

## ACCESSIBILITY ALLIANCE CHARTER - JANUARY, 2024

*Advertising is for everyone, and it is everywhere. Advertising plays a vital role in our societies and in our economies and can provide information about products and services that improve our lives.*

*For that potential to be realised, advertising must be inclusive – and that means that everyone must be included. We face a challenge: to create a truly accessible advertising ecosystem, which is inclusive by putting equality of access at its heart. This is a social and moral imperative, central to growth and trust.*

### THE VISION: All Ads Accessible to All.

#### What do we mean by 'accessible advertising'?

*Accessible marketing* is the use of inclusive design practices which make it possible for users of all abilities to fully experience a brand, receive and understand communication from it, and take advantage of opportunities to engage with the brand, its services, or its products.

*Accessible advertising* addresses campaigns' ability to be experienced by those with a form of impairment. This may involve overcoming multiple hurdles:

- **Visual** – such as sight loss and colour blindness
- **Auditory** – such as deafness, or impaired hearing
- **Cognitive** – such as learning difficulties like ADHD and dyslexia
- **Motor** – those with motor-skill impairments

#### What can we change?

The full range of potential solutions vary by channel and can include the following:

- Visual
  - Audio Description – having a narrative track overlaid on an ad
  - Alt text – providing written copy to accompany images, to be read aloud by a screen reader
  - Dialogue – using more descriptive dialogue, so that content can be followed without visual aid
- Auditory
  - Subtitles – providing subtitles or closed captions, so that content can be understood without relying on audio
  - Signing – utilising signing in ads and ensuring signers are using closed captioning
  - Contrast – ensuring that colours are used in the right combinations, allowing text to be easily read
- Cognitive
  - Readability – clarity of language when text is displayed
  - Fonts – using dyslexia-friendly fonts
  - Images – avoiding fast-moving and flashing content
- Motor
  - Design – simplifying design and navigation
  - Interactivity – elements that are easily clickable or tappable
  - Navigation – use of keyboard navigation on websites

## Who does this affect?

The World Health Organisation estimates that there are approximately 190 million people with some hearing loss or deafness in Europe alone – representing 1 in 5 of the whole population.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, there are estimated to be over 30 million blind and partially sighted people in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Globally, these figures get even larger, with an estimated 1.3 billion people experiencing significant disability – or 16% of the world's population.<sup>3</sup>

It's not just people who suffer from sight or hearing loss who expect or need media to be accessible. Many parts of the world have an ageing population, for whom accessibility is key; it is critical for people with learning difficulties; and many younger people choose to use features like subtitles all or part of the time.

*Based on previous analysis, the Alliance has prioritised accessibility for those with sight and/or hearing impairments. Future priorities will be based on consultation and understanding of the audiences who will benefit from change.*

## Where does it affect people?

Media are delivered and consumed in many forms everywhere, each with different characteristics and presenting different challenges to people with disabilities. Digital display and broadcaster media represent the channels where most improvement can be made for most people. This is a global challenge and requires solutions that can be scaled worldwide.

*The Alliance has focused its work to date on broadcast media and its first priority is to accelerate momentum in this area.*

## Why does it matter?

Advertisers create campaigns to reach consumers, but in the absence of accessibility, entire potential audiences are being bypassed – missing out on content and information about brands and services. This clearly cuts across our expectations of corporate social responsibility, excluding as it does large groups of people. **Reaching 100% advertising accessibility is the right thing to do – both socially and morally.**

## Why us?

Accessibility is a shared responsibility for everyone engaged in the process of creating and delivering advertising to the public, including brands, agencies, production companies, media companies and platforms. Barriers to accessibility exist throughout the value chain and reinforce a cycle of inertia:

- Many leaders in advertiser companies, their teams and their agencies are not aware of the need to make advertising accessible and are not addressing the issue as a priority.
- The availability of technology to make ads accessible is limited today – and global demand from advertisers is needed to drive investment.
- Lack of organizational prioritization, patchy availability of tools and additional cost and complexity mean that accessibility by design and take-up of existing tools is low.

## What's next?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ear-and-hearing-care>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.euroblind.org/about-blindness-and-partial-sight/facts-and-figures>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240063600>

For lasting change to be made, the role of advertisers to drive change is critical. The vital work already undertaken by key industry changemakers in the Accessibility Alliance will be re-convened under the auspices of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA). The UK's Incorporated Society of British Advertisers (ISBA) and France's Union des Marques (UDM) have offered to act as lead markets to generate learning and experience that can be translated into best practice guidance and playbooks for other markets. Further advertiser associations are welcome to step forward and join the effort.

*While work on broadcaster accessibility for those with hearing or sight impairments will continue as the priority, the scope of the Alliance will be broadened to include defined digital channels. Further priority setting will be subject to assessment of the scale of audience benefit against the degree of effort involved.*

This Charter represents the agreed position of the participants on the Alliance's scope and objectives as of January 2024. It is proposed to review the Charter in 12 months' time.

