

# Charter

January 2025 Update

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 with disabilities 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 disabilities. This may involve overcoming multiple hurdles:

- **Visual** – such as blindness, low vision and colour blindness
- **Auditory** – such as deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus
- **Cognitive** – such as learning difficulties and neurodiversity
- **Motor** – such as muscular disabilities

### What can we change?

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

#### Visual

- **Audio Description** – Having a descriptive track narration to complement the advert
- **Dialogue** – Using more descriptive dialogue, so the narrative and key elements can be understood without the use of visuals
- **Alt text** – Providing written copy to accompany images, to be read aloud by a screen reader

#### Auditory

- **Subtitles** – Providing subtitles (also known as captions), so ads and content can be understood without the use of audio
- **Signing** – Using signers or sign interpreters in ads or as an overlaid visual
- **Contrast** – Ensuring the colours used meet a high enough contrast ratio to allow text to be easily read

#### Cognitive

- **Readability** – Having appropriate clarity of language when text is displayed

- **Fonts** – Using dyslexia-friendly fonts
- **Images** – Avoiding flashing and fast-moving images

### Motor

- **Design** – Simplifying design and navigation
- **Interactivity** – Having interactive elements that are easily clickable or tappable
- **Navigation** – Enabling the use of keyboard navigation on websites

## Who does this affect?

The World Health Organisation estimates that there are approximately 190 million people with deafness or hearing loss 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 low vision 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 only people with disabilities 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 Network has prioritised accessibility for those with visual and/or auditory disabilities in 2024. As low levels of accessibility persist across all forms of media, the Network will maintain its focus on making ads accessible for these groups in 2025. During the year, the Network will consult on future priorities by engaging with other groups who might 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 for people with disabilities. Digital and broadcast 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 Network focused its work in 2024 on broadcast media and has expanded to digital media, with initial priority to accelerate momentum in these areas. The Network will maintain its focus on driving the local development required to enable broadcast media to play out accessible ads, whilst engaging with global digital platforms and streaming service providers to support the development and adoption of their emergent solutions.

## Why does it matter?

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

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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>

## 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 access exist throughout the value chain and reinforce a cycle of inertia:

- Many leaders in 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 – demand from advertisers is needed to drive investment.
- Lack of organisational prioritisation, 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?

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 Ad Accessibility Network has been 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 acted 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.

- In 2025 the Network will selectively recruit further national advertiser associations to join and contribute to the effort. We will focus on a mix of large and small markets, with Germany, Spain and Belgium as priority targets for engagement.

This Charter represents the agreed position of the participants on the Network's scope and objectives as of January 2025. **We will continue to review the Charter and Priorities annually.**

