

Getting Help with ICT Accessibility in Public Procurement Activities

A supplemental guide to the Buy ICT 4 All Accessible Procurement Information Portal from G3ict

Whether you're new to the Information and Communications (ICT) accessibility field, or an ICT accessibility professional who has to now focused on areas outside of procurement, you might need to find sources of help beyond the published resources included in G3ict's Accessible Procurement Information Portal, [Buy ICT 4 All](#).

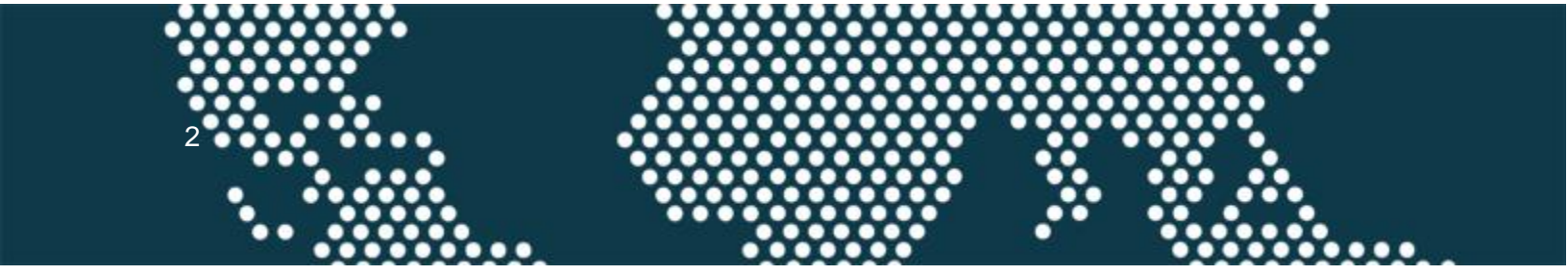
If you're a decision-maker looking for advice on complex policy and procedure accessibility concepts, or if you're a procurement officer working on implementing new inclusive policies and procedures, you may be need help with accessibility beyond the published resources linked to in the Portal.

In this guide, we provide advice and links to sources of help. There are several associations providing advice and assistance as part of their mission. There are paid consulting services, events, and more. But, you shouldn't overlook sources of help closer to home, and so we start our guidance with seeking help from colleagues...

Note: *The information in this guide is intended to provide starting points for seeking assistance. The information is not intended to be exhaustive. We point to many national and international resources. Additional local or regional sources of support may be found through web searches, professional networks, and so forth.*

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Sources of Support

Colleagues and Accessibility teams in your organization

In large organizations, corporations, and government departments, it is easy to overlook existing sources of knowledge and experience. After all, the concept of ICT accessibility has been around almost since the dawn of the Information Age. (Accessibility in ICT public procurement has been around as a concept for at least 20 years, but is only recently becoming widespread.)

- Have there been past initiatives to incorporate accessibility in your department or in related departments?
- What has been done to address accessibility in your organization so far? (think of access to buildings and facilities, hiring and diversity practices, employee awareness training, website accessibility and customer service accessibility improvements, etc.)
- Is there a central department responsible for ICT accessibility? Can they help introduce you to accessibility topics and provide more background on past initiatives in your organization?

The bigger the organization, the higher the likelihood of finding institutional knowledge and experience in ICT accessibility. *It's no guarantee though, so you might next consider...*

Procurement Associations (National and International)

If you work in the field of procurement, you might have followed a similar path to those working in professional fields all over the world:

1. Obtain educational qualifications (certificates, graduate degrees, etc.)
2. Begin working in the procurement sector
3. Go to national and international procurement conferences and trade shows
4. Join a national or international procurement association

It's an over-simplified list, of course. But, something like this trajectory is repeated hundreds of thousands of times over. National and international associations have memberships in the thousands or even tens of thousands. You may already be a member.

So, it would seem logical that if...

- Approximately 15-20% of the population has disabilities¹
- Public Procurement Standards have been available in the US since 2001², and Europe-Wide since 2015³
- Guidance on public procurement and ICT accessibility has been produced throughout the last decade by many technology associations, academics, and non-profit organizations working in or with the disability sector⁴

... then many national and international procurement associations would have adopted the cause of ICT accessibility in procurement activities, and would be supplying information and training on this topic to their members.

