


 A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 	ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES GROUP	
		14-Jun-2024
PROGRESS REPORT FOR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN & FEEDBACK PROCESS		



ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AND FEEDBACK PROCESS

FIRST PROGRESS REPORT

2024

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1. GENERAL

This report outlines the progress Ethiopian Airlines has made during the first year of its Accessibility Plan.

1.1 Feedback Process and Contact Information

Ethiopian Airlines values feedback from all passengers, including those with disabilities, and is dedicated to providing accessible services for everyone. We encourage you to share your thoughts on our Accessibility Plan and the services we provide using our feedback formats. Alternatively, you can reach out to the Manager of Customer Relations Management by phone or email, as listed below.

Ethiopian Airlines is committed to ensuring a positive travel experience for all passengers, and your feedback is crucial in helping us achieve this goal. You can also provide anonymous feedback, allowing you to express your thoughts freely and without fear of identification. Anonymous feedback is given the same consideration as all other feedback.

By offering the option for anonymous feedback submissions, Ethiopian Airlines aims to enhance the quality and diversity of feedback received, fostering a culture of transparency and continuous improvement. Ethiopian Airlines continually seeks ways to improve its services and make travel more accessible for everyone.

Contact Information

Ethiopian Airlines Group

Manager, Customer Relations Management

Email Address,


Customerrelations@ethiopianairlines.com

Tell: 011-5174422

POBOX 1755

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

To request a copy of Ethiopian Airline’s Accessibility Plan or this first Progress Report in an alternate format, please contact us via the above-mentioned channels.

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2. Information and Communication Technology


Ethiopian Airlines is dedicated to making information and communications accessible to people with disabilities, as outlined in our Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process. We set high web accessibility standards and strive diligently to achieve them. Our team is committed to ensuring that our websites meet all current laws and guidelines, including the W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines, to create a usable experience for all customers. We continuously educate ourselves through training sessions with advocacy groups, industry partners, and other resources.

In alignment with our Accessibility Plan, we work with services such as Level Access, conduct external review and testing for our digital communications, and utilize customer feedback to identify and eliminate barriers in Ethiopian Airlines' information and communication technologies.

Additionally, we have begun enhancing the Ethiopian Airlines Mobile application to make it more accessible and inclusive for all users. This involves benchmarking international guidelines and best practices from leading airlines mobile applications worldwide. We also receive technical support from professionals in disability associations for web and app accessibility issues, including testing new features.

2.1 Progress Made and Action Taken:

- Ethiopian Airlines has set high web accessibility standards to ensure compliance with W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines.
- Regular updates and audits of the website to maintain and improve accessibility.
- Benchmarking against international guidelines and best practices from leading airlines mobile applications.
- Involvement of disability associations for testing new features to ensure they meet accessibility standards.
- Continuous improvement of the mobile application to make it more accessible and inclusive for all users.
- Regular training sessions with advocacy groups and industry partners to stay informed about the latest accessibility standards and practices.
- Conducting external testing of digital communications to identify and fix accessibility issues.
- Actively seeking and incorporating customer feedback to identify and remove barriers in information and communication technologies.
- Gaining technical support from professionals in disability associations regarding web and app accessibility issues. In this regard, regular consultations with experts is ongoing to ensure all new features and updates comply with accessibility standards.

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3. Communication other than ICT

As outlined in our Accessibility Plan, Ethiopian Airlines has implemented a comprehensive process to communicate essential travel information to customers with disabilities. When booking, customers can request assistance from Special Assistants who are available to help with medical or special assistance needs. Additionally, any accessibility requirements are documented and communicated to airport frontline agents and in-flight Cabin crew. For customers who are deaf or hearing-impaired, separate safety briefings are provided as needed to ensure they receive all necessary information.

3.1 Progress Made and Action Taken

- Ethiopian Airlines has implemented guidelines and provided training to its staff to ensure proper interaction with passengers with disabilities, aiming to raise awareness about effective communication and the accurate delivery of services.
- Enhancing awareness and utilization by promoting accessible products, services, and alternative communication methods.
- Consistent improvement of communication guidelines to develop content that is straightforward, brief, and readily comprehensive.

4. Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

As Ethiopian Airlines is dedicated to actively endorsing the principles of the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), it incorporates accessibility criteria into the procurement processes for the acquisition of new goods, services, or construction projects. Ethiopian Airlines ensures that facilities, goods, and services prioritize accessibility, demonstrating commitment to identifying and removing any existing barriers and proactively preventing the emergence of new ones.

