



World Summit on Accessible Tourism

# Destinations for All

Brussels 1-2 October 2018

## WALLONIA

### tools and partnerships

### to develop accessible tourism

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# The administration for Walloon Tourism

Commissariat général au Tourisme

## Institutional tourism entity in Wallonia

- Enforcement of the rules
- Recognition of tourism offer and labelling
- Supervising and supporting tourism actors
- The grants award procedure (for renovations, tourism and promotional equipment)
- Advising the Walloon government and tourism actors with their strategic choices.



# Wallonia – General information



Southern  
part of  
Belgium

Languages  
French  
German (less than 1%)

Population  
3.500.000  
inhabitants

Surface  
area  
17.000km<sup>2</sup>

Capital  
Namur



Wallonie

# Wallonia - Tourism



- Nature
- Terroir
- Sports & Adventure
- Historical heritage
- Traditions and folklore
- Proximity tourism



# Wallonia - Tourism



- 3.4 million visitors (2017)
- 7.83 million overnight stays →
- 12 million visitors to the region's attractions →
- €2.8 billion spent by tourists (2016)



**3.355 accommodations options**

**313 tourist attractions**



**→ 4,1% of the gross value added of Wallonia (2016)**





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# Destinations for All

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**When accessibility becomes  
a political commitment**

# Since 2000

- **Political impetus**

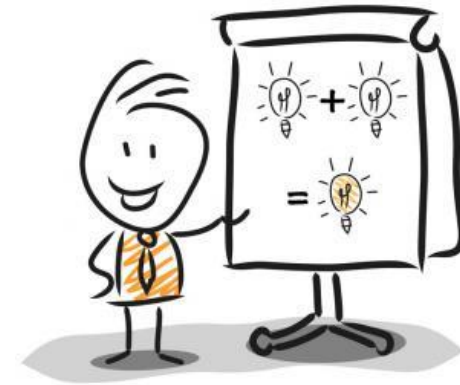
Getting all actors around the table to REFLECT on the accessibility of public buildings and tourism infrastructure in Wallonia.



# Accessibility cannot simply be improvised !

## Reflexion

- Benchmarking
- Site visits
- Discover good practices in other countries  
and regions





# A UNITED FRONT



Rally

Being stronger

Territorial coherence

**Various methods are suggested by different consultancies that specialise in accessibility**

- The public bodies that have been contacted by these various experts are asking for a **united front** behind one single product/one method.
- Avoid the multiplication of evaluation methods, labels and, above all, the spreading of public funds.

# Professionals in accessibility are taking action!



Associations representing disabled people that have been members of the **Collectif Accessibilité Wallonie-Bruxelles (CAWaB)** since 2006 have decided to:

- Pool their expertise
- Pool their methodology

Goal ? Create one single book of criteria



With the invaluable collaboration of many types of users/“testers”, who will help adapt it to the realities on the ground.

Create a structure for implementing the methodology

## 2010 - Result = one single tool for Wallonia



- 1 method
- 1 certification

Financial support of the

- Ministry of Social Action
- Ministry of Tourism

# The missions



- Evaluate the level of accessibility of goods and services to people with specific needs
- Certify
- Act as an information tool

# Evaluate



Access-i rests on a **network** of professionals and a single **methodology**





**ACCESS ▶ i**



## Evaluate

A methodology created for and by Access-i users decided to put aside the law and expert opinions, in favour of asking people with disabilities what their expectations and tolerance threshold were.

**Book of  
criteria:**



Put together by professional auditors. Checks were carried out to make sure that advice given wasn't contrary to the law



# Act as an information tool



**ACCESS** ▶ i  
www.access-i.be

Access-i's analysis came up with 7 groups of users with disabilities and 3 levels of accessibility for each.








**Objective:** To inform, without misleading, visitors and clients on the conditions and levels of accessibility of places open to the public.

## 7 groups, 3 levels:

Qualifying the level of accessibility of a space open to the public or an event, based on the needs of 7 user groups



**ACCESS** ▶ **i**  
www.access-i.be

-  people in wheelchairs
-  people with walking difficulties
-  the blind
-  visually impaired people
-  the deaf
-  hearing impaired people
-  people with learning and comprehension difficulties

## 7 groups, 3 levels:

**3 colours that correspond to 3 levels of  
accessibility**



- **Green** = accessible independently
- **Orange** = accessible with occasional assistance needed
- **White** = accessibility information available

# Who can request an Access-i audit ?



Any public service, tourism or heritage infrastructure.

Examples:

- Accommodation
- Restaurants
- Concert halls, cultural centres
- Tourist attractions
- Sports or recreation centres
- Public parks or gardens
- ...



# But also...



Events such as festivals, carnivals...



The Heritage Days.

Annual themed tourism years.

## **The amazing Wallonia**



The **Wallonia by Bike** themed tourism year: 6 certified RAVeL itineraries



The **Wallonie Gourmande** themed year: 27 certified venues (brasseries, abbeys, distilleries and vineyards)

Other projects being developed: Nature parks of Wallonia

# Where does Access-i operate?



Access-i works primarily in Wallonia, but also in the Brussels-Capital Region or any territory that shares Access-i's methodology.



