

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

### **Assembly**

**Second (2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary) Session**  
**Geneva, October 2 to 11, 2017**

### **REPORT ON THE ACCESSIBLE BOOKS CONSORTIUM**

*Information document prepared by the Secretariat*

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. This is the third 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 by 20 Member States. Practical initiatives 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 Member States of WIPO’s Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights; it is a private-public alliance led by WIPO and it includes the following umbrella organizations:

- The World Blind Union;
- The DAISY Consortium;
- The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment;
- The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions;

- Sightsavers;
- The International Publishers Association;
- The International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations; and
- The International Authors Forum.

4. The ABC Secretariat is located at WIPO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and currently employs one full-time WIPO staff member, four contractors (two full-time, two part-time) and an off-shore information technology company that develops and maintains the ABC Global Book Service technical platform. Administrative, communication, financial and legal support is provided to the ABC Secretariat by WIPO's respective divisions.

## B. ACTIVITIES OF THE ACCESSIBLE BOOKS CONSORTIUM

5. ABC has been operating for three years, and it has produced excellent results during this initial "start-up" period. See "ABC Overall Results: 2014 – 2017" in Annex I. ABC has three main activities:

### ABC Global Book Service

6. The ABC Global Book Service ("the Service"), formerly known as TIGAR, is a global online catalogue of books in accessible formats that provides libraries serving people who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled ("the print-disabled") with the ability to search and make requests for accessible books. The Service is an international library-to-library technical platform located at WIPO Headquarters in Geneva. Through the Service, libraries serving the print-disabled (authorized entities as defined in Article 2(c) of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty) can supplement their collections of accessible books from their counterparts in other countries free of charge.

7. Twenty-five libraries have signed an agreement with WIPO to participate in the Service, and the catalogue now contains 360,000 titles in more than 76 languages. See the list of 25 participating libraries in Annex II, as well as the top users (Annex III) and the main languages of the Service (Annex IV). As of August 31, 2017, more than 9,500 titles had been downloaded by participating libraries with an estimated savings in production costs of USD 19 million (assuming production costs in developed countries of approximately USD 2,000 for a book read by a human narrator). Accessible books from this service were loaned *via* participating libraries to their patrons 165,000 times as of August 31, 2017.

8. Significant work, including major software upgrades, was undertaken this year to improve the technical platform of the Service, thereby improving security, efficiency and performance, as well as reducing costs.

9. Additionally, the ABC Global Book Service was modified to take into account the entry into force of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty on September 30, 2016. Prior to the entry into force of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty and provisions consistent with the Treaty being implemented in a country, the cross-border exchange of accessible books could only occur with the authorization of the copyright owner. Where participating libraries in the Service are located in countries that have implemented the Marrakesh VIP Treaty, exchanges can now occur without such authorization being obtained.

10. As countries implement the provisions of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty in their national laws, the Service will guide participating libraries through the process of exchanging accessible books. For example, the Marrakesh VIP Treaty allows for the implementation of what is known as "commercial availability" provisions in national copyright legislation. In such a case, the national law of a country may stipulate that before an accessible book is exchanged across borders, the requesting organization needs to confirm that the book is not commercially

available on its market in the requested format. The ABC Global Book Service will advise participating libraries of such possible requirements under national copyright legislation and make the necessary adjustments to the Service platform to notify users to take this requirement into account.

11. As mentioned above, for those participating libraries that are located in countries that have not yet implemented the provisions of the Treaty, the Service will continue to obtain the authorization from the copyright owner(s) so that an accessible book can be exchanged across borders. In this manner, the ABC Global Book Service offers one centralized system for the cross-border exchange of accessible books that addresses the different legal requirements implemented in each participating jurisdiction.

### Capacity Building

12. ABC provides training and technical assistance in the latest accessible book production techniques to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) serving people with print disabilities, departments of education and commercial publishers in developing and least developed countries (LDCs). Training and technical assistance is 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 also provided, so that the techniques taught during the training can be utilized immediately by the trainees and are not forgotten.

