



Pitching competition: Call for Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe

ITU-EC Regional Forum for Europe
“Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL”

“[Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL](#)” is a Regional Forum jointly organized by the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** and the **European Commission (EC)**, and co-organized by the AccessibleEU Resource Centre. It is scheduled to take place on **13-14 December 2023** in **Madrid, Spain**. Supported by the Government of Spain and hosted by Fundación ONCE, this forum will be conducted as part of Spain's 2023 Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

In its fifth edition, Accessible Europe will feature the **Pitching Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe**. Eligible projects will be published on the [Accessible Europe website \(https://www.itu.int/go/Accessible-Europe-23\)](https://www.itu.int/go/Accessible-Europe-23), and further disseminated within the European ICT stakeholder community. Interested participants will have their projects considered for the [World Summit of the Information Society \(WSIS\) Prizes 2024](#).

After an initial screening based on eligibility criteria, selected candidates will have the opportunity to present their innovative technological approaches in-person at the Regional Forum, where a public vote will be held to recognize the most impactful solutions presented. The first day of the event will conclude with a ceremony to celebrate and award the competition's exceptional winners.

This initiative serves as a catalyst for enhancing social inclusion and quality of life for individuals with disabilities, while also fostering an innovation ecosystem centered on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) accessibility. Open to diverse participants from various sectors across Europe, this competition invites the submission of innovative digital solutions for persons with disabilities, incorporating a variety of technologies tailored to address a wide range of disabilities.

Background

Digital accessibility plays a crucial role in fostering an inclusive digital society, economy, and environment. For persons with disabilities, the importance of ICT is especially pronounced, serving as vital tools for overcoming barriers and enhancing quality of life through greater independence and broader social engagement. 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. 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.

Accessible Europe is organized within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe 3 on “Digital Inclusion and Skills Development”, itself defined and adopted by member states during the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) 2022, joining with Resolution WTDC 58 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) Telecommunication/information and communication technology accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs. It is further fortified by the Plenipotentiary Conference





Resolution 175, which addresses ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities, recognizing the need for equal and equitable access to digital information and the use of ICT and the cooperation with various stakeholders, global standards, and the promotion of emerging technologies, as key elements to achieve the goal of inclusive communication for ALL.

Competition

The **Pitching Competition on 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 use. Below are the competition’s specifications:

<p><u>Eligibility Criteria</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The solution must be in the final stage of development, or have been finalized 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 persons with disabilities and specific needs; ● Eligible competitors are expected to present their projects in-person during a dedicated pitching session at the Accessible Europe: ICT 4 All Forum held on 13-14 December in Madrid, Spain. ITU is not able to provide financial assistance for this purpose; all associated expenses will be borne by the competitor. ● Be advised that the call is time-sensitive and may conclude upon reaching the desired number of eligible candidates.
<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.





<u>Submission</u>	<p>Please submit all information about your solution at the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AccessibleEurope2023. The form is organized as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Eligibility screening;2. General information about the organisation and project;3. General information about the submitter;4. 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) and a link to video of the solution (if applicable).b. Components Description: A description of the components of the solutions, including the interfaces, hardware or software, and the standards used or developed for the solution (up to 2500 characters)c. Main Use Case Scenario: A detailed description of the solution's main use case, the actors involved (i.e. beneficiaries, collaborators), the sequence of actions, the input and outputs, etc. (up to 4000 characters)d. Business Development Plan: An outline of your plan for business development of this solution (up to 2000 characters)5. Participation.
<u>Deadline</u>	The contest will accept submissions until 25 October 2023, 23:59 (CEST, UTC+2) .
<u>Other Information</u>	<p>Eligible submissions will be automatically considered for the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2024.</p> <p>Kindly note that there is no submission fee for solutions. However, please remember that all travel, accommodation, and related expenses for attending the event are the responsibility of the competitors.</p> <p>In the Annex attached to this Call, you will find the survey questions for your reference. Kindly submit your responses exclusively via the provided SurveyMonkey link (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AccessibleEurope2023).</p>

Terms & Ethical Standards

Competitors must adhere to ethical standards of conduct, and failure to do so, e.g., through plagiarism will result in 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. Employees, or persons related to ITU and event partners are excluded from participating in the competition.

