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CAST

Multidimensional Cultural Accessibility Assessment Framework

DIMENSION / AREA	DETAILED DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
1/ DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY	Digital accessibility means that digital systems, interfaces, and content can be perceived, understood, navigated, and used by people with different abilities, sensory modalities, and cognitive functioning. It includes clear and well-structured information organization, easy-to-understand language, and solutions that support alternative modes of perception (such as screen reader compatibility, captions, or visual previews), as well as design strategies that facilitate orientation, predictability, and independent use.	• *Accessible website* • *Screen reader–compatible content* • *Captioned videos* • *Easy-to-understand, easy-to-read information* • *Visual preview of the space in advance* • *Online ticket booking with a simple interface* **TATE** **MOMA** **ACCESSABLE**
2/ SENSORY AND COGNITIVE ACCESSIBILITY	Creating multisensory and cognitively accessible experiences that support different modes of perception, learning, and information processing. This includes the use of multiple sensory channels (visual, auditory, tactile), clear and predictable spatial and informational structures, easy-to-understand communication, and design strategies that reduce cognitive load and support orientation, engagement, and independent participation.	• *Multisensory exhibition elements (tactile models, soundscapes, scent-based installations)* • *Audio descriptions and captioned audiovisual materials* • *Tactile maps and object replicas for touch-based exploration* • *Quiet rooms or low-stimulus spaces for visitors with sensory sensitivities* • *Easy-to-read interpretive texts and visual communication aids (icons, pictograms)* • *Step-by-step*

		guidance and predictable spatial orientation within exhibitions
3/ SPATIAL ACCESSIBILITY / BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Spatial accessibility refers to the design of the physical environment in ways that go beyond mere compliance with accessibility standards. It includes barrier-free access, clear and legible spatial structures, intuitive wayfinding systems, environmental conditions that support sensory comfort, adaptable spatial use, and the presence of quiet or retreat spaces. It also encompasses appropriate dimensions and maneuverability, consideration of different modes of movement and perception, the use of contrasts and tactile markings, good acoustic and lighting conditions, and spatial design strategies that support orientation, independent mobility, and a sense of safety.	• Ramps and elevators • Step-free entrances and circulation • Clearly visible and tactile signage • High-contrast labels and inscriptions • Pictograms and visual symbols • Tactile floor indicators and guidance paths • Rest areas or quiet rooms • Clearly traceable routes and circulation paths • Adequate lighting and good acoustic conditions • wide doorways and sufficient maneuvering space • Accessible restrooms • Seating at different heights and with armrests • Lowered service counters or ticket desks • Tactile maps or orientation boards
4 / TRANSPORTATION / MOBILITY ACCESSIBILITY	Transportation or mobility accessibility refers to the ways in which visitors are able to reach a cultural institution and move between the institution and the surrounding urban or regional infrastructure. This dimension examines whether access to the institution is supported	• *Accessible public transport routes near the venue* • *Step-free access at nearby bus, tram, or metro stops* • *Accessible parking spaces close to the entrance* • *Drop-off points for*

	by accessible transportation systems, clear travel information, and infrastructure that accommodates diverse mobility needs. It includes the availability of accessible public transport routes, step-free stations and stops, accessible parking, and safe pedestrian connections to the institution. It also concerns the provision of clear information about how to reach the venue using different modes of transport, including public transport, taxis, or accessible mobility services. Mobility accessibility ensures that participation in cultural life is not limited by transportation barriers and that visitors with diverse mobility needs can plan and undertake their journey safely and independently.	*taxis or accessible transport services* • *Safe and well-marked pedestrian routes from transport stops to the venue* • *Clear travel information on the website (including accessible routes)* • *Information about accessible transport services or mobility support* • *Wayfinding from public transport stations to the institution*
5/ SERVICE AND ATTITUDINAL ACCESSIBILITY	Service and attitudinal accessibility refers to the ways in which institutional practices, staff attitudes, and service structures support inclusive and respectful participation. It concerns how visitors are welcomed, informed, and assisted, and whether institutional culture recognizes diverse needs, communication styles, and modes of participation. It includes staff preparedness and attitudes, inclusive communication practices, the availability of assistance and support tools, flexible institutional rules, and transparent and predictable service processes. Attitudinal accessibility also involves recognizing people from diverse and	• *Trained and prepared staff* • *Easy-to-understand information and guidance* • *Sensory support tools (e.g., noise-reducing headphones)* • *Sensory bags or sensory kits for autistic visitors (e.g., fidget tools)* • *Flexible ticketing and admission policies* • *Clearly designated assistance points* • *Clearly communicated programme schedule in advance* • *Staff available to provide guidance or orientation*

