HOW TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN ACCESSIBLE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

ACCESS IT

1. WHAT IS THIS GUIDELINE ABOUT?

This guideline proposes the benefits of involving the different agents in product creation, identifying the main stakeholders and providing different tools to get them involved. In addition, a description of a plan for a participatory process is attached.

2. WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS GUIDELINE?

This guideline is created for all the stakeholders to collaborate to achieve the highest level of accessibility throughout the tourism consumption chain: Organizations of people with disabilities / NGOs, government agencies, academic institutions and private sector.

3. HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS IN AN ACCESSIBLE WAY?

It is a process that brings great benefits to companies but that requires anticipating its preparation: identifying the interest groups, the form of participation, the preparation of a plan and its execution.

- A co-creation process involves engaging stakeholders at an **early stage** when options are open and can influence the outcome, sharing knowledge and ideas with the possibility to incorporate them into the final decision.
- The **key benefits** of a well-planned and implemented stakeholder engagement process are: Informed decisions, property, lasting change, avoid or manage conflicts and reduced costs.
- **Identification of interest groups** is related to identifying the roles and interests of the different groups, and based on this, define what we want to achieve and what is the most appropriate way to involve those groups.
- There are different **ways to engage stakeholders** in planning, decision-making, and implementation processes.
- Stakeholders can participate in different forms:

  - ✓ Sharing information
  - ✓ Collecting information
  - ✓ Consultation
  - ✓ Shared decision making

4. PLANNING THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

In order to define an effective plan for stakeholders' participation a key issue is to have a **good knowledge of ongoing partnerships** in the target region. Existing and new partnerships can be described as networks and clusters.

Depending on the maturity of a tourism destination, it is possible that a separate structure is dedicated for coordination and management of common initiatives with regard to tourism – **Destination management organisation (DMO)**. If such a separate organization does not exist, usually, the coordination and marketing functions are within the competence of local public authorities.

Example of successful cooperation between public bodies and other organisations is the Accessible Travel Guide developed by The Madrid Council, in conjunction with Predif (an NGO representing people with disabilities) and other tourism organisations.

Except for the ideal case where a well-developed DMO exists and is capable to include the accessible tourism objective in its framework, the reality usually comprises fragmented partnerships and networks between different local actors.

Depending on the situation, the approach used **to involve local businesses** shall include some or all of the following **strategies**:

- ✓ incorporate the accessible tourism initiative within an existing local tourism coordination body;
- ✓ identify collaborative businesses to become part in a dedicated local accessible tourism network;
- ✓ interview separate businesses to identify their competitors and search for common grounds between them which can serve as incentives for cooperation.

The interactions between local tourism actors from the potential for development of joint offers between them including services for people with special needs.

An essential instrument to engage stakeholders with the cause are the **information campaigns for raising awareness** about the importance and benefits of accessibility.

The main **steps** in implementation of information campaigns are:

- ✓ Definition of target groups
- ✓ Communication of main message
- ✓ Production of the content
- ✓ Timeframe.

Fundraising is in the essence for every cause in order to accomplish its mission. Two main **approaches** can be brought to attention:

- ✓ apply for public funds or
- ✓ raise funds through donations.

More about the **principles of effective fundraising** you could read here: https://www.hawthornbusinessgroup.co.uk/principles-effective-fundraising/