



UN Tourism joins AWE in delivering practical solutions for more accessible and inclusive tourism businesses

Madrid, Spain, 3 December 2025 – UN Tourism – in cooperation with the Agency for Business and Economic Development (AWE) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – have released practical guidelines helping businesses from across the sector enhance their impact by increasing accessibility.

Released on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Accessibility Guidelines for Tourism Businesses outline five practical steps for travel and tourism companies to follow. These include growing revenue by reaching a broader customer base, strengthening brand reputation, and planning cost-effective improvements to boost accessibility. By following these steps, accommodation establishments, travel agencies, transport companies, and destinations can create inclusive, user-friendly environments, deliver higher-quality services, and support sustainability by engaging a more diverse local workforce.

UN Tourism Executive Director Zoritsa Urosevic says: “As our sector continues to enjoy strong levels of growth, we must ensure that everybody can benefit, whether it’s as a tourist or as part of the diverse tourism workforce. These guidelines offer hands-on and achievable steps for every type of tourism business to make accessibility and inclusivity a key pillar of their work, allowing them to reap financial and reputational benefits.”

Susanne Friedrich, Director of the Agency for Business and Economic Development (AWE) says: “The publication of these guidelines marks a significant milestone in the partnership between UN Tourism and AWE. We are now reaping the rewards we sowed at the beginning of the year and are proud to have achieved a triple win effect with these guidelines: progress for the tourism industry, improving inclusion for persons with disabilities, and supporting the economic progress of developing and emerging countries.”

A major market for tourism businesses

More than 1.3 billion people live with severe disabilities, and almost half of all people over 60 have a disability. For tourism businesses, failing to address accessibility can lead to complaints, fines, or exclusion from public grants. Customers with disabilities, specific access requirements, seniors and their families may represent up to one third of the global market. Low accessibility can therefore signal exclusion, resulting in negative reviews and reputational damage, affecting revenues.

A long-term focus on accessibility makes businesses stronger. Evidence shows that companies prioritizing disability inclusion enhance financial performance, foster innovation, and build more competitive organizations. Companies leading in disability employment tend to outperform their competitors, achieving up to 28% higher revenue, double their net income, and 30% higher economic profit margins. Disability-inclusive companies also grow profits up to four times faster and benefit from higher employee retention among workers with disabilities.

The Guidelines were laid out in an accessible format by the ONCE Foundation. They will be presented in the coming days at major events on Accessibility in Ecuador and Cuba. Additional promotional initiatives are planned with UN Tourism's German partners from AWE throughout 2026 to support businesses in embracing accessibility and the growing opportunities it brings.