	marginalized groups as legitimate participants, respecting different behaviors, communication styles, and cultural practices, and ensuring that assistance can be requested without stigma, judgment, or discrimination. It requires an institutional culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusive participation.	• *Possibility to request assistance without prior notice* • *Inclusive and respectful communication practices* • *Staff wearing visible identification for easier approach* • *Visitor feedback channels to report barriers* • *Assistance for navigation within the building or exhibition* • *Availability of sensory kits or accessibility toolkits (e.g., magnifiers, flashlights, tactile tools).* • *Clear information about accessibility features on the website*
6/ CULTURAL PROGRAMMING	Cultural programming does not merely refer to the organization of events; rather, it constitutes an institutional practice through which cultural institutions shape the forms of participation, visibility, and social connection. This dimension examines how institutions structure opportunities for participation through their cultural programs and how they create inclusive pathways for diverse communities to engage with cultural spaces. It includes targeted programs, integrated activities, and hybrid models of participation. Multisensory and game-based formats, strategies that support gradual engagement, and collaborations with community, civil society, or professional	• *Program formats that build on different modes of perception and communication* • *Multiple modes of participation (e.g., observation, active engagement, creative production, discussion)* • *The inclusion of community and experiential knowledge* • *Co-creative and participatory program formats* • *Long-term collaborations with community partners and civil society organizations*

	organizations contribute to meaningful participation, relational learning, and the diversification of audiences. In this sense, cultural programming does not primarily assess the quality of individual programs. Instead, it examines the extent to which inclusion is embedded in an institution's curatorial, educational, and organizational strategies, and how cultural participation becomes an ongoing and sustainable institutional practice.	• *Programs that amplify underrepresented voices and perspectives* • *Curatorial and pedagogical decisions that make different bodies, experiences, and forms of knowledge visible* • *Programs that enable dialogue, reflection, and collective learning* • *Multisensory museum activities or workshops* • *Game-based or tactile exhibition tours* • *Inclusive workshops adapted to diverse needs* • *Co-creation programs involving disabled participants* • *Programs developed in collaboration with special educators or accessibility experts* • *Quiet hours or adapted museum visiting periods*
7/ ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION AND INTERPRETATION	This dimension examines how institutions communicate accessibility from both functional and experiential perspectives. It includes exhibition texts, visual aids, symbol systems, simplified or easy-to-understand language, and multimodal interpretive formats within the museum space. Cognitive accessibility is not treated as an additional adaptation, but as a fundamental condition for real-time	• *Easy-to-Read exhibition texts* • *Pictogram-based signage and symbol systems* • *Audio guides and audio-labelled content* • *Sign language videos* • *Captioned audiovisual content* • *Sensory maps of the*

	participation. This dimension addresses not only on-site interpretation but also how accessibility is communicated before and during the visit. Clear information on institutional platforms about inclusive services, the visibility of accessibility tools, explicit descriptions of available support options, sensory maps, visitor guides (e.g., social guides or access guides), and transparent visitor information significantly influence visitors' ability to plan their visit in advance. Communication functions as an enabling infrastructure for access: it determines the extent to which accessibility measures become practically usable and whether visitors are able to anticipate the spatial, sensory, and operational conditions of the environment.	*exhibition space* • *Tactile diagrams or tactile interpretive materials* • *Visitor guides or step-by-step visiting guides* • *Social stories or social guides for museum visits* • *Clear information about accessibility services available before the visit* • *Visible information about assistive tools and available support options*
8/ REPRESENTATION AND MEDIA COMMUNICATION	This dimension goes beyond the functional communication of accessibility and examines how disability, inclusion, and other marginalized social positions are represented at the discursive, cultural, and identity level within institutional communication. It analyzes institutional messages, public visual representations, DEIB strategies, mission statements, communication campaigns, and narratives circulating on social media. Representation shapes visibility, expectations, and social norms, influencing whether different social groups appear in institutional communication as absence, as problems to be solved, as inspirational stories, or as legitimate social experiences.	• *Representation of diverse bodies, ages, ethnic backgrounds, and disability experiences in institutional communication* • *Visibility of marginalized groups in campaigns, posters, and online platforms* • *Mission statements or institutional value statements that explicitly emphasize inclusion* • *Voices of affected communities featured on institutional platforms (e.g., interviews,*