13. ABC partners in developing countries and LDCs are encouraged to promote collaboration among all relevant stakeholders, including government agencies and commercial publishers, to ensure enhanced awareness about the production of materials in accessible formats. In this manner, ABC seeks to ensure the sustainability of accessible book production in the medium and long term in the country where a project has been implemented.

14. ABC capacity building activities have continued in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka and new projects have been established in Argentina, Botswana and Uruguay. The activities in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are funded by the Government of Australia. One project in India is funded by the Republic of Korea and a second project in India is funded by the Skoll Foundation and the United Nations Foundation.

15. Nearly 3,950 accessible educational titles will have been produced in national languages from January 2014 to December 2017 through ABC's capacity building projects in these seven countries. During this same period, 26 training sessions in accessible book production techniques will have been provided to NGOs, departments of education and commercial publishers.

### Accessible Publishing

16. ABC promotes the production of "born accessible" works by publishers, that is, books that are usable from the start by both sighted persons and the print disabled. In addition to its support of the *ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing*, which contains eight high-level aspirational principles relating to digital publications in accessible formats that publishers are invited to sign, this year ABC again organized the *ABC International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing*. The winners of the 2017 ABC International Excellence Award were SAGE Publishing of the United Kingdom and Tiflonexos, an NGO in Argentina serving people who are print-disabled. The awards were presented at the London Book Fair in April 2017 to recognize these organizations for having provided outstanding leadership and achievements in the advancement of the accessibility of digital publications to persons with print disabilities.

## C. FUTURE ACTIVITIES IN THE 2018/2019 BIENNIUM

### ABC Global Book Service

17. ABC is continuing to expand its Service and is approaching prospective member libraries that have significant collections of accessible format works in widely-read languages. For example, ABC hopes to increase its Spanish language titles, in light of the fact that Latin America is a leader in terms of the number of countries joining the Marrakesh VIP Treaty. Of the 19 countries in Latin America, 12 are parties to the Treaty.

18. Additionally, participating libraries have stated that it would be useful to obtain their patrons' views of which books in the ABC catalogue the libraries should request. ABC plans to release a pilot of a user-friendly consumer application in 2018 so that a print-disabled library patron will be able to search for titles through his or her ABC participating library. The consumer application, once released, will only be available to those print-disabled end-users who are members of an ABC participating library.

### Capacity Building

19. ABC plans to continue to provide training and technical assistance in the latest accessible book production techniques, as well as to increase the number of capacity building projects in Africa, Latin America, and in Asia. Attaining this objective will be dependent upon continued funding by donors and identifying local partners who are interested in implementing the ABC mandate. The long-term goal is to create centres of accessible publishing, which could be consulted when needed by regional NGOs, government agencies, libraries, authors and commercial publishers.

### Accessible Publishing

20. ABC will continue to promote the goal of "born accessible" publishing through its ABC International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing. It also hopes to provide training and issue best practice guidelines for publishers in how to produce books in accessible formats. Towards this end, WIPO has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the services of experts who can provide training and technical assistance in accessible book production in a number of languages. In this way, WIPO hopes to create a roster of experts, which the ABC Secretariat will be able to rely on for training and technical assistance around the world.

### Fundraising

21. WIPO has issued an RFP for the services of an expert fundraising company to assist with researching and submitting grant proposals for ABC projects to private sector sources such as charitable foundations and corporate giving programs; it hopes to obtain funding from sources other than the WIPO Regular Budget. As reported to Member States in the 2015 and 2016 Reports on the Accessible Books Consortium, WIPO will continue to proceed cautiously, gradually, and transparently in the development and implementation of a comprehensive fundraising strategy, which may also consist in the possible establishment of, and partnership with, non-profit entities (which would be subject to the laws and regulations of the countries in which such entities may be created), in order to attract donations that would benefit from the status of tax deductions.

