

# ACCESSIBLE CAMPING GUIDELINES

VADEMECUM

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Realized by  
*Croatian Camping Association*

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Published March 2020

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We at the Croatian Camping Association believe that **everyone who wants to travel should have the opportunity to do so**, as well as to be able to explore even the farthest corner of every country.

**Accessible tourism** certainly makes it easier to reach this goal. It gives those with accessibility needs, as well as their traveling companions, more options to choose from. It strives for equality and helps turning the world into a more open place.

Nowadays, as people travel, they may begin to notice that more and more campsites, hotels and destinations are promoting themselves as accessible and disability-friendly. It seems that this, once foreign concept, is getting better accepted and **I'm excited to see the growing number of campsites, hotels, destinations and even tour operators that incorporate accessible tourism into their offerings.**

Keeping these ideas in mind, together with the support of the International organization **Village for all – V4A®**, specialized in helping, educating and promoting all kinds of accessible tourism, we prepared this guidelines with the aim of helping and introducing accessible tourism to all campsites, especially the Croatian ones.

The publication and its suggestions have been conceived in order **to allow the best hospitality** for customers with disabilities and, more generally, for all those who have specific needs regarding their health conditions.

We believe that, beyond the existing rules and regulations, making Croatian campsites accessible represents an **enrichment of the tourist offer**, considering that the profile of millions of guests who attend campsites and tourist villages every year has changed a lot in the last few decades and it is destined to change even more in the future.

From an “all nature” and youthful type of holiday, camping has become a choice where comfort, services and adequate facilities are combined with the natural environment and local tourism contexts. **Accessibility and usability became a plus that requires the campsites to meet customer needs.** At the same time, the modifications will help the preservation of the values that outdoor tourism companies have already established, in Croatia, as well as in Europe.

**Welcoming all guests** in an adequate way is the first step to be taken to guarantee a quality service - in addition to the usual qualities of sensitivity and availability, specific knowledge, solutions, and techniques are required, all of which are indicated in this manual.

While reading it, don't ever forget to ask yourself: **“How is my organization include accessible tourism into its offer?”.**

**Adriano Palman**

Managing Director  
*Croatian Camping Association*

# LEARN TO UNDERSTAND

The struggle to find reliable solutions for specific requirements not only significantly narrows the range of available tourist information for disabled travellers, but also discourages them from booking. There are essentially three problems: **accessibility, information, and cost.**

## Accessibility

It is not only people in wheelchairs who should be taken into consideration, but generally **people with reduced mobility**, people with **sensory limitations** (sight and hearing), **elderly people**, people with **temporary disabilities**, etc.

The ability to access and use facilities is fundamental in order to allow these potential guests to consider tourist options. It goes without saying that attention must be paid to **all aspects of the holiday and to all promoted services.** For example, it makes no sense to offer a beach holiday in an accessible village if the beach or access to the sea are not accessible.

## Information

The most frequent paradox is that accessible facilities are often underused by people with disabilities. The information problem is connected to two issues: **the difficulty of finding useful information and its reliability.** The most challenging part of organizing a holiday is looking for accessible accommodation: when booking with travel agencies, it is difficult to find 'complete' accessible holidays, or even simply lists of accessible accommodation.

In recent years, an increasing number of directories and hotel chain catalogues feature the accessibility symbol: the problem is whether this information is **reliable.**

All tourists experience this issue. However, in the case of disabled people it is **a fundamental concern** that not only relates **to comfort**, but also to **personal safety** and the opportunity to make full use of the holiday time.

The combination of these **negative factors ‘forces’** the disabled person or group to **organize themselves independently**, which results in additional challenges and often higher costs. This deters disabled travelers and generally **limits their options**.

