

Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled (MVT)

Assembly

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REPORT ON THE ACCESSIBLE BOOKS CONSORTIUM

Information document prepared by the Secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the sixth annual *Report on the Accessible Books Consortium* prepared in the framework of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
2. The *Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled* (“the Marrakesh VIP Treaty”) was adopted on June 27, 2013, by the Member States of WIPO, and the Treaty came into force on September 30, 2016, after ratification or accession by 20 eligible parties. Practical activities are needed to realize the objectives set forth in the Marrakesh VIP Treaty and the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) is one global initiative to implement the Treaty at an operational level.

3. ABC was launched on June 30, 2014, before the WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR); it is a public-private partnership led by WIPO and includes the following umbrella organizations:

- DAISY Consortium;
- International Authors Forum;
- International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment;
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions;
- International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations;
- International Publishers Association;
- Sightsavers; and
- World Blind Union.

The ABC Secretariat is located at WIPO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WIPO personnel began working remotely from home in March 2020 and are gradually returning to WIPO premises since August.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ACCESSIBLE BOOKS CONSORTIUM

ABC Global Book Service

5. The ABC Global Book Service (“the Service”) is a global online catalogue of books in accessible formats that provides participating libraries for the blind, known as authorized entities (AEs) as defined in Article 2(c) of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty, with the ability to search, order and exchange accessible books across borders.

6. A major milestone was reached in March 2020, when 500,000 titles became available for cross-border exchange in the Service under the provisions of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty, that is, without the need to request permission from the copyright owner. Over 580,000 titles are now available for clearance-free exchange under the terms of the Treaty.

7. Currently, 83 AEs have signed an agreement with WIPO to participate in the Service, which represents a 36 per cent increase since September 2019 (see Annex I). There are an additional 11 AEs from around the world that have stated their intention to join the Service, which would increase the number of participating AEs in the Service to 94 (see Annex II). Participating AEs downloaded more titles in 2019 alone than the cumulative downloads in 2014–2018.

8. The Service saw a number of new features added this year, including the user interface becoming available in French and Spanish, additional layers of encryption and pseudonymisation for personal data protection and stronger service monitoring tools.

9. The ABC technical platform was migrated to Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud in 2020. As part of the migration, a number of architectural and process-oriented optimizations were implemented, which will further improve the Service’s efficiency, scalability and security. These include:

- (i) use of a development pipeline to improve the code testing and deployment process, including implementation of numerous automated security tests following best practices as set out by the WIPO Security and Information Assurance Division;
- (ii) migration of the ABC FTP service to AWS S3 SFTP, as well as migration of the Oracle database to Amazon Aurora PostgreSQL, for improved availability, speed and stability.

10. The ABC Secretariat made modifications to the WIPO–AE agreement, which were reviewed by WIPO’s copyright experts and the Office of the Legal Counsel and were endorsed by the ABC Board. The revisions to the AE agreement were implemented to:

- (i) reflect the implementation of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty in many countries;
- (ii) take into consideration comments from a number of current and prospective AEs, thereby clarifying certain provisions and improving the agreement’s overall coherence;
- (iii) respond to European AEs’ concerns about their obligations under the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); and
- (iv) ensure that all AEs participating in the ABC Global Book Service are bound by one agreement, with the same terms and conditions.

The revised agreements have been sent to participating AEs in the Service for counter-signature.

Future ABC Global Book Service Activities

11. ABC has developed a supplementary application as a complement to its current Service, to offer to participating AEs. This supplementary application is in its final stages of development and is proposed to participating AEs as a tool that they can provide to beneficiaries. It will give beneficiaries, as defined in Article 3 of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty, the ability to query and download directly accessible-format works supplied by participating AEs in ABC.

12. AEs that wish to join the supplementary application consent to provide all of their digital files to ABC to be hosted on the cloud, so that the digital audio files become available for immediate download by beneficiaries. Currently, only metadata related to the titles (i.e., name, title, producing AE, etc.) is included in the ABC catalogue and not the actual digital audio files. Once a title is ordered, the Service is dependent on human intervention from the producing AE to upload the requested digital audio file. Making the digital files available for immediate download through a cloud repository will allow AEs to save time and resources, allowing the Service to run without constant human intervention. In turn, beneficiary persons should see improvements in the delivery times for receiving the digital files. A staged approach to release this supplementary application is planned, beginning with a limited number of AEs that have indicated their interest in the supplementary application and that have the necessary technical infrastructure.

