



REOPENING  
TOURISM FOR  
TRAVELLERS WITH  
DISABILITIES:  
**HOW TO PROVIDE  
SAFETY WITHOUT  
IMPOSING  
UNNECESSARY  
OBSTACLES**

A person in a wheelchair is shown from the back, with their arms raised high in a celebratory gesture. The person is wearing a light-colored, textured hat. The background is a solid blue color. The image is used as a background for the text.

## INTRODUCTION

Travellers with disabilities, specific access requirements and seniors wish to start travelling again just as any other citizen. This wide segment of the population, comprising millions of potential consumers worldwide, has been hit hard by COVID-19. As the tourism sector is gradually reopening, it should not impose unreasonable new obstacles and barriers that can often be avoided if we embrace the concept of Accessible Tourism for All, in the recovery process. The travel & tourism industries should see travellers with specific access requirements as a great economic opportunity for them to stay afloat and make their businesses flourish again.

**UNWTO and its partners from disabled people's organizations and civil society have developed a set of basic recommendations addressed to different stakeholders across the tourism value chain to help them adjust to the new health and sanitary protocols.**



## TRAVEL PLANNING AND INFORMATION ON NEW TRAVEL PROTOCOLS

- **Update information, instructions and alerts in accessible, easy-to-read and clear language formats** so any client with specific access requirements knows how to proceed.
- **Extend the use of Braille signage and disinfect regularly as it is frequently touched. Provide alternatives for new sound announcements** (subtitled videos, images, pictograms, QR codes, voice announcement systems in lifts).
- **Install touchless and button-free technologies**, interface terminals and ticket machines.
- **Make all webpages and Apps accessible and include all accessibility-related information at these platforms**, especially that related to COVID-19 travel advice and warnings.
- **Use transparent masks and visors** when possible, so persons with intellectual & psycho-social disabilities, deaf & blind travellers would understand better key instructions.
- **Regularly remind about physical distance** rules and assist travellers who do not understand the local language or those with learning difficulties to comply.
- **Consider specific positions and signage of hand sanitizers and transparent separators so clients with different disabilities can** enjoy a seamless travel experience.
- **Assist travellers with motor disabilities** to safely manipulate masks and sanitizers in case they are unaccompanied and require assistance.
- **Avoid adding unnecessary furniture** and obstacles that would cause clutter in accessible routes.
- **Place (radio) beacons to ease indoor wayfinding** for blind travellers as they are facing new barriers.

- **Make complaint forms available** in QR or other e-formats if not available in paper version.
- **Ensure that DMOs/Tourist Information Offices** are involved in designing all protocols in order to be able to provide correct, transparent and updated instructions to any visitor with disability.
- **Maintain effective communication between tour-operators & travel agencies and other service providers**, so clients with specific requirements can be advised on their travel decisions.