	It also considers the ways language and terminology are used, the diversity of visual representations, the involvement of affected communities in communication processes, and whether inclusion appears as a core element of institutional identity or merely as a communicative gesture. While the previous dimension examines how access is communicated, this dimension analyzes how different social groups and experiences are socially constructed within institutional narratives, and what role these meanings play in shaping the organization's public self-image and cultural position.	*videos, personal stories)* ● *Inclusive narratives and collaborations with civil society organizations on social media* ● *Non-paternalistic and non-heroizing representation (avoiding portrayals of marginalized people solely as "inspirational stories")* ● *Multilingual communication and culturally sensitive visual representation* ● *Community collaborations or joint campaigns with marginalized groups*
9/ POLICY AND GOVERNANCE ACCESSIBILITY	Policy and governance accessibility refers to the institutional structures, leadership practices, and decision-making processes that ensure disability inclusion and equity are embedded in organizational strategy and governance. This dimension examines whether accessibility and inclusion are addressed only at the level of individual initiatives or whether they are integrated into institutional policies, leadership structures, and long-term strategies. It considers how organizations allocate responsibility, resources, and accountability for accessibility and inclusion. Policy and governance accessibility also involves the participation of disabled people and other	● *Inclusion of representatives from marginalized communities in boards or advisory bodies* ● *Institutional accessibility and inclusion policies or action plans* ● *Regular accessibility and inclusion audits and evaluation processes* ● *Dedicated accessibility, diversity, or inclusion coordinators* ● *Accessibility and inclusion integrated into institutional strategic planning* ● *Budget allocation for accessibility and*

	marginalized groups in leadership, advisory roles, and decision-making processes. It includes formal policies, institutional commitments, evaluation mechanisms, and governance practices that support sustainable and systemic inclusion.	*inclusion measures* • *Advisory groups involving representatives of marginalized communities* • *Transparent reporting on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals*
10/ ECONOMIC ACCESSIBILITY / AFFORDABILITY	Economic accessibility refers to the ways in which cultural institutions ensure that participation in cultural life is not limited by financial barriers. This dimension examines whether access to exhibitions, programs, and cultural services is economically attainable for diverse social groups, including people with limited financial resources, marginalized communities, and visitors requiring support. It includes pricing policies, reduced or free admission schemes, companion tickets, and other financial support mechanisms that enable equitable participation. Economic accessibility also concerns transparency of pricing, the availability of community-based or subsidized programs, and institutional strategies that aim to remove economic barriers to cultural participation. By addressing affordability, cultural institutions contribute to broader social inclusion and ensure that access to culture is not determined by economic privilege.	• *Free entry policies or free admission days* • *Discounted tickets for students, seniors, or low-income visitors* • *Companion tickets or free entry for support persons* • *Community passes or local resident discounts* • *Subsidized educational or community programs* • *Free access to accessibility tools or assistive devices* • *Transparent ticket pricing and concession policies* • *Partnerships with schools, NGOs, or social organizations to support participation*

Multidimensional Cultural Accessibility Assessment Framework

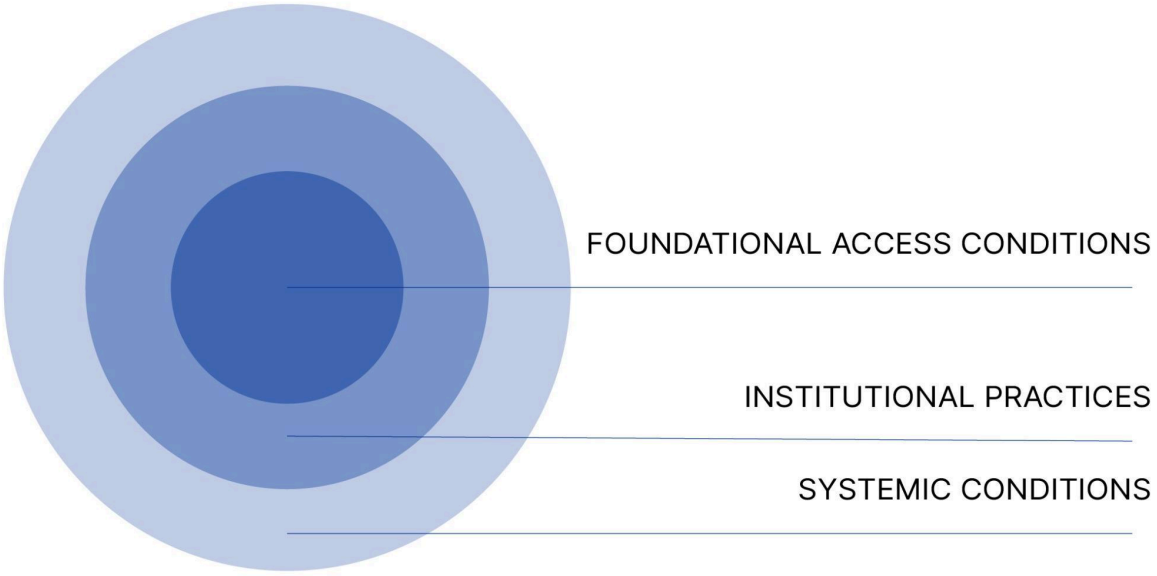

Figure 1. The Multidimensional Cultural Accessibility Assessment Framework conceptualizes accessibility as a layered system consisting of foundational access conditions, institutional practices, and systemic conditions, structures that shape inclusive cultural participation.