4.1 Progress Made and Actions Taken

- Ethiopian Airlines has integrated accessibility requirements into its procurement policies to ensure all goods, services, and facilities meet accessibility standards.
- The airline has established criteria for selecting vendors that prioritize suppliers who offer accessible products and services.
- The airline has upgraded its infrastructure to include accessible seating areas, restrooms, and boarding ramps at major hubs.
- Procurement of assistive technology such as hearing loop systems, Braille signage, and tactile paving to assist passengers with disabilities.
- Engaged with disability advocacy groups to get input on the accessibility of goods and services procured.
- Regular consultations with accessibility experts to identify and address gaps in procurement practices.
- Procured accessible ground transportation options, such as wheelchair-accessible shuttles and buses.

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- Acquired communication tools that ensure information is accessible to passengers with different disabilities, including visual and auditory impairments.

5. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

As clearly stated in the Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process, Ethiopian Airlines is dedicated to enhancing accessibility and usability of its programs and services including on booking & reservation, check-in process, progressing through the airport to reach the gate, boarding and disembarking from the aircraft, and the in-flight journey. In addition to this, Ethiopian is committed to ensuring that website services, applications, and contents are accessible to individuals with disabilities.


5.1 Progress Made and Action Taken

- Ethiopian Airlines has introduced services tailored for passengers with disabilities, including special assistance during boarding and disembarking, accessible seating options, and personalized in-flight services.
- Upgraded airport facilities to include accessible check-in counters, restrooms, and seating areas. This also includes the provision of special assistance services at airports.
- Implemented comprehensive training programs for staff focused on disability awareness, customer service for passengers with special needs, and handling assistive devices.
- Improving the accessibility of the airline’s website and mobile app by ensuring compliance with W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines. This includes making the booking process, check-in, and customer service chat more accessible to users with disabilities.
- Work in progress to integrated assistive technologies in customer service processes, such as screen readers for visually impaired passengers and sign language services for passengers with hearing impairments.
- Collaborated with disability advocacy groups to understand the needs of passengers with disabilities and incorporate their feedback into the design and delivery of services.

6. Transportation

Ethiopian Airlines is dedicated to ensuring that all transportation under its management and control is accessible to all customers or provides equivalent services. By eliminating transportation-related barriers, Ethiopian Airlines aims to offer persons with disabilities meaningful travel options, enabling them to connect with their loved ones.

We strive to empower individuals to make their own travel choices, with support available as needed, regardless of their disabilities. Our commitment includes enhancing the accessibility of our products and services and continually improving our efforts to deliver excellent customer experiences for everyone.

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6.1 Progress Made and Action Taken

- Upgraded major airports with accessible restrooms, waiting areas, and check-in counters.
- Installed assistive devices like elevators, ramps, and tactile paving for visually impaired passengers.
- Designated accessible seating options on wide body aircrafts.
- Provided trained personnel to assist passengers with disabilities during boarding, in-flight, and deboarding.
- Ensured all travel information is available in accessible formats, including Braille and audio formats.
- Safety videos and entertainment on board include subtitles in various languages and some Ethiopian Airlines Group aircraft are already equipped with at least one safety instructions card in braille.

7. Built Environment

Ethiopian Airlines has made significant progress in enhancing the built environment through renovating existing facilities, planning accessible new buildings, collaborating with partners, and continuously improving based on feedback. These efforts ensure that all passengers, including those with disabilities, have barrier-free access to our facilities.

Ethiopian Airlines is committed to eliminating barriers in the all its facilities specially on Airport terminal facilities to ensure barrier-free access for everyone. Ethiopian Airlines is actively retrofitting existing spaces and incorporating accessibility improvements into the planning of new buildings.

7.1 Progress Made and Actions Taken

- Upgraded existing buildings, including ticket offices, lounges, and terminal facilities, to ensure they meet accessibility standards.
- Identified and removed physical barriers to create a more accessible environment for passengers with disabilities.
- Integrated accessibility considerations into the design and planning stages of new buildings and facilities.
- Worked with accessibility experts to ensure new constructions meet or exceed accessibility guidelines.
- Engaged with external partners, including disability advocacy groups, to gain insights and feedback on accessibility improvements.
- Renovating the existing restrooms to make accessible in all major facilities.
- Work in progress to Install accessible elevators and ramps to improve mobility within buildings and terminals.

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8. Provision of Accessibility Related Regulations

Ethiopian Airlines, as a large transportation provider as defined under the Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPRR, SOR/2019-244), comply with the sections applicable to Aircraft and Air Carriers under Parts 1, 2, 3 and 7 applicable to foreign carriers of the Regulations.

