021. wsis.org/prizes Please be informed that there is no participation fee.</p>

Terms & Ethical Standards

Competitors are required to maintain ethical conduct and may be subject to disqualification. Please note that members of a competing team must control the majority of the intellectual property rights of the solution submitted to the competition and must account for the majority of the work and resources put into the creation and prototyping of the solution. Plagiarism will lead to disqualification from the competition. Employees or persons related to ITU and event partners are excluded from participating in the competition.



Evaluation

After an initial pre-selection based on the assessment of requirements, an evaluation committee composed of ICT accessibility experts will evaluate each competing solution according to the following criteria: Creativity, User Experience, Technology and Solution Development. Scores will be assigned on the basis of the table below:

CRITERIA	SPECIFICATION	WEIGHT	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Creativity	Innovation-originality of the idea	35	1	2	3	4
User Experience	Size of user target Impact on user life Ease of use	35	1	2	3	4
Solution Development	Quality and status of development of the solution presented Use of Standards Standards Development	20	1	2	3	4
Technology	Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality Big Data Cloud Computing Internet of Things (IoT) e-Payment Other	10	1	2	3	4

Note: Grade 1 is the lowest score and grade 4 is the highest score.

FINAL SCORE =	(Creativity x 35) + (User Experience x 35) + (Solution Development x 20) + (Technology x 10)
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The sum of all grades obtained by each proposal, multiplied by its weight – in accordance with the above formula – will be considered the final score. Solutions will be sorted in categories in descending order of their final score.

Please note that the evaluation process will take place from 20 January to 11 February 2021.

Finalists and Winning Projects

Three projects for each category will be shortlisted and announced on 19 February 2021. Finalists will be invited to attend the ITU–EC Forum for Europe “Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL”, which will take place virtually from 23-25 March 2021.

In the context of the Forum, finalists will be given the opportunity to exhibit their product and pitch their solution to an international audience of ecosystem stakeholders, institutional and industry representatives and the interested general public.





During the final session of the Forum’s first day, the 5 winning solutions will be announced and presented and will be followed by a special ceremony in presence of ITU, the European Commission and the host, the Government of Portugal. Winners will be awarded with special recognition of ACCESSIBLE EUROPE and other runner-ups will receive a certificate of participation. ITU members and industry partners, whenever appropriate, will promote the winning projects in national, regional and international events, thereby increasing the author/s business opportunities.

Other Information

All participants of this regional competition are strongly encouraged to attend the ITU–EC Forum for Europe “Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL.”. For more details on the event, please visit the event website at <http://itu.int/go/Accessible-Europe-21>, where information on the agenda, registration, logistics, and other useful links are available and regularly updated.

For any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at EURregion@itu.int.