13. Moreover, ABC continues to discuss with other providers of accessible titles the establishment of a portal for a federated search, which will provide a central location for the public search, discovery and exchange of the largest number of titles in accessible formats in the widest possible range of languages. Such a federated search capacity across a network of catalogues would assist AEs and people who are print-disabled, by maximizing the number of accessible titles available on various platforms and thus reducing the time and effort required to search for accessible titles.

Capacity Building

14. ABC provides training and technical assistance in the latest accessible book production techniques to authorized entities, departments of education and publishers in developing and least developed countries (LDCs). Training and technical assistance are provided in the following accessible formats: EPUB3, DAISY and Braille (both electronic and embossed paper). Funding for the production of educational materials in national languages to be used by primary,

secondary and university students who are print-disabled is provided by ABC, so that the techniques taught during the training can be utilized immediately by the trainees.

15. Since the start of capacity building, 13,300 accessible educational books have been produced in national languages in 17 countries through training and technical assistance provided by ABC.

16. The sources noted below funded capacity-building projects in the following countries from September 2019 to September 2020:

- Funds-in-Trust (FIT) Australia: Bangladesh, Indonesia and Viet Nam;
- FIT Republic of Korea: Argentina, Mexico, Nigeria and Uruguay;
- FIT United Arab Emirates: Tunisia; and
- WIPO Regular Budget: Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia and Uruguay.

WIPO continues to welcome Funds-in-Trust for ABC training and technical assistance projects.

17. ABC issued a “Call for Proposals” in October 2019, inviting eligible organizations (or partnerships of organizations) located in developing countries and LDCs to send their applications for capacity-building projects to WIPO by December 31, 2019. The Call for Proposals was open to organizations worldwide. The ABC Secretariat requested applications ranging from USD 20,000 to 50,000 for a 12-month period. A total of 44 applications were received from 33 countries (22 from the African region, five from the Arab region, 10 from the Asia Pacific region and seven from the Latin American and Caribbean region). The ABC Secretariat is currently working with 12–15 finalists from the “Call for Proposals” to develop comprehensive work plans and budgets for each partner organization so that projects can commence in 2021. Geographical distribution was taken into consideration in selecting the projects, in addition to the stated eligibility criteria.

Future Capacity Building Activities

18. Within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing travel restrictions, capacity-building partners will be offered online training in the latest accessible book production techniques. WIPO has contracted with accessibility experts to provide substantive content for an online training course in how to produce books in accessible formats. The course is currently under development. While timelines are very tight, ABC is hopeful that capacity-building partners will be able to enroll in the course in the last quarter of 2020, complete training by the end of 2020 and start producing educational books in accessible formats in early 2021.

Accessible Publishing

19. ABC promotes the production of “born accessible” works by publishers, i.e., books that are usable from the start by both sighted persons and the print-disabled. In particular, all publishers are encouraged to:

- use the accessibility features of the EPUB3 standard for the production of digital publications; and
- include descriptions of the accessibility features of their products in the information they provide to distributors, retailers and others in the book supply chain.

20. Publishers and publisher associations around the world are invited to sign the *ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing*, which contains eight high-level aspirational principles relating to digital publications in accessible formats. Hachette Livre became the 100th signatory to the

ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing in 2019. The list of ABC Charter signatories is found at Annex III.

21. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, ABC was able to organize the annual *ABC International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing*, which has become a noted event in the field of accessibility to recognize organizations providing outstanding leadership and achievements in the advancement of the accessibility of digital publications to persons with print disabilities. The 2020 winners were Macmillan Learning of the United States of America in the publisher category, and *Fondazione LIA* of Italy in the initiative category. Unfortunately, the London Book Fair, where the ABC award is normally presented at a ceremony, was cancelled due to the pandemic, although the winners were notified and sent their trophies by post.

22. The ABC Secretariat is working toward raising awareness about the implications of the European Accessibility Act, which will have a wide impact on publishers who wish to sell books in the European Union (EU). EU Member States will have up to June 2022 to transpose the provisions into national law, and a further three years, i.e., up to June 2025, to apply those provisions. ABC commissioned two interviews on the topic of the European Accessibility Act, which have been published in the WIPO Magazine and posted on the ABC website.

Future Accessible Publishing Activities

23. Together with the International Publishers Association, ABC will continue to promote and expand the number of signatories to the *ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing*.