### **Our goals**

Our goals are unchanged from those of the Alliance's founders:

- Make advertising accessibility the new standard for all in Europe
- Encourage all the industry to join in the movement for more accessibility

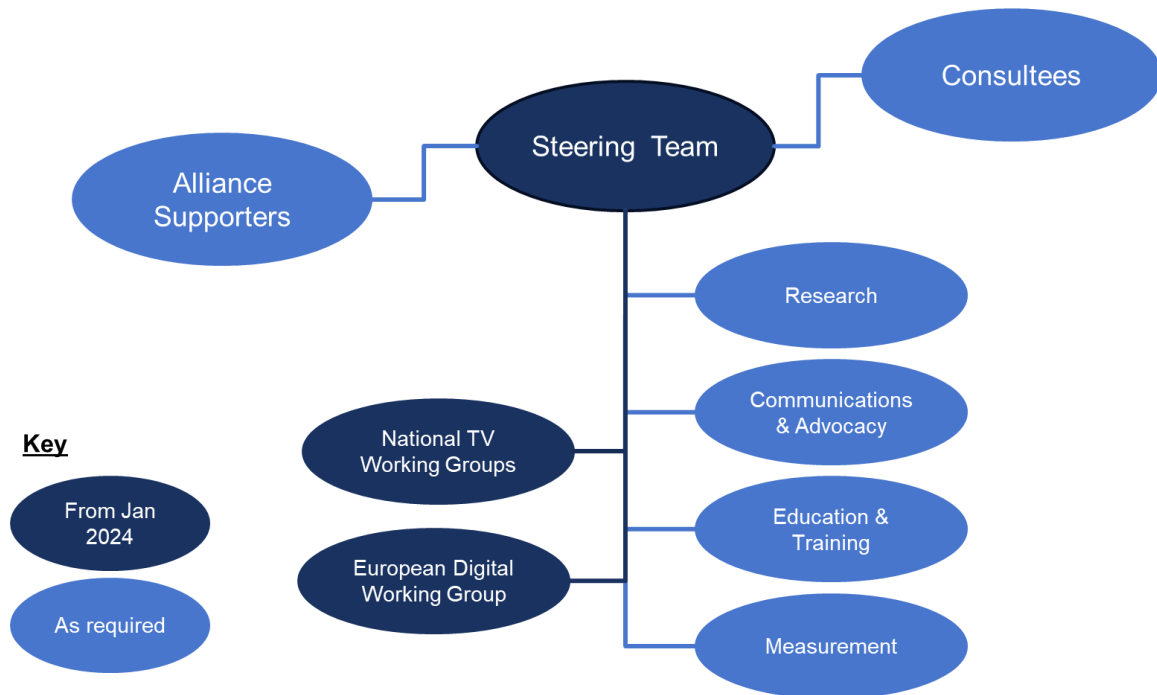
More specifically, we will:

- Make the case for change to key decision-makers through high-level advocacy
- Provide education and actionable training for practitioners throughout the value chain
- Work with production companies, media owners and platforms to agree standards and to make implementation easy - and ideally the default
- Measure levels of technical enablement and buy-side adoption

### **Membership & Governance**

Below is a governance schematic:

**Advertising Accessibility Alliance: Governance Schematic**



A core **Steering Team** will agree policy, set priorities and oversee progress. The Steering Team will comprise both founders and new members. Excluding partners, the size of the Steering Team should not exceed 15. Current members and identified prospective members (in italics and square brackets) are shown below. New members of the Steering Team will be admitted by a majority vote of existing members.

<b>Steering Team</b>		
<b>Brand Owners</b>	<b>Trade Bodies</b>	<b>Partners</b>
Procter & Gamble Unilever Diageo Mars Mastercard <i>[Estee Lauder]</i> <i>[L'Oréal]</i>	World Federation of Advertisers ISBA – Incorporated Society of British Advertisers UDM – Union des Marques EGTA - Association of Television and Radio Sales Houses EACA – European Association of Communication Agencies	Access Service V500 – Valuable 500 RNIB – Royal National Institute for the Blind RNID – Royal National Institute for the Deaf Extreme Reach
<b>Media Owners/Platforms</b>		
Meta <i>[Google]</i>		

The **Steering Team**, under the co-chairmanship of ISBA and UDM, will meet every six weeks. ISBA will provide secretariat support and has proposed a calendar for 2024.

A **Consultee** group is envisaged, comprising other bodies which can represent a broad range of disabilities, to support priority setting and provide expert counsel.

The establishment of a **Supporter** tier of membership will be considered, as more brand owners, media owners and platforms engage in the work. The role of this group will be to

amplify communication and to be consulted on major policy decisions. This group could include brands and media owners engaged only at the national level.

Operational **Working Groups** will be established, reporting to the Steering Team. The first of these is to accelerate adoption and measurement of subtitles and audio description across broadcast in the UK.

