THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

TANZANIA COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED

COMMUNICATION SERVICES ACCESSIBILITY TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES GUIDELINES

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Approved by	Title	Signature	Date
Dr. Jabiri K. Bakari	Director General	----------	31/01/23

PART I
PRELIMINARIES

1. Citation

These Guidelines shall be cited as Communication Services Accessibility to Persons with Disabilities Guidelines, 2023.

2. Objective of the Guidelines

The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) is mandated by the Electronic and Postal Communications (Consumer Protection) Regulations, 2018 to ensure licensees take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access the premises and other relevant services. These Guidelines intend to guide licensees on measures to be taken to achieve accessibility of communication services to persons with disabilities.

3. Definitions

In these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires –

"Act" means the Electronic and Postal Communications Act, Cap 306 of the laws of Tanzania;

"Accessibility" means the ability by persons with disabilities to equally access and benefit from electronic and postal communications services;

"Audio Description" means oral commentary that gives a viewer who is blind or partially sighted a verbal description of what is happening on the television screen at any given moment. It is provided as an aid to the understanding and enjoyment of the programme. The technique uses a second sound track that gives a description of the scene and the on-screen action;

"Authority", means the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority established under the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority Act, Cap 172 of the laws of Tanzania;

"Closed Captioning" means converting audio content of television broadcast or other means production into text and displaying the text on a screen or monitor;

"Disability" means in relation to an individual loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical, mental or social factor or as defined in the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2010

"Free to Air Television" means a broadcasting service provided without charging a subscription fee.

"licensee" means a person licensed by the Authority to provide any electronic communication, postal or courier services;

"Photosensitive viewer" means a person who experience seizure triggered by flashing lights or contrasting light and dark patterns;

"Sign language" means the Tanzanian language that uses a system of manual, facial, and other body movements as a means of communication;

"Subtitles" means a service by which both the audio dialogue and sound representations of a video programme, are made visible by the user via onscreen text that is synchronised with the audio content;

"Universal Design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design;

PART II

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROVISION TO PERSONS WITH DISABITIES FOR FREE TO AIR TELEVISION

4. A free to air licensee is insisted to ensure that services are made available and accessible to persons with disabilities in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations by providing accessibility services including audio description, sign language, and subtitles or closed captioning.

4.1 Audio Description

A free to air television licensee needs to maintain quality access to audio description, which is essential for ensuring that all persons with disabilities accessing broadcasting services benefit from the same.

4.2 Sign Language

To ensure the requirement of sign language is implemented, a free to air licensee is recommended to make sure:

(a) the viewers can see not only the hands but also, where applicable, the facial expressions of the interpreter;

(b) the screen of the interpreter should be no smaller than one sixth of the screen;

(c) the background, in turn, should also contrast the skin tone and the clothing of the interpreter;

(d) sign language interpreters employed have a recognised accreditation from the National Swahili Council.

4.3 Subtitles

Subtitles to be provided by a free to air licensee need to:

(a) be as near synchronous to speech as is practicable;

(b) reflect the spoken word with the same meaning;

(c) contain easily read sentences, and commonly used sentences in a tidy and sensible format;

(d) give proper contrast between foreground and background colours; and

(e) use the best legible font for all subtitles.

4.4 Closed Captioning

In providing closed captioning the following are necessary for a free to air licensee to take into account:

(a) closed captioning must match the spoken words in the dialogue and convey background noise and other sounds to the fullest extent possible;

(b) closed captioning must coincide with their corresponding spoken words and sounds to the greatest extent possible and must be displayed on the screen at a speed that can be read by viewers;

(c) closed captioning must fully run from the beginning to the end of the program possible;

(d) closed captioning should be placed within the 'safe caption area' of a '14:9 display and should normally occupy the bottom of the screen, except where they would obscure the speaker's mouth or other vital information or activity; and

(e) closed captioning should not block other important visual content on the screen, overlap one another or run off the edge of the television screen.

5. A Content Broadcasting service licensee may make broadcasting services more accessible to persons with disabilities by doing the following: -

(a) providing a range of formats on a television broadcaster's website (such as electronic versions and audio clips);

(b) incorporating accessibility services into advertisements, economic indicators, weather details, telephone numbers and addresses or details of goods and services shown on screen; or

(c) making use of non-scheduled services such as access via personal video digital recorders (PVRs) and video on demand (VOD).

6. **Breaking news**

A free to air licensee needs to provide for a news text strapline in case of breaking news across channel.

7. **Interviewing hearing impaired person**

When interviewing hearing impaired person:

(a) A reporter is recommended to speak directly to hearing impaired person being interviewed as they would for any other guest.

(b) The interpreter should be off screen of the main shot.

(c) The interpreter should stand to the side of the reporter so that the sight line between reporter or camera and the hearing impaired person is maintained.

8. **Warning to photosensitive viewers**

A free to air licensee is urged to take special care when providing content that may disturb photosensitive audiences or viewers and issue warnings in both forms text and audio on the television screen prior to broadcasting for persons with photosensitive epilepsy.

9. **Broadcasting issues of National interest.**

Service providers of content by subscriptions are urged to provide sign language interpretation when broadcasting issues of national interest.

PART III

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OTHER LICENSEES OF ELECTRONIC AND POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS

10. **Universal Design in Products and Services**:

A licensee is urged to ensure that all communication equipment ready for purchase adhere to the principles of Universal Design to cater for the needs of persons with Disabilities.

11. **Recharge Vouchers or Scratch Cards Vouchers**

A licensee is urged to ensure that digits under scratch panel of the recharge vouchers or scratch cards vouchers have a minimum font size of 14.

12. **Emergency Services and Customer Assistance**

A licensee is urged to ensure that emergency services and customer assistance provided are in both voice and text so as to be easily accessible to persons with disabilities.

13. A licensee is urged to ensure that there are trained employees who can provide customer services and communicate with persons with Disabilities.

14. A licensee is urged to ensure free directory services to persons with disabilities are ready available when requested.

15. A licensee is urged to ensure that he provides a demonstration in respect of the use of the equipment to persons with Disabilities who visit a licensee shops or centres before the person purchases the equipment.

16. A licensee is urged to:

(a) ensure that, where practicable, provides, upon request, printed material outlining accessible products for persons with disabilities in simple and reader friendly languages.

(b) provide brochures, videos and other information to organisations that work with visual and hearing impaired persons on a regular basis to ensure the information provided is displayed on information stands and targeted to hearing impaired persons;

(c) make available advertisements and promotions for products and services specifically designed for persons with disabilities in accessible formats to relevant organisations of persons with disabilities in every region upon request;

(d) make provision for specific offers categorised according to disabilities which must be easily accessible.

Dar es Salaam
.....31.....JANUARY, 2023

Dr. Jabiri K. Bakari
DIRECTOR GENERAL