[Annexes follow]

**ABC Overall Results:  
2014 – 2017**

<b>ABC Global Book Service Indicators</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2017 (cumulative)</b>
Number of authorized entities (AEs) that have signed an agreement with WIPO to participate in the ABC Global Book Service (“participating AEs”)	11	25  Six participating AEs are in jurisdictions that have ratified the Marrakesh VIP Treaty (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, Republic of Korea)
Number of titles in the ABC Global Book Service catalogue	224,500	360,000
Number of downloaded titles by participating AEs  Savings obtained through downloaded titles (estimated USD 2,000 per downloaded title for books that are narrated by people)	200  USD 400,000	9500  USD 19 million
Number of titles where authorizations were obtained from the copyright owner for the cross-border exchange of accessible format copies of published works	1,270	21,700
Number of loans of ABC titles to print disabled individuals through participating AEs	16,000 (December 2014)	165,000
<b>Capacity Building Indicators</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2017 (cumulative)</b>
Number of educational titles that will have been produced in national languages in accessible formats through training and technical assistance provided by ABC	N/A	3948 educational titles by December 2017  Projects established in Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Uruguay.
Number of trainings provided in the latest accessible publishing techniques to NGOs, government agencies and commercial publishers	N/A	26 training sessions (2 - 4 days each) by December 2017

<b>Inclusive Publishing Indicators</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2017 (cumulative)</b>
Number of nominations received for the ABC International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing	N/A	31 nominations in total  The ABC Award was presented at the London Book Fair in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
Number of guidelines published on accessible publishing	1	4  In 2017, ABC released the “Manual on the Use of Digital Materials for Braille Production” and in 2016 it issued the “ABC Starter Kit for Accessible Publishing in Developing and Least Developed Countries” as well as the “ABC Accessibility Guidelines for Self-Publishing Authors”.

[Annex II follows]

## Participating Libraries in the ABC Global Book Service

1. Australia: Visability
2. Australia: Vision Australia
3. Bangladesh: Young Power in Social Action
4. Brazil: Dorina Nowill Foundation for the Blind
5. Canada: Canadian National Institute for the Blind
6. Denmark: Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities (Nota)
7. France: *Association Valentin Haüy*
8. Finland: Celia
9. Iceland: Icelandic Talking Book Library
10. Ireland: National Council for the Blind of Ireland
11. Israel: The Central Library for Blind and Reading Impaired People
12. Nepal: Action on Disability Rights and Development
13. Netherlands: Dedicon
14. New Zealand: Blind Foundation
15. Norway: Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille
16. Poland: Central Library of Labour and Social Security
17. Portugal: National Library of Portugal
18. South Africa: South African Library for the Blind
19. Republic of Korea: National Library for the Disabled
20. Sweden: Swedish Agency for Accessible Media
21. Switzerland: *Association pour le Bien des Aveugles et malvoyants*
22. Switzerland: Swiss Library for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Print Disabled
23. Switzerland: *Bibliothèque Sonore Romande*
24. United Kingdom: Seeing Ear
25. United States of America: National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

[Annex III follows]

### Top Users of ABC Global Book Service

	ABC Participating Library	Number of Downloads (cumulative)
1	<i>Association Valentin Haüy (France)</i>	2422
2	Canadian National Institute for the Blind	1717
3	Blind Foundation (New Zealand)	1820
4	Vision Australia	917
5	South African Library for the Blind	691
6	<i>Association pour le Bien des Aveugles et malvoyants (Switzerland)</i>	432
7	National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (United States of America)	295
8	Swedish Agency for Accessible Media	262
9	Young Power in Social Action (Bangladesh)	136
10	Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities (Nota)	114
11	National Council for the Blind of Ireland	193
12	Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille	111

[Annex IV follows]



**Main Languages in ABC Global Book Service Catalogue**

	<b>Language</b>	<b>Catalogue Entries</b>
1	English	119,691
2	Swedish	81,225
3	Dutch	42,594
4	Danish	33,591
5	Norwegian	28,883
6	French	24,891
7	Polish	11,145
8	German	8,941
9	Portuguese	2,059
10	Spanish	1,229

[End of Annex IV and of document]