FOUNDATIONAL ACCESS CONDITIONS

- Sensory & Cognitive Accessibility
- Spatial Accessibility / Built Environment
- Digital Accessibility
- Transportation / Mobility Accessibility

INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

- Service & Attitudinal Accessibility
- Accessible Communication & Interpretation
- Cultural Programming

SYSTEMIC CONDITIONS

- Representation & Media Communication
- Economic Accessibility / Affordability
- Policy & Governance Accessibility

The framework can be used as an analytical and evaluative tool to assess cultural accessibility across multiple dimensions in museums and cultural institutions.
By addressing accessibility across infrastructural, institutional, and systemic levels, the framework highlights that inclusive cultural participation is not only a matter of physical access, but also of institutional practices, representation, and structural conditions.

(Additional links, examples, best practices, and toolkits can be found in the presentation and in the accompanying project folder.)

Minimum Cultural Accessibility Checklist

The following checklist outlines the minimum accessibility conditions that participating institutions are encouraged to work towards during the project period. Institutions are not expected to meet all criteria immediately, but to progressively improve their accessibility conditions and practices.

Level 1 / Minimum accessibility (baseline conditions)
Level 2 / Developing inclusive practices (practice development)
Level 3 / Transformative inclusion (institutional transformation)

Level 1 – Minimum accessibility (baseline conditions)
Basic accessibility conditions that institutions are encouraged to achieve during the project period in order to ensure that cultural spaces are usable for a wider range of visitors.

Level 2 – Developing inclusive practices (practice development)
Institutional practices that go beyond minimum accessibility by integrating inclusive design principles, diversified participation formats, and more systematic approaches to accessibility.

Level 3 – Transformative inclusion (institutional transformation)
Advanced institutional practices in which accessibility and inclusion are embedded in organisational culture, governance, programming, and long-term strategies, enabling meaningful and equitable cultural participation.

The checklist below focuses on minimum accessibility conditions that can be realistically implemented by institutions within the timeframe of the project.

1. Digital Accessibility

Minimum

- The website provides clear accessibility information, including how to access the building and what accessibility services are available.
- Key visitor information is available in simple and easy-to-understand language.
- Videos are captioned or accompanied by a text alternative.
- Basic information about the space is available before the visit (e.g., photos and descriptions of the environment).

2. Sensory and Cognitive Accessibility

Minimum

- A quiet space or rest area is available for visitors who need a break from sensory stimulation.
- Key information in the exhibition is presented in a clear and structured format.
- At least some elements or materials support different sensory or learning modes (e.g., tactile objects, audio content, or visual aids).

3. Built Environment

Minimum

- The building is step-free or has an accessible alternative entrance.
- An accessible restroom is available.
- Main circulation routes are wheelchair accessible.
- Signage is readable and high-contrast.

4. Transportation Information

Minimum

- The website provides clear information on how to reach the institution using public transport or other mobility options.
- Information about parking or accessible transportation options is available.
- Basic information about the nearest public transport stops is available.

5. Service and Attitudes

Minimum

- Staff receive basic training in inclusive communication and visitor assistance.
- Visitors are able to request assistance when needed.
- Staff are aware of the available accessibility services and tools and can inform visitors about them.
- Staff can direct visitors to accessibility information or services when requested.

6. Communication

Minimum

- The exhibition includes clear visual signage or pictograms.
- A clear visitor guide or basic orientation information is available.
- Accessibility services are clearly communicated to visitors (e.g., on the website or on-site).
- Key visitor information is easy to locate within the exhibition space.

7. Cultural Programming

Minimum

- The institution offers inclusive or adapted programmes for diverse audiences.
- The institution collaborates with community organisations or civil society groups.
- Programmes allow different modes of participation (e.g., listening, observing, or active engagement).

8. Representation

Minimum

- Institutional communication is respectful and non-stigmatizing.
- Diverse communities and social groups are represented in institutional communication.
- Images and communication materials reflect a diversity of visitors and communities.

9. Policy / Governance

Minimum

- A designated person responsible for accessibility is appointed within the institution.
- The institution regularly collects visitor feedback, including feedback related to accessibility.
- Accessibility is acknowledged as an institutional priority or commitment.

10. Economic Accessibility

Minimum

- Discounted or free admission options are available for certain visitor groups.
- Companion tickets are available for disabled visitors who require support.
- Information about ticket prices and concessions is clearly communicated.