## Costs

**The financial means of people with disabilities are no different from those of other categories of tourists.** However, it should be remembered that they often face certain additional costs relating to personalised transport, personal assistance, etc. Along with these ‘objective’ problems, there is a cultural problem that concerns both disabled and non-disabled people. A minority of disabled people worldwide live in a situation that we could describe as inclusive and independent, which creates **two problems in the field of tourism:** from **the perspective of disabled people**, even people who are interested and willing to enjoy tourism opportunities often do not have the experience and tools to face and overcome the difficulties involved in organizing a holiday; from **the operators’ point of view**, the fact that they are not accustomed to having relationships with disabled people can lead to problems. This series of difficulties leads to the current situation in which **most tourist bookings are made with associations**, i.e. private social and voluntary organisations, public services and organisations involved in social tourism, or disabled people simply decide not to go on holiday. **There is a clear imbalance between supply and demand!**

# TOOLS

**The accessible tourism market comprises 127 million people in Europe and can account for up to 20% of a tourism company's turnover.** Open-air facilities require a concrete commitment to achieving quality, structural and service levels that adequately meet the needs of people with disabilities. It is very often evident that employers and **employees find it difficult to understand the requirements of this type of clientele,** which indisputably has **a high ethical, social and above all economic value.**

## Moving from disabilities to needs

**Cultural innovation** is represented by a cultural transition that we can summarize as: **'Moving from disabilities to needs'.** **Needs,** as such, **are not linked to disabilities** and related stereotypes.

**The needs** of an obese person, a pregnant woman or an elderly person with walking difficulties **are similar** and we certainly cannot say that families with small children, who use a pushchair and have the same needs as people in wheelchairs, have a disability! We must also remember people with dietary requirements or food intolerances, communication difficulties, sensory difficulties, etc.

## Moving from constraints to opportunities

Above all, these customers require **reliable information** on the state of the facilities and on the campsite's ability to provide services, including customized services.

**It is therefore insufficient to make a general declaration of willingness** to welcome this type of customer or, **even worse, to claim that facilities are accessible simply because they have a hospital-style toilet.**

It is also not helpful to rely on the classification system generally used by public administrations which, when compiling directories, include the logo of the little man in a wheelchair intended to 'sum up' (supposing it were possible) the accessibility of the facilities and people's every need.

In order to move from regulatory constraints to market opportunities, **it is necessary to train staff, plan measures to improve and maintain facilities' accessibility and listen to customers to correctly meet their needs.**

### Transparent accessibility

This means **implementing measures and/or services that do not have a 'hospital-style' approach, but satisfy needs expressed by customers, paying attention to the quality of the service on offer, not only in terms of performance but also aesthetically.** For example, a family with small children in a pushchair has needs that are very similar to those of a person using a wheelchair to get around. Walkways on the beach are an ideal solution for mothers who have to use a pushchair, always loaded with everything needed to ensure their child's well-being, and they are also a **convenient solution** for a person in a wheelchair. By constructing walkways, you can offer a good service to many people **without creating something specific**, such as a beach only dedicated to disabled people. Nobody likes ghettos and they are of no use to anyone. **Accessibility can only be achieved through planning and constant attention to all environments**, remembering for example to build ramps, not steps, to keep the routes well-maintained... and much more. **Transparent accessibility must become a working method that is applied on a daily basis.**

### Training

**All staff must have appropriate skills to communicate with these guests. Cases of discrimination** very often occur due to a lack of knowledge about how to behave properly. For example: staff often only speak to companions and exclude people with disabilities from the conversation or prevent a blind person with a guide dog from entering a restaurant. Besides being discriminatory, **this behaviour can also lead to complaints** and, last but not least, **negative reviews.**

### Positive communication

**A warm welcome is a sign of kindness and courtesy towards customers**, which will put them at ease and make them feel at home. It is essential to always treat customers as you would wish to be treated. Most of these guidelines are appropriate for any situation, regardless of whether you are dealing with people with disabilities or not. **Avoid expressions** such as handicapped, invalid, wheelchair-bound, electric-chair user, differently abled and incapacitated.

Remember that:

- *A customer with a disability is a human being who is just the same as everyone else.*
- *A person is a person regardless of what they can do.*
- *A person with a disability is not a sick person.*
- *Disabilities cannot be 'standardized'.*
- *Some forms of disability are immediately noticeable, while others may be less obvious.*
- *Don't worry about using commonly used expressions such as 'see you later' if a blind person is present or 'let's go for a stroll' with a person in a wheelchair.*

**It is not only verbal language**, but also facial expressions, body posture (meta-communication) and tone of voice that communicate your mood. Helpfulness and courtesy are always appreciated.