[Annexes follow]

ANNEX I: LIST OF AUTHORIZED ENTITIES (AEs) THAT HAVE JOINED THE ABC GLOBAL BOOK SERVICE

New AEs that joined since September 2019 are preceded by an asterisk

1. Argentina: *Asociación Civil Tiflonexos*
2. Australia: *VisAbility*
3. Australia: *Vision Australia*
4. *Antigua and Barbuda: *Unit for the Blind and Visually Impaired, T.N. Kirnon School*
5. Austria: *Hörbücherei*
6. Bangladesh: *Young Power in Social Action*
7. Belgium: *Eqla (previously known as l'Œuvre Nationale des Aveugles)*
8. Belgium: *Flemish Library Serving Persons with Print Disabilities – Luisterpuntbibliotheek (previously known as Flemish Library for Audiobooks and Braille)*
9. *Belgium: *Ligue Braille*
10. *Bolivia (Plurinational State of): *Instituto Boliviano de la Ceguera*
11. Brazil: *Dorina Nowill Foundation for the Blind*
12. *Bulgaria: *National Library for the Blind “Louis Braille 1928”*
13. Burkina Faso: *Union Nationale Des Associations Burkinabé pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants*
14. Canada: *BC Libraries Cooperative 2009, National Network for Equitable Library Service*
15. Canada: *Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec*
16. Canada: *Canadian National Institute for the Blind*
17. Canada: *Centre for Equitable Library Access*
18. Chile: *Bibliociegos*
19. Colombia: *Instituto Nacional para Ciegos*
20. Croatia: *Croatian Library for the Blind*
21. Denmark: *Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities*
22. *Dominican Republic: *Asociación de Ciegos del Cibao de la República Dominicana*
23. *Dominican Republic: *Biblioteca Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña*
24. Egypt: *Bibliotheca Alexandrina*
25. *Estonia: *Estonian Library for the Blind*
26. Finland: *Celia Library for the Visually Impaired*
27. France: *Association Valentin Haüy*
28. France: *BrailleNet*
29. France: *Groupement des Intellectuels Aveugles ou Amblyopes*
30. Germany: *German Centre for Accessible Reading (previously known as German Central Library for the Blind)*

31. *Greece: Hellenic Academic Libraries Link (HEAL-Link)
32. Iceland: Icelandic Talking Book Library
33. India: DAISY Forum of India
34. Ireland: National Council for the Blind of Ireland – Library and Media Centre
35. *Hungary: Hungarian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted
36. Israel: Central Library for Blind and Reading Impaired People
37. *Jamaica: Jamaica Society for the Blind
38. Japan: National Diet Library
39. Japan: National Association of Institutions of Information Service for Visually Impaired Persons
40. *Kyrgyzstan: Library and Information Consortium
41. *Latvia: Latvian Library for the Blind
42. *Lithuania: Lithuanian Library for the Blind
43. Malawi: University of Malawi, Chancellor College
44. Malaysia: St. Nicholas' Home
45. *Malta: Malta Libraries
46. Mexico: *Discapacitados Visuales I.A.P.*
47. Mongolia: Braille and Digital Access Library Service of the Blind, Ulaanbaatar Public Library
48. *Mongolia: Mongolian National Federation of the Blind
49. *Myanmar: Myanmar National Association of the Blind
50. Nepal: Action on Disability Rights and Development
51. Netherlands: *Bibliotheekservice Passend Lezen*
52. Netherlands: Dedicon
53. New Zealand: Blind Low Vision NZ (previously known as Blind Foundation)
54. Norway: Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille
55. Poland: Central Library of Labour and Social Security
56. Portugal: National Library of Portugal
57. Qatar: Qatar National Library
58. Republic of Korea: National Library for the Disabled
59. *Republic of Moldova: National Information and Rehabilitation Center of the Public "Association of the Blind People of Moldova".
60. *Romania: *Fundația Cartea Călătoare*
61. Russian Federation: Russian State Library for the Blind
62. Russian Federation: St. Petersburg Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired
63. *Saint Lucia: St. Lucia Blind Welfare Association
64. Sierra Leone: Educational Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired

65. South Africa: South African Library for the Blind
66. *Spain: *Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles*
67. Sri Lanka: DAISY Lanka Foundation
68. Sweden: Swedish Agency for Accessible Media
69. Switzerland: *Associazione ciechi e ipovedenti della Svizzera italiana*
70. Switzerland: *Association pour le Bien des Aveugles et malvoyants*
71. Switzerland: *Bibliothèque sonore romande*
72. Switzerland: Swiss Library for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Print Disabled
73. Thailand: National Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, TAB Foundation
74. Tunisia: Tunisian National Library
75. *Ukraine: Ostrovskyi Central Specialized Library for the Blind
76. Uganda: Uganda National Association of the Blind
77. United Kingdom: Seeing Ear
78. *United Kingdom: Torch Trust for the Blind
79. United States of America: California State Library, Braille and Talking Book Library
80. United States of America: Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled
81. United States of America: American Printing House for the Blind
82. Uruguay: *Fundación Braille de Uruguay*
83. Viet Nam: Sao Mai Vocational and Assistive Technology Center for the Blind

[Annex II follows]

ANNEX II: LIST OF AUTHORIZED ENTITIES (AEs) THAT HAVE STATED THEIR INTENTION TO JOIN THE ABC GLOBAL BOOK SERVICE

1. Bhutan: Muenselling Institute
2. Czech Republic: Czech Blind United
3. Dominican Republic: *Fundación Francina Hungría*
4. Guatemala: *Benemérito Comité Pro Ciegos y Sordos de Guatemala*
5. Kenya: Kenya Institute for the Blind
6. Pakistan: Pakistan Foundation Fighting Blindness
7. Palestine: Palestine Association of Visually Impaired Persons
8. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: National Public Library of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
9. Tajikistan: National Library of Tajikistan
10. Thailand: Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand
11. United States of America: Braille Institute of America

[Annex III follows]

ANNEX III: LIST OF SIGNATORIES TO ABC CHARTER FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLISHING

1. World Intellectual Property Organization
2. Argentina: *Ediciones Godot*
3. Argentina: *Ediciones Santillana, Argentina*
4. Australia: Allen and Unwin
5. Australia: Sydney University Press
6. Brazil: National Union of Book Publishers
7. Brazil: *Associação Religiosa Editora Mundo Cristão*
8. Brazil: *Brinque-Book Editora de Livros Ltda*
9. Brazil: *Distribuidora Record de Serviços de Imprensa S.A.*
10. Brazil: *É Realizações, Editora, Livraria e Distribuidora Ltda*
11. Brazil: *Ediouro Publicações Ltda*
12. Brazil: *Editora Albanisia Lúcia Dummar Pontes ME*
13. Brazil: *Editora Arqueiro Ltda*
14. Brazil: *Editora Atlas S/A*
15. Brazil: *Editora Bertrand Brasil Ltda*
16. Brazil: *Editora Best Seller Ltda*
17. Brazil: *Editora Biruta Ltda*
18. Brazil: *Editora Bonifácio Ltda*
19. Brazil: *Editora Carambaia EIRELI*
20. Brazil: *Editora Casa da Palavra Produção Editorial Ltda*
21. Brazil: *Editora Claro Enigma Ltda*
22. Brazil: *Editora de Livros Cobogó Ltda*
23. Brazil: *Editora e Produtora Spot 1 Ltda*
24. Brazil: *Editora Filocalia Ltda*
25. Brazil: *Editora Fontanar Ltda*
26. Brazil: *Editora Forense Ltda*
27. Brazil: *Editora Gaivota Ltda*
28. Brazil: *Editora Globo S.A.*
29. Brazil: *Editora Guanabara Koogan Ltda*
30. Brazil: *Editora Intrínseca Ltda*
31. Brazil: *Editora Jaguatirica Digital Ltda*
32. Brazil: *Editora José Olympio Ltda*
33. Brazil: *Editora JPA Ltda*
34. Brazil: *Editora Jurídica da Bahia Ltda*
35. Brazil: *Editora Lendo e Aprendendo Ltda ME*