Here is a list of national / international procurement associations promoting and delivering accessibility information to their members:

1. _____

This is not a typo. Unfortunately, this appears to be the current situation.

If you are a member of such an association, please petition them to begin providing links to serve the needs of the 15-20% of the population who are currently being overlooked.

If you are an official working directly for such an association, please feel free to link to G3ict's Accessible Procurement Information Portal, [Buy ICT 4 All](#) and/or other resources, or create your own resources for your members. If you do, and you'd like to be the first on the above list—and setting yourself apart as a trail-blazer in this area—we [would like to hear from you](#).⁵

With an absence of information from procurement associations, the next best source of information might be...

Accessibility Organizations (National and International)

As part of their mandates to provide information to the public and/or to their members, many ICT-related accessibility associations provide information and guidance on procurement. These organizations may be contacted to find sources of help and assistance in implementing accessible procurement activities.

[The International Association of Accessibility Professionals \(IAAP\)](#)



IAAP “... is a membership-based organization for individuals and organizations that are focused on accessibility or are in the process of building their accessibility skills and strategies. The objective of this association is to help accessibility professionals develop and advance their careers and to help organizations integrate accessibility into their products and infrastructure.”

Procurement information: IAAP incorporates the topic of accessibility in procurement into its [certification programs](#), as well as [professional development initiatives](#). It also provides periodic webinars and other [education resources](#) that cover procurement and related topics.

G3ict – the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies



G3ict’s “... mission is to facilitate and support the implementation of the dispositions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on the accessibility of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and assistive technologies. G3ict relies on an international network of ICT accessibility experts to develop and promote good practices, technical resources and benchmarks for ICT accessibility advocates around the world.”

Procurement information: G3ict has developed an Accessible Procurement Information Portal, [Buy ICT 4 All](#).

[The US Business Leadership Network \(USBLN\)](#)



USBLN "... helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. The USBLN serves as the collective voice of nearly 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing more than 5,000 businesses."

Procurement information: "The [Procurement Council](#) provides key direction in elevating the Disability Supplier Diversity Program (DSDP) and supporting DSDP goals and activities. The Procurement Council provides Program oversight and direction, reviews/provides feedback on program initiatives, approves and gives buy-in for established and new initiatives and ensures needs of members are met."

[Business Disability International](#)



Business Disability International (BDI) comprises (at the time of writing) a network of 24 companies and associations, coming together to “empower organizations and individuals to define and deliver solutions that lead to a more inclusive and prosperous world.”

Procurement information: “The [Global Procurement Taskforce](#) will enable ‘disability confident’ procurement of products and services. Procurement has a profound impact on the ability of any corporation to deliver positive customer experiences, develop new products and services, source talent, increase employee wellbeing and productivity, and make a commercial return. However, the crucial and systemic role of procurement, which influences and interacts with so many other parts of an organisation, has been largely overlooked.”

Note: If your organization is not listed above, please contact us.

Government groups (National)

In countries that have adopted policies and practices for ICT accessibility, the government department responsible for supporting implementation will usually post nationally relevant resources and contact information for support. The following is a list of national government groups responsible for ICT accessibility procurement:

Australia: Department of Finance

“As a central agency of the Australian Government, the Department of Finance (Finance) plays an important role in assisting government across a wide range of policy areas to ensure its outcomes are met.”

Procurement information: [Accessibility ICT Procurement Standard](#)

Canada: Public Services and Procurement Canada

“As the Government of Canada’s common service provider, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) works to provide excellent service to other federal departments. By aiming to improve access to its programs and services for people with disabilities, PSPC helps federal departments provide high-quality programs and services to all Canadians.”

Procurement information: [Accessibility at Public Services and Procurement Canada](#)

Ireland: National Disability Authority

“The National Disability Authority is the independent state body providing expert advice on disability policy and practice to the government and the public sector, and promoting Universal Design in Ireland.”

Procurement information: [IT Procurement Toolkit](#)

USA: General Services Administration

“GSA's acquisition solutions offer private sector professional services, equipment, supplies, and IT to government organizations and the military. GSA also promotes management best practices and efficient government operations through the development of governmentwide policies.”

Procurement information: [section508.gov website](https://www.section508.gov)

Note: If your national government group is not listed above, please contact us.