- *Behave naturally, without giving exaggerated attention.*
- *Offer a professional and high-quality service.*
- *Speak directly to the person and not to family members or companions.*
- *Don't constantly offer your help.*

**Adapt to the time needed** to: Communicate - Move around - Understand information.



# RECEPTION

## ENTRANCE DOOR

The **clear width of the door** must be no less than 85 cm and should ideally be 1 metre wide. **Transparent glass doors** must have two coloured bands at different heights: 70 and 170 cm. If access is via **ramps or stairs**, provide a level stopping area of no less than 120 cm in front of the entrance door on both sides. **An automatic sliding door** is recommended.

## INFORMATION PANELS

Ensure that **general information and notices** are placed at a maximum height of 140 cm, in an area perfectly lit with natural light.

## RECEPTION DESK

**Part of the desk** should be lowered to 90 cm, with the lower part free at a depth of 60 cm to facilitate communication and support for the completion of paperwork. Always talk to the customer and not to their companions. Place **information material dispensers** at heights between 70 and 130 cm. **Always allow access to guide dogs for the blind.**

## PARKING

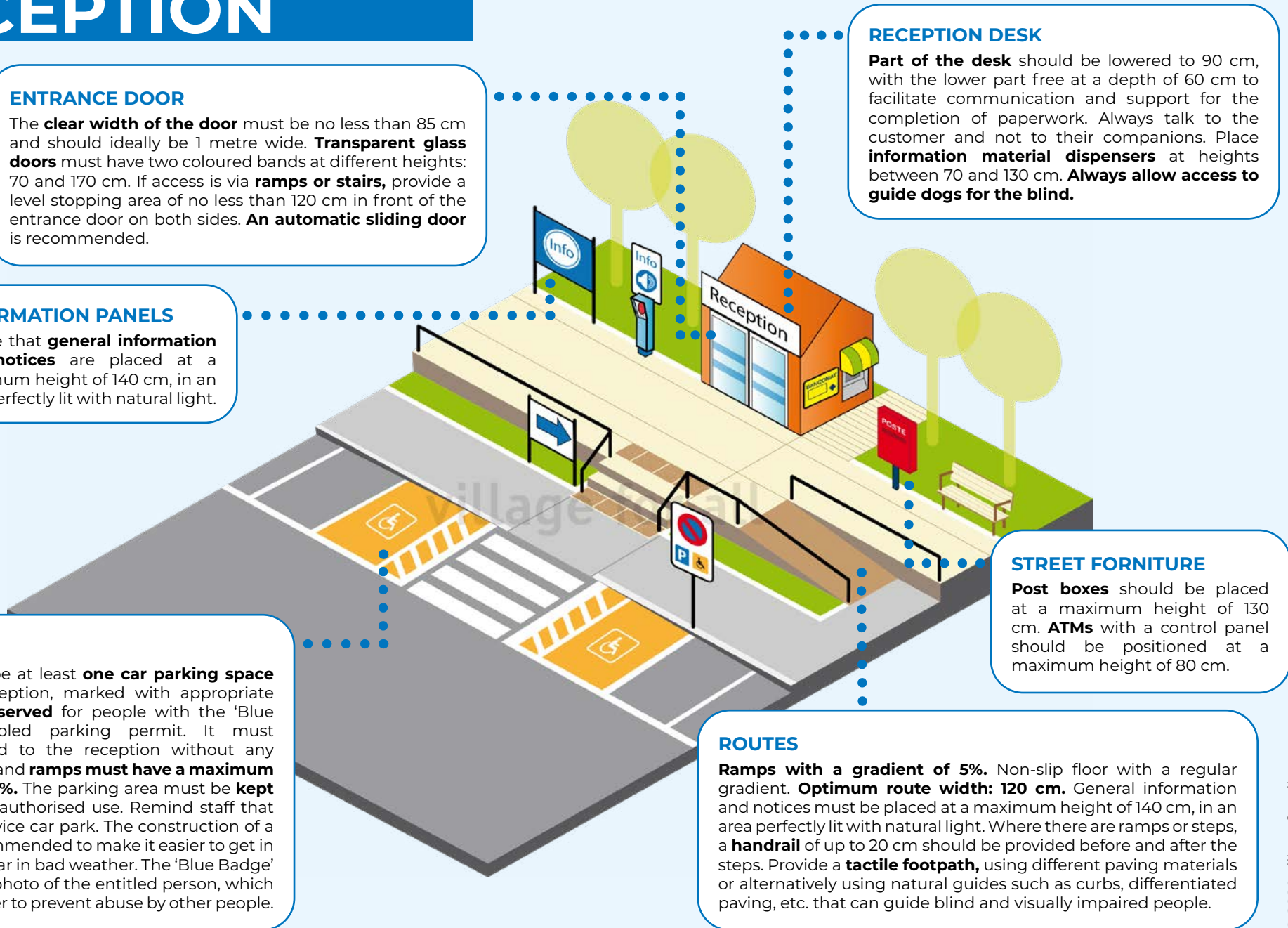
There must be at least **one car parking space** near the reception, marked with appropriate signs and **reserved** for people with the 'Blue Badge' disabled parking permit. It must be connected to the reception without any obstructions and **ramps must have a maximum gradient of 5%**. The parking area must be **kept free** from unauthorised use. Remind staff that it is not a service car park. The construction of a cover is recommended to make it easier to get in and out of a car in bad weather. The 'Blue Badge' features the photo of the entitled person, which makes it easier to prevent abuse by other people.

