



Environmental, social and governance

Tip sheet

Hogan Lovells

The ESG Academy

ESG and digital accessibility



Why is digital accessibility an ESG issue?

In 2023, the World Health Organisation stated that there are approximately:

1.3 billion people in the world living with a form of disability.

That's **1/6** of all people, or almost

16% of the world's population.

“Disability” is a diverse term and there are a number of different types of disabilities, not all of which can be easily seen. Governments have long enforced mandates meant to ensure people living with disabilities are not discriminated against in many ways, but with technology evolving, the regulatory focus has now turned to ensuring access for all in the digital space.

This makes digital accessibility an integral part of the “S” in ESG.



What's happening?

In recent years, regulatory efforts to improve digital accessibility have tended to focus on requiring governmental and other public bodies to comply with accessibility obligations in respect of their online services.

Now, however, there is an increased regulatory expectation for private product manufacturers and service providers to also take steps to ensure that individuals with disabilities can use and access their products and services online in the same way as everyone else, which means companies need to closely monitor regulatory developments around the world.

Companies also need to be mindful that accessibility requirements may derive from broader legislation, such as equality laws, anti-discrimination laws and laws relevant to specific sectors or functions (for example in the healthcare and education sectors).



Where to start?

1

Consider adopting universal design principles in your business, which ensures products and services are open to the broadest spectrum of people.

2

Make use of local resources. We often see government entities taking the initiative to publish best practice guides, offer seminars and auditing services in order to support and encourage the private sector to adopt digital accessibility practices.

3

Involve all your stakeholders:

- Consider accessibility at an early stage when developing a new technology product or service, and ensure that the right people are involved - including those with disabilities - so that the starting point is accessible design across the product lifecycle.
- Collaborate more and seek out input and advice from industry and consumers alike.
- Take into account the perspectives of consumers with disabilities when developing digital products and services.



Find out more

For more resources, get in touch with us at clientesg@hoganlovells.com