Eligible and Winning Projects

Upon receiving submissions, a preliminary screening will be conducted to ensure compliance with eligibility criteria and the accuracy of the information provided. Eligible practitioners will have the opportunity to attend the ITU–EC Forum for Europe “Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL” in Madrid, Spain, from **13-14 December 2023**.

During the final session of the Forum’s first day, candidates will pitch their solutions to an international





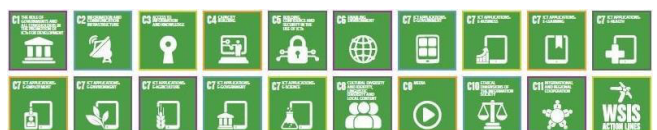
audience of ecosystem stakeholders, institutional and industry representatives, and interested general public. Based on the presentations, a public vote will be held amongst Forum attendees to recognize the most innovative digital solution. The public vote will be followed by a social event and ceremony attended by the organizers (ITU and EC), the co-organizer (AccessibleEU Resource Centre), the host (Fundación ONCE), and the voting audience, during which the winner will be announced. Winners will be awarded based on the outcome of the vote and will receive a certificate of participation.

Please note that all travel, accommodation, and related expenses for attending the event are the responsibility of the competitors.

Other Information

All participants of this pitching competition are strongly encouraged to attend the Regional 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-23>, 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.





Annex I – Example Submission Form for Pitching Competition: Call for Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe

(To be completed on <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AccessibleEurope2023>)



1. Introduction

In its fifth edition, the [Regional Forum for Europe "Accessible Europe: ICT 4 ALL - 2023"](#) will feature the Pitching Competition for Innovative Digital Solutions for an Accessible Europe.

The Pitching Competition seeks submissions on new concepts of technology, digital applications or interfaces that are developed for use by persons with vision, hearing, speech, cognitive and physical disabilities. Albeit not exclusively, these may include hardware and peripherals for specific use, services accessible through the web or software integrated into mobile devices.

After an initial screening based on eligibility criteria, selected candidates will have the opportunity to present their innovative solutions in-person during a dedicated pitching session at the Regional Forum, where a public vote will be held to recognize the most impactful solutions presented.

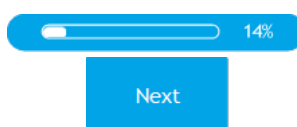
Eligible projects will be compiled into a stocktaking report, published on the [Accessible Europe website \(https://www.itu.int/go/Accessible-Europe-23\)](#), and further disseminated within the European ICT stakeholder community. Interested participants will have their projects considered for the [World Summit of the Information Society \(WSIS\) Prizes 2024](#).

Only submissions received before 25 October 2023 23:59 CEST (UTC+2) will be considered.

Kindly note that there is no submission fee. However, all travel, accommodation, and related expenses for attending the Forum will be borne by the competitors.

For any questions please email: eurregion@itu.int and eamen.itu@gmail.com.

Note: The application contains open-ended questions for which you need to prepare beforehand. Please check the submission template on [the Forum website](#).





2. Section 1 - Eligibility screening

* 1. What is the current development stage of your solution?

The solution must be in the final stage of development or have been finalized within the past three years.

- In the final stage of development
 Finalized within the past three years
 Neither

Please provide a brief explanation or evidence supporting your response above.

* 2. Does your solution originate from the Europe region?

[Link to the list of countries](#)

- Yes No

Please provide a brief explanation or evidence supporting your response above.

* 3. Is your solution:

- Based on information and communication technologies,
- Compatible with most known operating systems,
- Compatible with widely available assistive accessibility devices or systems/platforms?

- Yes No

Please provide a brief explanation or evidence supporting all three points above.

* 4. Does your solution have a clear aim to benefit persons with disabilities and specific needs?

- Yes No

Please provide a brief explanation or evidence supporting your response above.





*** 5. Which of the following categories best qualifies your project?**

- 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

Please provide a brief explanation or evidence supporting your response above.

6. Does your solution fit into any other secondary category?

- 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

Please provide a brief explanation or evidence supporting your response above.

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3. Section 2 - General information about the organization and project

*** 1. Name of Institution/Organization**





*** 2. Type/legal entity**

The pitching competition seeks submissions from individuals and teams across the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors.