## ROUTES

**Ramps with a gradient of 5%**. Non-slip floor with a regular gradient. **Optimum route width: 120 cm**. General information and notices must be placed at a maximum height of 140 cm, in an area perfectly lit with natural light. Where there are ramps or steps, a **handrail** of up to 20 cm should be provided before and after the steps. Provide a **tactile footpath**, using different paving materials or alternatively using natural guides such as curbs, differentiated paving, etc. that can guide blind and visually impaired people.

## STREET FURNITURE

**Post boxes** should be placed at a maximum height of 130 cm. **ATMs** with a control panel should be positioned at a maximum height of 80 cm.



# RESTAURANT

## SELF SERVICE

**Self-service distribution shelves** and distribution display units with max height of 70/80 cm. Staff should be prepared to provide information on food contained in the dishes on offer and to provide plates, additional forks, straws, etc. Provide at least one **menu written in large font and one in Braille**, specifying the ingredients in the dishes.

## TOILET

There should be at least one **'accessible' toilet**. The **entrance door** should be at least 80 cm wide, ideally 85 cm. The **washbasin** and drain pipe should be wall-mounted, without a pedestal, featuring automatic or short-lever taps. The **front clearance** (free space) should be at least 80 cm. The toilet should ideally be wall-mounted with the centre at 45 cm and a **wall handle** at 70 cm. Preferably, **normal bathroom fixtures should be used and where possible, a toilet lift should be added**. The toilet must have a **front clearance and at least one side clearance** (free space) of at least 80 cm. It is recommended to install a **hand shower** with a lever mixer that can be reached from the toilet. The **emergency bell** must be clearly visible and easy to reach even when lying on the ground.

## TROLLEYS

**Trolleys should be provided to support trays** that can be used by families with small children and people with reduced mobility.