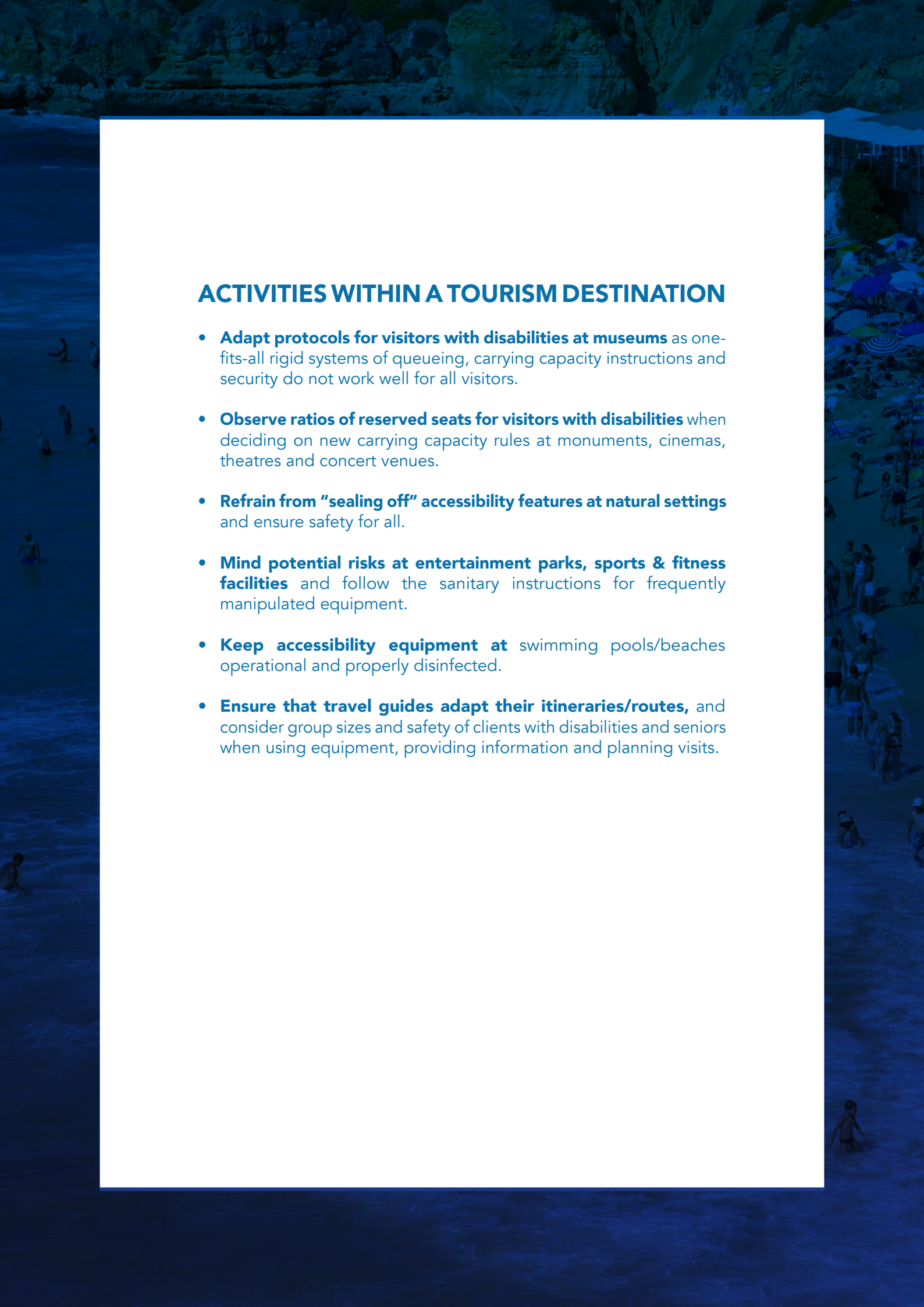
## TRANSPORTATION

- **Upskill employees** to be able to duly inform clients with disabilities on the new rules.
- **Keep reserved/priority access** seating for persons with disabilities, seniors, pregnant women and others without compromising anyone's safety.
- **Adjust new protocols at airports/stations for passengers with disabilities/access requirements.** Maintain routine sanitation and disinfection of all areas with potential for human contact.
- **Regularly disinfect mobility** equipment used for providing assistance to access transport facilities.
- **Advise clients to purchase direct trips** where possible, in order to diminish exposure to risks and obstacles.
- **Revise and announce opening hours** of repair stores and rental companies of mobility devices at the destination.

## ACCOMMODATION, BARS & RESTAURANTS

- **Make front desks fully accessible; adapt counter heights, separators' positions, signage, install magnetic loops,** provide guest seating, so all users can check in comfortably and in a normal manner.
- **Introduce automated check-in/out processes through accessible webpages/Apps, key card systems, service catalogues/menus in QR codes** and touchless hand dryers.
- **Ensure physical distances between serving tables** so all users can move around in safety.
- **Refrain from blocking pavements and footpaths** with bar and restaurant furniture to an extent which does not allow their use by persons with disabilities and all other citizens.
- **Restrict usage of accessible toilets to those who need them** and sanitize after every use.
- **Guarantee individual use** of sealed-off cutlery sets and/or single-use equipment by clients with disabilities and seniors; staff may provide assistance, if requested.
- **Train staff to provide a seamless service** experience to clients with disabilities in safety.
- **Ensure deep cleaning** of all customer service areas, equipment and surfaces on a regular basis.



The background of the page is a photograph of a beach scene. In the foreground, there's a dark, silty water area where several people are swimming. In the middle ground, a sandy beach is visible with many people sunbathing, some under colorful umbrellas. In the background, there are rocky cliffs or a headland. The overall image has a slightly desaturated, vintage feel.

## ACTIVITIES WITHIN A TOURISM DESTINATION

- **Adapt protocols for visitors with disabilities at museums** as one-fits-all rigid systems of queueing, carrying capacity instructions and security do not work well for all visitors.
- **Observe ratios of reserved seats for visitors with disabilities** when deciding on new carrying capacity rules at monuments, cinemas, theatres and concert venues.
- **Refrain from "sealing off" accessibility features at natural settings** and ensure safety for all.
- **Mind potential risks at entertainment parks, sports & fitness facilities** and follow the sanitary instructions for frequently manipulated equipment.
- **Keep accessibility equipment at** swimming pools/beaches operational and properly disinfected.
- **Ensure that travel guides adapt their itineraries/routes,** and consider group sizes and safety of clients with disabilities and seniors when using equipment, providing information and planning visits.