Consultants

Finding a consultant

The brief guidance for finding a consultant or consultancy firm that is knowledgeable about ICT accessibility (and/or accessibility in procurement) is to:

1. Be clear on your needs.
2. Understand the different kinds of consulting service that are available.
3. Use this information to conduct a targeted search.

For more, read the article “[Q&A: How do I find a knowledgeable accessibility consultant?](#)”, part of the National Federation of the Blind’s [Accessibility Switchboard](#) project.

Company lists

Information on companies (including consultants) involved with ICT accessibility can be found at the G3ict list of [ICT Accessibility Company Profiles](#).

In addition, [IAAP lists member organizations](#) (including consultants).

Academia

Georgia Institute of Technology: AMAC Accessibility Compliance

“Make accessibility technical assistance part of your daily game plan. Our quality assurance team can provide accessibility technical assistance. Whether it's your marketing department wanting to make content accessible, your procurement unit wanting to make sure they are buying the most accessible products, or incorporating organizational internal compliance policies and procedures, AMAC can support your technical assistance needs.”

Procurement information: [AMAC Practical and Cost-Effective Compliance Solutions](#)

Note: If your academic group is not listed above, please contact us.

Events

This is a list of annual conferences and events where inclusive ICT in procurement has typically been (or potentially will be) presented. (To stay up-to-date with updates and announcements, read the News & Views section of the [Buy ICT 4 All Portal](#).)

Sweden: Funka Accessibility Days

“Funka Accessibility Days is northern Europe’s largest conference on accessible ICT. We are proud to welcome some of the world’s leading experts on web accessibility to the beautiful city of Stockholm, Sweden. ”

Usually in April, Stockholm

Official website: [Funka Accessibility Days](#)

UN HQ: Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

“The COSP is the largest and most diverse international disability meeting in the world. It provides a launching pad to advance the human rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development. The annual Conference sees participation from Government delegations, UN Agencies, Civil Society and non-governmental organisations, National Human Rights Institutes, and Disabled Persons Organisations, and has grown in recent years. ”

Usually in June, New York City, USA

Official website: [COSP CRPD sessions](#)

USA: M-Enabling Summit

“The M-Enabling Summit Conference and Showcase is dedicated to promoting accessible and assistive technology for senior citizens and users of all abilities. It is an annual meeting place for all who create and contribute accessible ICT products, services and consumer technologies. ”

Usually in June, Washington, DC

Official website: [M-Enabling Summit](#)

USA: CSUN Assistive Technology Conference

“.. provide[s] an inclusive setting for researchers, practitioners, exhibitors, end users, speakers and other participants to share knowledge and best practices in the field of assistive technology.”

Usually in March, San Diego, CA

Official website: [CSUN Conference](#)

USA: ICT Accessibility Testing Symposium

“The symposium [includes] workshops, presentations and published proceedings from peer reviewed submissions. We welcome national and international submissions from all sectors, including disability associations, academia, government, industry, industry associations, and non profits.”

Usually in October, East Coast

Official website: [ICT Accessibility Testing Symposium](#)

Note: If your event is not listed above, please contact us.



¹¹ For example, see [Including Your Missing 20% by Embedding Web and Mobile Accessibility](#), Hassel, J. 2014.

² Section 508 Standards: <http://buyict4all.org/ict-accessibility-standard/section-508-information-and-communication-technology-ict-standards-and-guidelines-36-cfr-parts-1193-and-1194>

³ EU 301 549 Standard: <http://buyict4all.org/ict-accessibility-standard/accessibility-requirements-suitable-for-public-procurement-of-ict-products-and-services-in-europe-en-301-549>

⁴ See the content of the Accessible Procurement Information Portal, [Buy ICT 4 All](#).

⁵ At the time of writing (June 2017), a web search of national procurement associations and international procurement associations revealed an absence of easy-to-find public information on ICT accessibility and its role in procurement activities. If we have overlooked or missed key public information, please do contact us so that we may provide links back to your organization. If you conduct training activities on accessibility for your members but this information is not yet public, please consider making that information public and also contact us. Please note that in this exercise, associations that provided news and information links to third-party news articles on accessibility in procurement were *not* considered to be actively providing information and resources on accessibility to their members as part of their mission.