## Our goals

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

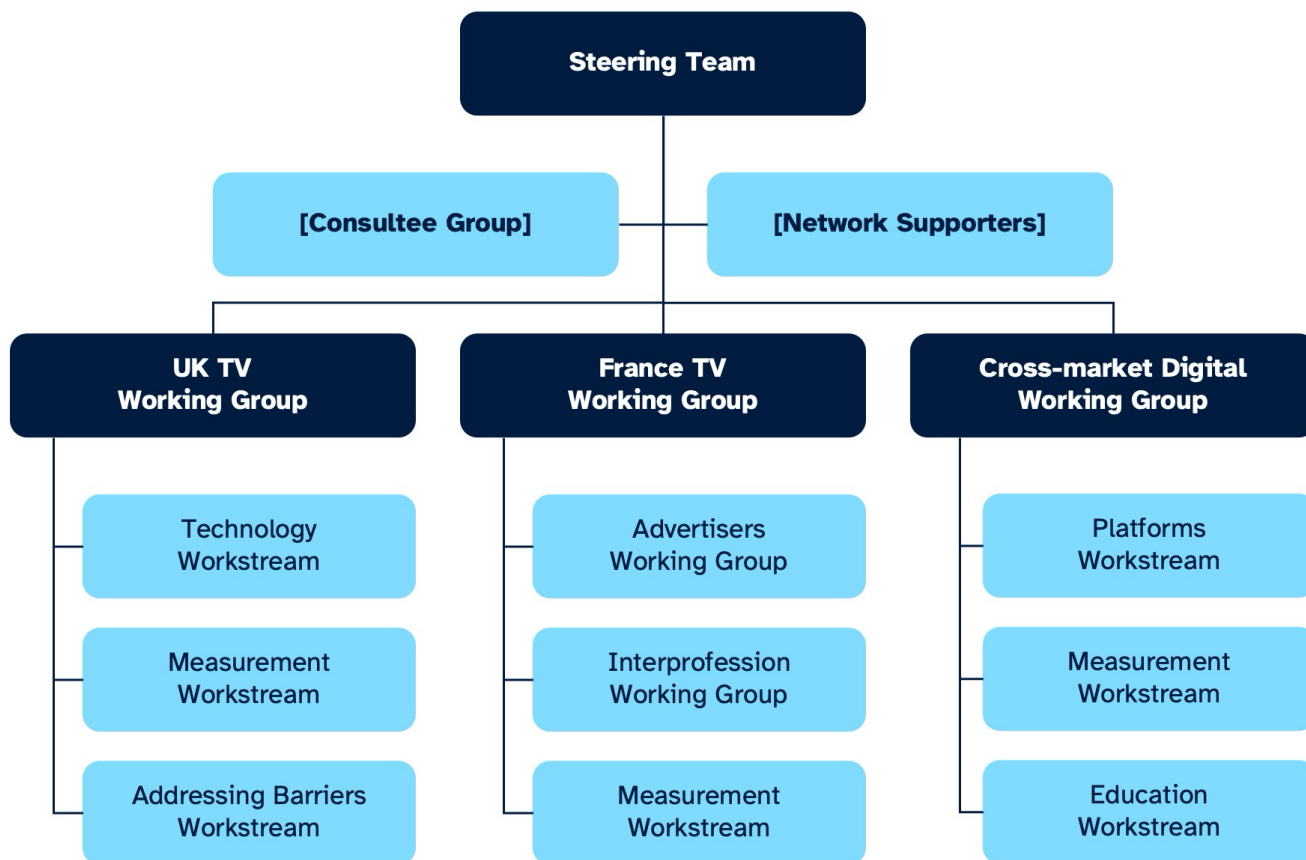
- Make advertising accessibility the new standard for all in Europe
- Encourage all the industry to join in the movement for more accessibility

## Our strategies are to:

- 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 an updated governance schematic:



A core **Steering Team** agrees policy, sets priorities and oversees progress. The Steering Team comprises both founders and newer members. Excluding partners, the size of the Steering Team should not exceed 15. Current members and identified prospective members (in square brackets) are indicated below. New members of the Steering Team will be admitted by a majority vote of existing members.

### Steering Team

#### Brand Owners

Diageo  
L'Oréal  
Mastercard  
Procter & Gamble  
Reckitt  
Unilever

#### Partners

Extreme Reach  
Peach  
RNIB – Royal National Institute of Blind People  
RNID – Royal National Institute for Deaf People  
The Valuable 500

#### Trade Bodies

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

#### Media Owners/Platforms

Google  
Meta

The Steering Team met under the chairmanship of ISBA every six weeks in 2024. ISBA provided secretariat support and managed the calendar.

- Responsibility for secretariat support will rotate to UDM in 2025. The role of Chair will remain with ISBA until mid-year and be reviewed at that time.

Operational **Working Groups** are established, reporting to the Steering Team:

### **UK TV Working Group**

The **UK TV Working Group** exists to accelerate adoption and measurement of subtitles and audio description across broadcast in the UK. It was formed from ISBA's existing Accessibility Taskforce and comprises:

#### **Brand Owners**

Diageo  
Procter & Gamble  
Unilever

#### **Trade Bodies**

Advertising Association  
ISBA – Incorporated Society of British Advertisers  
IPA – Institute of Practitioners in Advertising  
Thinkbox

#### **Partners**

Adtext  
AMV BBDO  
Clearcast  
Extreme Reach  
Flock Associates  
Peach  
PHD  
Responsible Marketing Advisory  
RNIB – Royal National Institute of Blind People  
RNID – Royal National Institute for Deaf People

#### **Media Owners/Platforms**

Channel 4  
ITV  
Sky

This group met every 6 weeks under the chairmanship of ISBA. Workstreams are established on **technology, measurement and addressing barriers**.