## TABLES

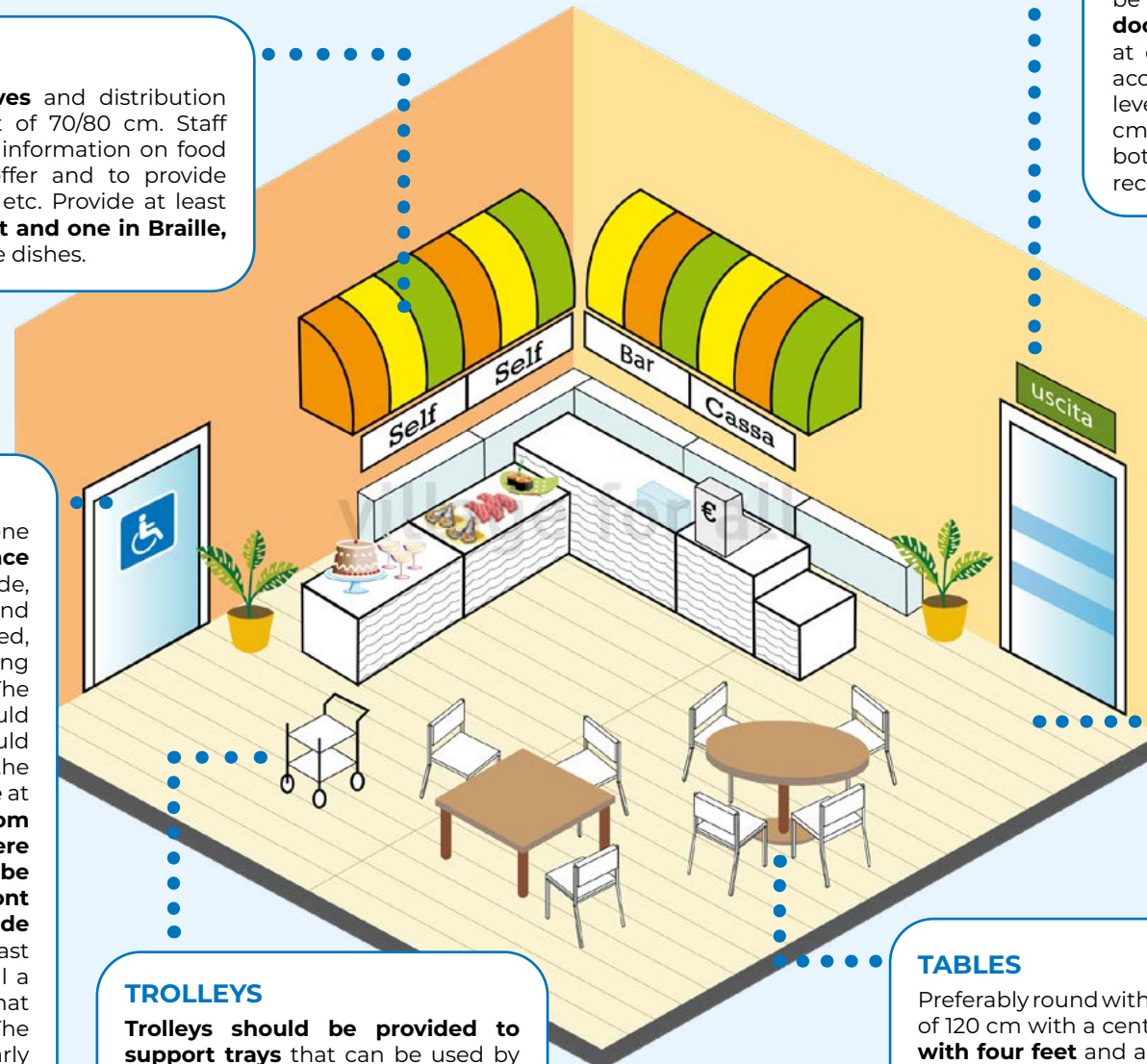
Preferably round with a minimum diameter of 120 cm with a central support or **square with four feet** and a minimum size of 100 x 100 cm. In both cases, tables should have **free space underneath** of about 70/75 cm..

## ENTRANCE DOOR

The **clear width of the door** must be no less than 85 cm and should ideally be 1 metre wide. **Transparent glass doors** must have two coloured bands at different heights: 70 and 170 cm. If access is via **ramps or stairs**, provide a level stopping area of no less than 120 cm in front of the entrance door on both sides. **An automatic sliding door** is recommended.

## INSIDE ROUTES

**Ramps with a gradient of 5%**. **Non-slip floor** with a regular gradient. 120 cm, which can be reduced to 90 cm for short sections.



# MARKET

## SELF SERVICE

**Self-service distribution shelves** and distribution display units with max height of 70/80 cm.

## SIGNAGE

Create **guidance signs** using large fonts, preferably such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana and Calibri, taking care to write black on white, or at least ensuring that there is a **strong contrast between the writing and the background**. **General information and notices** must be placed at a maximum height of 140 cm, in an area perfectly lit with natural light.

## ROUTES

**Ramps with a gradient of 5%. Non-slip floor** with a regular gradient. Leave **passageways** free to facilitate mobility. Their width should be no less than 120 cm, which can be reduced to 90 cm for short sections. At the end of corridors, there should be spaces of no less than 120 cm