# Communication/promotion:

## everything falls into place step by step:

- [www.access-i.be](http://www.access-i.be)
- Via the promotional websites of partners
- Via social media

# Initial political decisions

- Accessibility becomes a priority in the government's regional political declaration, with several ministries concerned.
- The Commissariat général au Tourisme (CGT) - Wallonia's tourism administration - includes the development of accessibility in tourism in its upcoming strategic plans (currently in its administration contract).
- The *Code Wallon du Tourisme* has advantageous subsidies for PRM renovations

# WALLONIA : new measures

Government decision

2018-2019

Increase the offer of  
tourism that is  
accessible to all

INCLUSION

# WALLONIA : new measures

Government decision

2018-2019

Awarding of grants to support  
tourism actors with their specific  
renovations

With the expertise of Access-i



# TODAY - Trust !

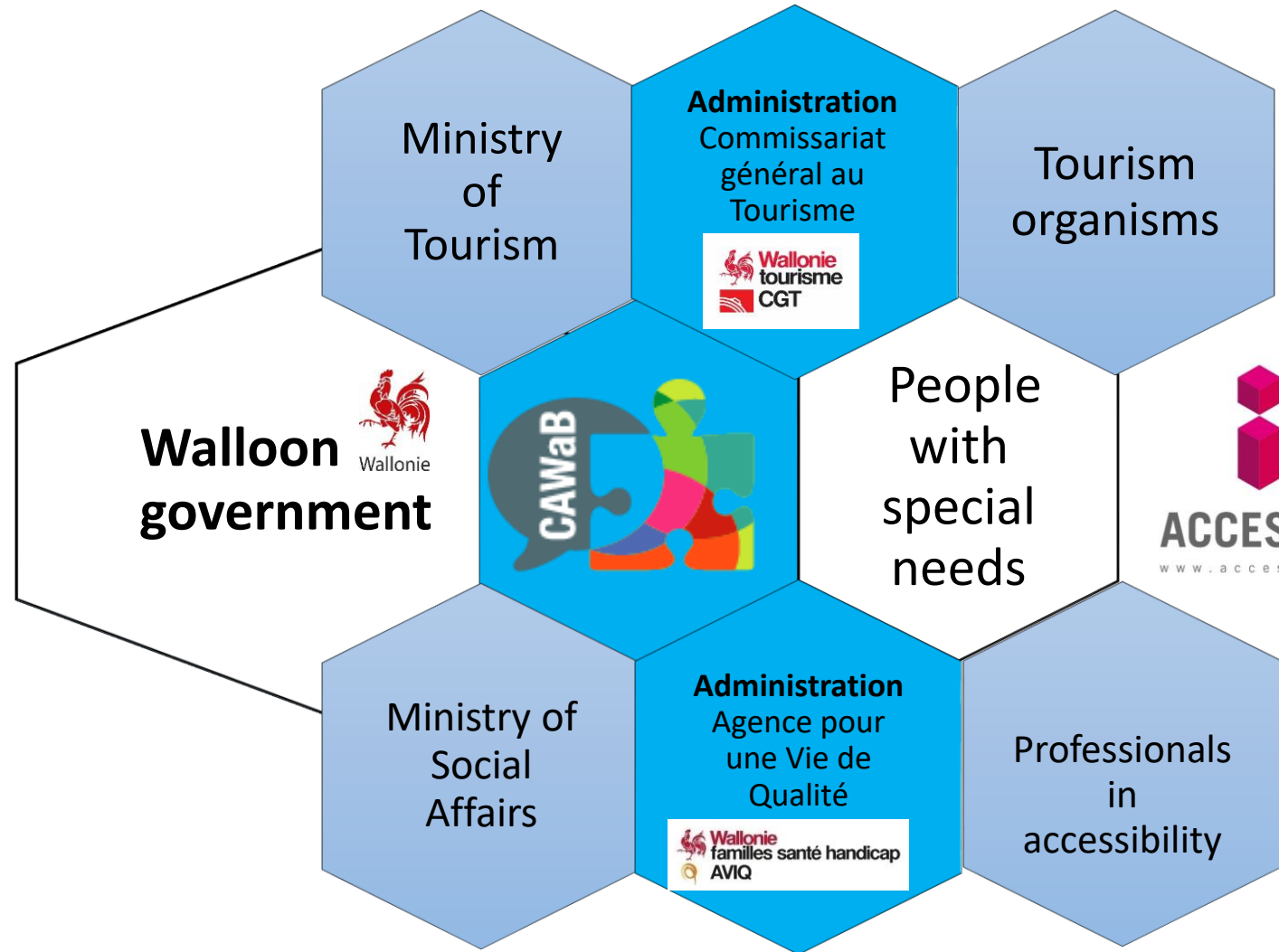


## Policy of partnerships

Dedicated work to gather experts in tourism and accessibility

Work with the administrations (Ministries of Tourism and Social Affairs)

Take into account user opinions



# CONCLUSION



- **One single non-profit organisation that groups together professionals in accessibility**
- Use of one single evolving methodology
- Promotion of one single certification
- Reducing self-declaration = professionalising the tourism offer
- Gradually putting into place a coherent effort throughout Wallonia

A collective effort  
for better **inclusion**



# Thanks for your attention



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ACCESS ▶ i

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