ITA e-Accessibility Policy

Policy No: ITA.5.1
Policy Area e-Accessibility
Policy Title e-Accessibility Policy
Purpose To provide fair and equal life opportunities to persons with disabilities and the elderly people through the use of information & communication technologies (ICT). Inclusion of this minority section of the public in life opportunities is critical in discharging the government's social and economic responsibilities.
Definitions e-Accessibility – is the extent to which an ICT-based product, tool, information or service can be used by persons with disabilities and the elderly people as effectively as it can be used by a person without disability. Disability – refers to one or more human limitations resulting in interaction barriers either between person-and-person, or person and ICT product, tool & service. These human limitations, which are caused by natural circumstances, accidents, illnesses or environmental factors, can be physical, mental, sensory, psychosocial and neurological. Elderly People – due to normal aging process, a person who is at least 55 years old <u>and</u> has reduced functional capability in normal interaction with an ICT device. Assistive-ICT – is an innovative method or technology that aids, improves or increases the functional capabilities of persons with disability and the elderly people in using ICT. Assistive-ICT can be in various forms such as hardware, software, firmware or a combination of these forms. ICT-based Public Equipment – is an ICT-based product or tool that is physically placed in a public area. Examples are electronic kiosk, terminal and automated teller machine (ATM). Information – refers to set or sets of logical / related data in electronic form. Information

can be accessed, stored and presented in various media such as text, graphics, voice and multimedia.

e-Services – are electronic services provided to the public. These services are typically accessed via mobile phones or computers.

Government Agency – is an organization or unit that has governing functions and exercises authority; it has direct responsibility or accountability to the public. Examples of government agencies are ministries, councils, authorities and municipalities.

Outcome

With the aid of ICT, persons with disabilities and the elderly people can lead better, efficient and more independent lifestyles. There will be fair and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and the elderly people in all aspects of life such as – but not limiting to - learning and education, employment, government interaction, play, travel and socialize.

Scope

This policy addresses two major components of e-accessibility:

i. Use of ICT device (such as computer and mobile phone)
ii. Access via electronic means to data, information, e-services and applications

Persons with disabilities and the elderly people must be able to use ICT device effectively, and that data, information & applications can be accessed in the various forms suited best for these people.

This policy includes the use of assistive-ICT products and tools, in accommodating the use of ICT devices to aid persons with disabilities and the elderly people.

Physical accessibility is not covered under this policy.

Policy Statements

1. *Government agencies and government-owned companies shall ensure that public information and e-services are accessible by persons with disabilities and the elderly people.*

2. *Government agencies and government-owned companies shall ensure that ICT-*

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based public equipment is fully accessible to persons with disabilities and the elderly people.

3. *Government agencies and government-owned companies shall ensure that internal information and applications shall be made accessible to employees who are disabled and the elderly employees.*

4. *Government agencies shall initiate and lead to explore and implement the use of ICT to fully accommodate to persons with disabilities and the elderly people within their respective lines of businesses.*

5. *Government agencies with regulatory functions - such as but not limited to banking, education, employment, telecommunications and transportation - shall ensure that their specific e-accessibility rules and regulations are adhered by government and private entities bounded within their regulatory functions.*

Exemptions (If any)

For national security reasons, this policy may not be applicable to government functions that are related to national defence or national security.

Standards Compliance Requirements

i. Websites and e-services shall comply with World-Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

ii. New ICT-based public equipment shall be made accessible by persons with disabilities and the elderly people.

iii. Employees with disabilities and elderly employees shall attend the required training program on the relevant use of assistive-ICT products and tools.

Others

Best Practices
- Requirements for both the majority and the minority sections of the public have to be taken into consideration in the development and implementation of public information, e-services, and ICT-based public equipment.

- Involve the process of designing and testing of websites, e-services and ICT-based public equipment by persons with disabilities, in particular the blind, deaf and mobility.

Checklists

Nil.

References

Please refer to ITA website (**www.ita.gov.om**) for related information on e-accessibility.

Please refer to Ministry of Social Development website (**http://www.mosd.gov.om/**) for information and initiatives on general accessibility.

Please refer to W3C website (**http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/**) for details on WCAG 2.0.

Please refer to G3ICT website (**http://www.e-accessibilitytoolkit.org/**) for details on e-accessibility and assistive-ICT.

Please refer to International Telecommunications Union (**http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/sis/PwDs/index.phtml**) for details on development for e-accessibility in the telecommunications sector.

Please refer to ADA Design Standards (**http://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm**) for ICT-based public equipment.

Please refer to Universal Design (**http://www.universaldesign.com**) to improve e-accessibility designs.