36. Brazil: *Editora Manole Ltda*
37. Brazil: *Editora Nova Fronteira Participações S/A*
38. Brazil: *Editora Original Ltda*
39. Brazil: *Editora Paz e Terra Ltda*
40. Brazil: *Editora Pequena Zahar Ltda*
41. Brazil: *Editora Prumo Ltda*
42. Brazil: *Editora Record Ltda*
43. Brazil: *Editora Reviravolta Ltda*
44. Brazil: *Editora Rocco Ltda*
45. Brazil: *Editora Schwarcz S/A*
46. Brazil: *Elsevier Editora Ltda*
47. Brazil: *GEN – Grupo Editorial Nacional Participação S/A*
48. Brazil: *GMT Editores Ltda*
49. Brazil: *Imago Editora Importação e Exportação Ltda*
50. Brazil: *J.E. Solomon Editores Ltda*
51. Brazil: *Jorge Zahar Editor Ltda*
52. Brazil: *Livraria do Advogado Ltda*
53. Brazil: *LTC – Livros Técnicos e Científicos Editora Ltda*
54. Brazil: *NC Editora Ltda*
55. Brazil: *Pallas Editora e Distribuidora Ltda*
56. Brazil: *Petra Editorial Ltda*
57. Brazil: *Pinto e Zincone Editora Ltda*
58. Brazil: *Publibook Livros e Papéis Ltda*
59. Brazil: *Saber e Ler Editorial Ltda*
60. Brazil: *Sociedade Literária Edições e Empreendimentos Ltda*
61. Brazil: *Starlin Alta Editora e Consultoria EIRELI*
62. Brazil: *Summus Editorial Ltda*
63. Brazil: *Verus Editora Ltda*
64. Brazil: *Editorial 5 / ED5*
65. Canada: *House of Anansi Press*
66. Colombia: *Editorial El Manual Moderno Colombia S.A.S.*
67. Colombia: *Santillana Colombia*
68. Egypt: *Al-Balsam Publishing House*
69. France: *Hachette Livre*
70. Georgia: *Artanuji Publishing*
71. Georgia: *Bakur Sulakauri Publishing*
72. Georgia: *Intelekti Publishing*

73. Germany: *Verlag Barbara Budrich*
74. India: PHI Learning Private Limited
75. Italy: *Arnoldo Mondadori Editore*
76. Italy: *Edizioni Piemme*
77. Italy: *Giulio Einaudi Editore*
78. Italy: *Sperling & Kupfer*
79. Japan: Discover 21, Inc.
80. Jordan: Al Salwa Publishers
81. Mexico: *Editorial el Manual Moderno, S.A. de C.V.*
82. Mexico: *Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial México*
83. Mexico: *Santillana México*
84. Mexico: *SM México*
85. New Zealand: Oratia Media
86. Nigeria: Nigerian Publishers Association
87. Saudi Arabia: Kadi and Ramadi
88. South Africa: New Africa Books
89. Spain: *Planeta de Libros*
90. Spain: *Santillana Educación S.L.*
91. Thailand: Silkworm Books Ltd
92. United Arab Emirates: Al Fulk Translation and Publishing
93. United Arab Emirates: Dar Al Aalam Al Arabi Publishing and Distribution
94. United Arab Emirates: Hudhud Publishing and Distribution
95. United Arab Emirates: Kalimat Group
96. United Arab Emirates: Sama Publishing, Production and Distribution
97. United Arab Emirates: Wahat Alhekayat Publishing and Distribution
98. United Arab Emirates: Waw Publishing
99. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
100. United Kingdom: British Dyslexia Association
101. United Kingdom: Elsevier
102. United Kingdom: Kogan Page
103. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd
104. United States of America: HarperCollins Publishers
105. United States of America: Macmillan Learning

[Annex IV follows]

ANNEX IV: ABC STATISTICS 2019–2020

ABC Indicators	Jan 2014	Sept 2019	Sept 2020	Increase from Sept 2019 to Sept 2020	Comments
No. of authorized entities (AEs) that have signed an agreement with WIPO to participate in the ABC Global Book Service	11	61	83	36%	11 agreements with new AEs are in the process of being signed, which will increase the number of participating AEs to 94
Total no. of titles in the ABC Global Book Service catalogue	224,500	540,000	640,000	19%	
No. of titles available for cross-border exchange under the Marrakesh VIP Treaty provisions	N/A	425,000	585,000	38%	
No. of titles downloaded by participating AEs	200	22,300	40,800	83%	
No. of ABC titles copied and distributed to print-disabled individuals through participating AEs	16,000 (Dec 2014)	293,000 as of August 31, 2019	381,000 as of August 31, 2020	30%	

No. of educational titles that were produced in national languages in accessible formats through training and technical assistance provided by ABC	N/A	9,300	13,300	43%	
No. of ABC Charter Signatories	N/A	100	105	5%	

[End of Annex IV and of document]