Details on Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations can be obtained under:

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2019-244/index.htm>

9. Feedback Information

Ethiopian Airlines has recently received feedback from passengers regarding the accessibility services provided across our facilities and services including during flights. This feedback is invaluable as it helps us identify areas for improvement and enhance the overall travel experience for passengers with disabilities.

- **Positive Feedback:**

- ✓ Passengers have appreciated the availability of special assistance during boarding and deboarding.
- ✓ Many have noted the courteous and helpful nature of our staff in addressing their accessibility needs.
- ✓ The improvements in accessible seating options and the provision of assistive devices have been well-received.
- ✓ Ethiopian Airlines Website is appreciated for its accessibility features it includes.

- **Areas for Improvement:**

- ✓ Some passengers reported difficulties in navigating certain areas of the airport due to inadequate signage and wayfinding systems. In addition, at domestic airports where Ethiopian Airlines operates, there are difficulties in boarding Airplanes as there is shortage of wheelchair assisting trucks.
- ✓ There were concerns about the accessibility of restrooms in some facilities.
- ✓ Feedback indicated a need for more comprehensive training for staff on handling of passengers with disabilities and specific accessibility issues.

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10. Consultations

Ethiopian Airlines remains committed to consulting with persons with disabilities to prepare, develop and maintain this Accessibility Plan, and the areas of the business addressed herein.

In alignment with universal inclusivity principles, all aspects of our business will include consideration for persons with disabilities to ensure that they uphold dignity and independence for all.

Ethiopian Airlines has developed a partnership with organizations and associations working on disabilities providing feedback on several accessibility issues. This relationship helps Ethiopian develop, plan, and implement programs, practices and procedures that are important to the disability community.

Consultations regarding accessibility issues at Ethiopian Airlines were conducted with a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure that the needs of passengers with disabilities were comprehensively addressed. The consultations involved engaging with disability advocacy groups such as Federation of Ethiopian Association of persons with Disabilities, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Disabilities and Elderly Rights Commissioner office, passengers with disabilities, Airline staffs, airport representatives, and regulatory bodies. These consultations aimed to gather insights, feedback, and recommendations to enhance the development of Ethiopian Airlines Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process and accordingly to improve the services provided at Ethiopian Airlines Group.

The consultation process unfolded through a series of meetings, consultation forums and workshops held at various locations, including Ethiopian Airlines headquarters in Addis Ababa, major domestic airports served by the airline, Ethiopian Skylight Hotel, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Headquarters in Addis Ababa. Additionally, virtual meetings, surveys and feedback forms were utilized to reach a broader audience and gather input from stakeholders who were unable to attend in-person sessions.

Consultations were held at various times to accommodate participants' availability and preferences, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives were represented. In June and November 2023, Ethiopian Airlines engaged with the Federation of Ethiopian Associations of Persons with Disabilities to address the accessibility issues encountered by disabled passengers while using the airline's facilities and services. Real-time experiences and best practices from other airlines were discussed and recommended for implementation at Ethiopian Airlines.

As part of a new initiative focused on assisting passengers with hidden disabilities, a virtual meeting was held in November 2023 with representatives from companies that work on hidden disability services in the UK and South Africa. This meeting aimed at raising awareness and developing products and services that best serve passengers with hidden disabilities.

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Another consultative meeting took place at the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission headquarters in March 2024. During this meeting, the Disabilities and Elderly Rights Commissioner presented an observation report for discussion. Participants raised crucial points regarding accessible air transportation, which Ethiopian Airlines acknowledged as opportunities for service improvement. Following this, a virtual follow-up meeting was conducted with Ethiopian Human Rights Commission representatives to discuss progress based on their observation report. Additionally, an invited expert from New York shared valuable insights on digital accessibility matters.

Ethiopian Airlines made concerted efforts to create an inclusive and accessible environment for all participants, providing accommodations, accessible transportation, and venue accessibility enhancements.

The feedback obtained through these consultations played a crucial role in shaping Ethiopian Airlines Accessibility plan and Feedback Process document. Suggestions and concerns raised by stakeholders were carefully considered and incorporated into the plan, ensuring that it reflected the diverse needs and experiences of passengers with disabilities. Specific measures were identified to improve accessibility across various touchpoints of the travel journey, including booking & reservation, airport security screening, check-in, boarding, in-flight services, and disembarkation.

Furthermore, the consultative feedback guided Ethiopian Airlines in identifying priority areas for investment, resource allocation, and training initiatives to enhance accessibility and ensure compliance with international accessibility standards and regulations. By engaging in meaningful consultations with stakeholders, Ethiopian Airlines demonstrated its commitment to promoting inclusivity, dignity, and equal access to air travel for all passengers, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

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