*** 3. Please provide a brief description of the Institution/Organization. (Up to 3000 characters)**

*** 4. Name of the Solution**

*** 5. Please provide a brief description of the Solution. (Up to 3000 characters)**

*** 6. Where your Institution or Organization is registered**

Country/Territory

City

*** 7. Contact information of the Organization**

Telephone/Mobile (+country code)

Email

*** 8. Organization/Institution/Solution Social media and Website**

Website

LinkedIn

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

Other 1

Other 2

43%

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4. Section 3 - General information about the submitter

The submitter will be considered as the focal point for any communications or queries about the submission.

*** 1. Name(s) of the submitter (legal name as it appears in the passport)**

*** 2. Last name(s) of the submitter (legal name as it appears in the passport)**

*** 3. Occupational title of the submitter**

*** 4. Contact information of the submitter**

Telephone/mobile (+country code)

Email address

Secondary phone number

Secondary email address

5. If you have an additional contact person, please share their information.

Name(s)

Last Name(s)

Role

Email address

Phone number

57%

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5. Section 4 - Solution description

* 1. Solution Overview: Photo 1

Up to five high-resolution pictures of the solution, containing the main components (screen pictures or device pictures).

Please submit in PNG, JPG, JPEG formats.

Choose File

* 2. Solution Overview: Photo 2

Up to five high-resolution pictures of the solution, containing the main components (screen pictures or device pictures).

Please submit in PNG, JPG, JPEG formats.

Choose File

3. Solution Overview: Photo 3

Up to five high-resolution pictures of the solution, containing the main components (screen pictures or device pictures).

Please submit in PNG, JPG, JPEG formats.

Choose File

4. Solution Overview: Photo 4

Up to five high-resolution pictures of the solution, containing the main components (screen pictures or device pictures).

Please submit in PNG, JPG, JPEG formats.

Choose File

5. Solution Overview: Photo 5

Up to five high-resolution pictures of the solution, containing the main components (screen pictures or device pictures).

Please submit in PNG, JPG, JPEG formats.

Choose File

6. Solution Overview:

Please provide a link to a video of the solution (if applicable)

* 7. Components Description:

A description of the components of the solutions, including the interfaces, hardware or software, and the standards used or developed for the solution.

(Up to 2500 characters)





*** 8. Main Use Case Scenario:**

A detailed description of the solution’s main use case, the actors involved (i.e. beneficiaries, collaborators), the sequence of actions, the input and outputs, etc.

(Up to 4000 characters)

*** 9. Business Development Plan:**

Please outline your plan for business development of this solution.

(Up to 2000 characters)

10. Please upload any instructions for use (if applicable) or any other related supporting documents for your solution here.

Please submit in PDF format.

Choose File

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6. Section 5 - Participation

*** 1. Will a representative from your organization be able to attend and present your solution in English and in-person at the Accessible Europe pitching session, covering all related expenses for your participation?**

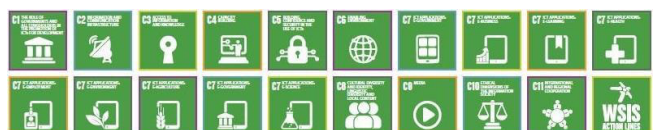
Eligible competitors will be invited to present their projects in-person during the dedicated pitching session at the Accessible Europe Forum held on 13-14 December in Madrid, Spain. ITU is not able to provide financial assistance for this purpose; all associated expenses will be borne by the competitor.

The event will be conducted in English, and all presenters are kindly requested to present in English.

Yes No

86%

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1. I hereby certify that:

- All information submitted is true, complete, and up-to-date.
- I have read, understood, and agree with all conditions and requirements set forth in the documentation provided for Accessible Europe 2023.
- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of my institution/organization.
- My team adheres to ethical standards of conduct, and controls the majority of the intellectual property rights of the solution submitted. We account for the majority of the effort and resources dedicated to its creation and prototyping.
- The submission does not:
 - a. violate the intellectual property rights of third parties;
 - b. contravene applicable national laws and international law;
 - c. depict or incite hatred, defame, abuse, harass, stalk, threaten a specific person or social group, incite violence or conflict or otherwise violate the legal rights of third parties (including those of privacy and publicity)
 - d. violate the terms of use of any social media service, website, mobile application or any other platform used in connection with such submission.
- I understand ITU reserves the right to verify eligibility for participation in the pitching competition as well as the accuracy of the information submitted.
- I would like my entry to be also submitted for the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2024.

*** 2. Signee**

Name(s) and Last Name(s) of the signee and submitter (legal name as it appears in the passport)

100%