## France TV Working Group

The **French TV Working Group** was convened in mid-2024 and has produced best practice guidance on subtitles and audio description and on the representation of disability in communication. It comprises:

### Brand Owners

Ferrero  
 Groupama  
 Macif  
 Maif  
 Société Générale

### Trade Bodies

AACC - L'association des agences conseil et création  
 UDM – Union des Marques  
 SNPTV

### Partners

Extreme Reach  
 Peach  
 Valentin Haüy  
 Association Française d'Audiodescription  
 ARPP

### Media Owners/Platforms

France Télévisions  
 TF1  
 M6

## Digital Working Group

A **cross-market Digital Working Group** was formed to create a baseline understanding of the availability and take-up of existing solutions for people with sight and hearing impairments. Sub-groups were established to focus on key tasks within **measurement, platform solutions and education**. The Digital Working Group comprises:

### Brand Owners

Diageo  
 L'Oréal  
 Procter & Gamble

### Trade Bodies

EACA - European Association of Communication Agencies  
 ISBA – Incorporated Society of British Advertisers  
 UDM – Union des Marques  
 World Federation of Advertisers

### Partners

Current Global  
 PHD  
 Responsible Marketing Advisory  
 The Valuable 500  
 WPP

### Media Owners/Platforms

Google  
 Meta  
 Microsoft  
 Pinterest  
 TikTok  
 X

## Further engagement

In 2024, two **Community Calls** were held, to engage the broader group of supporters and consultees. As the Network expands in scope, participation and geographic coverage, more formal Consultee and Supporter groups remain envisaged. The Consultee group would comprise bodies which can represent a broad range of disabilities, to support priority setting and provide expert counsel. Supporters could include brands, trade associations, agencies, media owners and platforms who are not represented on the Steering Group. The role of this group will be to amplify communication and to be consulted on major policy decisions. This group could also include brands, agencies and media owners engaged only at the national level.

## 2025 Priorities

**Our strategies** remain unchanged, centred on:

- High-level advocacy
- Education and actionable training
- Publisher engagement and technical enablement
- Measurement of enablement and adoption

Proposed **priorities for 2025** are:

- Accelerate **broadcast TV adoption** of captions and audio description in the UK and France
- Expand **geographically**, via WFA National Associations with a focus on Germany, Spain and Belgium
- Engage **more publishers** and secure commitments
- Engage **more brands** via Community Calls
- Establish a **Supporter Group** for new brands and publishers
- Step up the Network programme of **high-level advocacy** and communication
- Measure and track progress

## Key Performance Indicators

- Increase the proportion of TV advertisements featuring subtitles in the UK from 31% in Q4 2024 to 40% in Q4 2025
- Increase the proportion of TV advertisements featuring subtitles in France from 12.5% in H1 2024 to 20% in H2 2025
- Increase the proportion of ads featuring audio description in 2025 in both UK and France by 3 percentage points compared to 2024
- Increase the number of broadcast media owners in the UK and France with caption capabilities from 80% to 90%, measured as their share of all commercial impacts
- Establish benchmark measures for accessibility adoption for each participating digital platform

## Resources

Funded by advertisers, ISBA and platform members, a Programme Lead from the **Responsible Marketing Advisory (RMA)** provided overall project management, co-ordination between groups and stakeholder engagement in 2024. The Programme Lead has been the driving force in delivering an online resource hub within the WFA website.

ISBA will continue to fund this resource until the end of Q1 2025, by which point the first iteration of the online resource hub will be complete and deployed.

- Brand and platform members are asked to contribute at the same level as in 2024 to fund continued support from RMA to provide co-ordination and project management resource for the rest of 2025.
- It is envisaged that funding at this level will also be required for 2026 and 2027, at which point the Network's aim is to have effected sufficient lasting systemic change for support to no longer be required.

## **Deliverables and Timing**

Key deliverables from the 2025 effort will be:

- Ongoing project management and maintenance for the expansion of the online resource hub, including:
  - Coordination and publication of measurement material (data supplied by members)
    - UK and France broadcast by end of April 2025.
    - Digital by end of August 2025.
  - Building and launching a comprehensive library of article resources, including case studies, guides and news by end of June 2025.
  - Overseeing a website accessibility audit and engineering work (scoped separately) to be launched by end of June 2025.
  - Overseeing the translation of the website content into languages for key markets (translation and engineering work scoped separately)
    - French by end of June 2025
    - German by end of September 2025
    - Spanish by end of December 2025
- Oversight and coordination of group advocacy work, including:
  - Creation of key message and speaking point material
  - Support with tailoring content for specific speaking engagements and events
  - Facilitation of discussion and communications with the Supporter Group
  - Leading and preparing content for Community Calls
- Project management and subject matter expertise for Working Groups as needed