The first **National TV Working Group** will be formed in the UK from ISBA's existing Accessibility Taskforce, comprising:

### **UK TV Working Group**

#### **Brand Owners**

Procter & Gamble  
Unilever  
Diageo

#### **Media Owners**

ITV  
Sky  
Channel 4

#### **Trade Bodies**

ISBA – Incorporated Society  
of British Advertisers  
*[UDM – Union des Marques  
World Federation of  
Advertisers]*  
IPA – Institute of  
Practitioners in Advertising

#### **Partners**

Peach  
Extreme Reach  
AdText  
Clearcast  
AMVBBDO  
Flock  
RNIB – Royal National  
Institute for the Blind  
RNID – Royal National  
Institute for the Deaf  
Extreme Reach  
*[Thinkbox]*

Additional nominations are sought from the Steering Team. We are ideally looking to include those who can contribute best practice learning and who have already begun to tackle the education and adoption challenges within their own organisations. This group will meet every 2-4 weeks, commencing in January 2024 under the chairmanship of ISBA. Terms of Reference will be presented to the group for agreement and brought back to the Steering Team.

A **European Digital Working Group** will be formed to create a baseline understanding of the availability and take-up of existing solutions for people with sight and hearing impairments. The focus of the group will be on the major platforms from Google and Meta. A prioritisation matrix will be developed for the digital channel. A checkpoint will be set at the end of March to decide on the future of this group and set Terms of Reference.

### **Digital Working Group**

#### **Brand Owners**

Diageo  
Mars  
*[...]*

#### **Media Owners**

Meta  
*[Google]*

#### **Trade Bodies**

ISBA – Incorporated Society  
of British Advertisers  
*UDM – Union des Marques  
World Federation of  
Advertisers*

#### **Partners**

*[...]*

Additional nominations are sought to support this group.

The need for **specialist working groups** aligned to task and output will be kept under review by the Steering Team and are illustrated in the schematic at the start of this section.

## Resources

We will be able to accelerate progress towards our adoption goals if we are able to dedicate part-time resource to programme co-ordination. A draft job description for a two-day a week resource is appended. One option would be to co-opt resource from an Alliance member. We would welcome offers from any member. An alternative is to draw on resource externally or from partners. Two obvious candidates to support the Alliance are Flock, who have produced ISBA's REFRAME guide on a pro bono basis, and the Responsible Marketing Agency, whose team have worked extensively on Diageo's inclusion programme. There may be others. At present no budget has been set aside by members for this activity in 2024. ISBA can provide £10,000 to help stand up the project, but we would ask Alliance members (excluding partners) for a matching contribution. Our suggestion would be £10,000 per member. It is noted that the EGTA and EACA contributions will be non-financial. This would provide a 2024 budget of £90,000, based on current membership.

## Timings

Timed deliverables for the UK TV Working Group will be developed as an initial output, in time for the first Steering Team meeting of 2024.

**Job Title:** Part-Time Programme Lead for the Advertising Accessibility Alliance

**Location:** Flexible (UK/France/Western Europe)

**Job Type:** Part-Time (2 days per week)

**About the Role:**

We are looking for a motivated and organized Programme Lead to oversee a significant initiative between British and French advertising trade bodies. This part-time role is focused on enhancing advertising accessibility in TV and social media advertising for individuals with hearing and sight impairments, specifically through the use of sub-titles and audio description. The goal is to create a template for widescale industry adoption that can be deployed across Europe and ultimately globally. The position demands a strong emphasis on project management, coordination and stakeholder engagement.

**Key Responsibilities:**

**Project Leadership:** Direct and manage key projects within the initiative, focusing on achieving milestones within a limited timeframe. Identify interdependencies and incorporate in planning.

**Strategic Liaison:** Ensure strategic guidance from the Alliance is carried through into local and functional working groups, to ensure alignment with the initiative's goals.

**Collaborative Coordination:** Facilitate collaboration between stakeholders including trade bodies, advertisers, and platform providers to ensure swift project progress.

**Efficient Resource Management:** Oversee the allocation and management of resources, ensuring the project is delivered efficiently and within budget.

**Stakeholder Communication:** Maintain clear and consistent communication with all stakeholders, including reporting progress and addressing challenges.

**Problem-Solving:** Apply strong analytical skills to resolve issues swiftly and keep projects on track.

**Advocacy for Inclusivity:** Champion the importance of inclusivity in advertising and the social imperative for advertising accessibility.

**Qualifications:**

Bachelor's degree in Project Management, Business Administration, Marketing, or related field.

Demonstrable experience in project management, preferably within the advertising, media, or related sectors.

Knowledge of accessibility standards and practices, especially in relation to hearing and sight impairments.

Excellent organizational, communication, and leadership skills.

Proficiency in both English and French would be an advantage.

Ability to work effectively in a multicultural environment.