



**INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS FOR AVIATION DEVELOPMENT,  
INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

***ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION AND PROMOTION FOR AIR TRAVEL  
AND TOURISM***

***(ACCEPT)***

***REFERENCE DOCUMENT***

*iPADIS is an independent, international non-governmental organization (NGO) of public and private partnerships. It operates on a not-for-profit basis to lead effective advocacy for positive change in the global aviation industry. It actively promotes the development of international civil aviation in an innovative, sustainable and socially responsible manner.*

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## Executive Summary

iPADIS is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) of public and private partnership headquartered in Montreal, Canada and established to lead effective advocacy for positive change in the global aviation industry. Specifically, iPADIS serves as an interface between the aviation industry and civil society. Its primary focus is to ensure that aviation related policies and programmes at the international, regional and national levels incorporate the views and interests of users and meet the needs and expectations of civil society.

In 2006, the United Nations (UN) passed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, giving States the responsibility to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for targeted actions related to persons with disabilities by businesses, including in the transport sector.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) contained in Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention on Facilitation includes some provisions on transport of persons with disabilities. The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has put forward some standards on Accessible Tourism. The International Standards Organisation (ISO) as well as industry organisations like the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Airports Council International (ACI) and others have also released documents relating to persons with disabilities. While some States like Canada have signed into law Transportation Acts with sections that cover accessibility.

Despite the existence of the various guidance materials, they are aimed at different stakeholders and address different aspects of the matter. Ostensibly due to this lack of harmonisation, the aviation industry is experiencing a steady increase in national/regional disability policies and regulations that are either not harmonized or are in direct conflict with each other. Although well-intentioned, these initiatives can undermine efforts to encourage harmonization and better regulatory practices, leading to operational complexity for operators and confusion for passengers with disabilities.

In this regard, iPADIS has developed the Model Policy and Guidance on Accessibility (MPGA) that provides a coherent set of harmonised accessibility policies, rules, operational standards, procedures and best practices for the handling of passengers requiring assistance and for the seamless flow of passengers and accompanying persons and/or animals through the entire supply and value chain of air travel. iPADIS also developed an **Accessibility Evaluation and Promotion for Air Travel and Tourism (ACCEPT)** programme for assessment and certification of accessibility standards in air travel and tourism globally.

To further promote awareness of accessibility issues and to ensure high-quality service provision for persons with disabilities, iPADIS is partnering with other organisations including K eroul, a Quebec-based non-profit organization which, through training, information and lobbying, promotes and develops accessible tourism and culture. iPADIS and K eroul have decided to further collaborate on accessibility assessments, certification and related training programs for airports and airlines and other air transport and tourism related organisations.

# Accessibility Evaluation and Promotion for Air Travel and Tourism (ACCEPT)

## The Vision

The vision of iPADIS is for **ACCEPT** to be the leading non-governmental programme at the international level that enhances opportunities for persons with disabilities at airports and on-board aircraft around the world.

## The Mission

- To assist States and operators in the establishment and implementation of an efficient and effective set of technical and operational standards to ensure full accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- To enable airport and aircraft accessibility based on the “door-to-door” concept covering all physical and procedural requirements and the industry best practices.
- To enhance sensitization efforts for operators and agents, to inspire confidence in disabled passengers that they will be taken care of every step of the way.

## The Objective

The objective of the ACCEPT programme is to assist authorities, and air travel and tourism related organisations to evaluate, at their request, compliance of their procedures with global operational standards, guidelines and best practices for the handling of persons with disabilities. And to help facilitate the seamless flow of passengers requiring assistance through points of service contact within the travel industry.

## The Benefits

**ACCEPT is not a regulatory oversight tool.** Its aim is to support operators in the accessibility value chain to identify existing gaps and needs in their systems and processes; benchmark their operations and promote international best practices, demonstrate and enhance their user friendliness and social responsibility credentials; as well as attract new customers and ultimately enhance their profitability.

## The Assessment

Regulators and operators’ systems will be assessed based on the iPADIS Model Policy and Guidance on Accessibility (MPGA) and other requirements in the State’s regulations and respective organisational policy and operation procedures.

The Assessment will both consider two important aspects (as may be applicable) namely:

- ✓ Systems’ evaluation including the status of general principles, legislation, policy, regulations applicable in the State as well as the operator’s own policies, operational standards and guidelines; and
- ✓ Evaluation of existing operations, operational processes and practices.

## The Mechanism

An organisation or operator may undergo ACCEPT through two mechanisms:

1. **Request a Remote Assessment** - where the requesting organisation or operator would be required to complete **Self Assessment Questionnaire** and receive a benchmark report that provides an indicative overview of the level of compliance.
2. **Request an Onsite Assessment** - This involves the completion of a Self Assessment Questionnaire followed by an **Onsite Assessment** visit with a team consisting of an iPADIS Team Leader, trained representatives from local and international disabled communities and a certified accessibility instructor (for an additional onsite training needs analysis etc.)

## The Process

1. For a **Remote Assessment**:
  - a. Submit a Request for Service Form (indicating preference for Remote Assessment)
  - b. The requesting organisation/operator nominates a focal point for coordination
  - c. The organisation/operator is sent an invoice
  - d. The organisation/operator is sent a Self Assessment Questionnaire
  - e. The organisation/operator completes and submits the Self Assessment Questionnaire along with supporting documents such as company policies, operating procedures and photographs/video evidences
  - f. iPADIS reviews the organisation/operator's submission
  - g. An Assessment Report is transmitted to the organisation/operator within 4 weeks.
2. For a **Onsite Assessment**:
  - a. Submit a Request for Service Form (indicating preference for Onsite Assessment)
  - b. The organisation/operator nominates a focal point for coordination
  - c. The organisation/operator completes and submits the Self Assessment Questionnaire along with supporting documents
  - d. iPADIS reviews the organisation/operator's submission, determines scope of work and assessment team based on the organisation/operator's specific needs
  - e. A fee estimate is transmitted to the organisation/operator
  - f. The organisation/operator sets the date for the Onsite Assessment visit, nominates relevant staff that may accompany the Assessment Team, and provides relevant logistics.
  - g. The organisation/operator receives the report of the Onsite Assessment within 4 weeks of completion of the assessment.

## The Cost

The organisation/operator requesting the evaluation will be responsible for covering the direct costs for the assessment and a fixed programme cost included in the fee estimate. However, the costs may also be covered or subsidized by the State and grants from donors.

## The Report

The report of the Remote Assessment would serve as a benchmark indicator of the current level of compliance vis a vis the desired industry standard for accessibility and would be generated four weeks after the submission of the questionnaire.

The report of the Onsite Assessment will be generated within four weeks of completion of the Onsite Assessment and will be presented confidentially to the operator detailing the identified gaps along with observations and recommendations on how to best address areas needing improvements. A certificate publicly attesting to the result of the evaluation may also be issued at the request of the organisation/operator.

## Additional Benefits

Apart from being a great tool to benchmark the operators level of compliance with global accessibility standards and best practices, the ACCEPT programme may also be used by regulators in identifying regulatory gaps and areas where enhanced policymaking is needed and may be applied. It may also serve as a tool to identify where States may further support their industry operators and the disabled community with pertinent financial investments and incentives.

It may therefore be in overall interest of the operator that the authorities be duly notified of the assessment and/or involve national regulators or relevant regional organisations in the process. It is also at the discretion of the operator whether to share their report or some findings such as pertaining to the evaluation of State's policy and regulation with the authorities.

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