## ENTRANCE DOOR

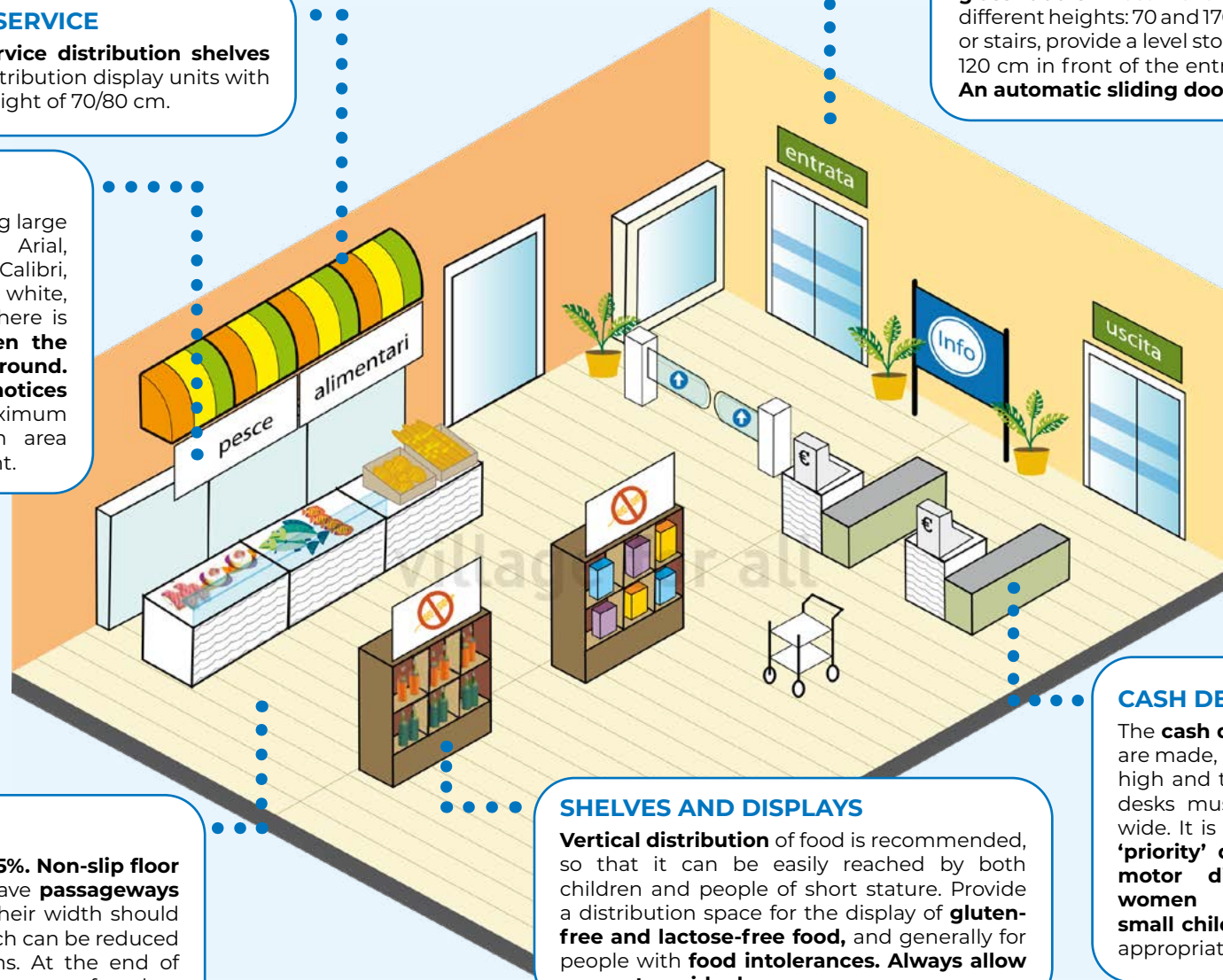
The **clear width of the door** must be no less than 85 cm and should ideally be 1 metre wide. **Transparent glass doors** must have two coloured bands at different heights: 70 and 170 cm. If access is via ramps or stairs, provide a level stopping area of no less than 120 cm in front of the entrance door on both sides. **An automatic sliding door** is recommended.

## SHELVES AND DISPLAYS

**Vertical distribution** of food is recommended, so that it can be easily reached by both children and people of short stature. Provide a distribution space for the display of **gluten-free and lactose-free food**, and generally for people with **food intolerances**. **Always allow access to guide dogs**.

## CASH DESK

The **cash desk**, where payments are made, must be at least 90 cm high and the gap between cash desks must be at least 90 cm wide. It is advisable to have **one 'priority' desk** for **people with motor disabilities, pregnant women and families with small children**, accompanied by appropriate signs.





# POOL

## TOILET

There should be at least one **'accessible' toilet**, including nearby, with direction signs.

## POOL

The **pool edge** must be perfectly recognisable by using colour contrasts.

## FOOT WASH BASIN

The **opening** of the foot wash basin must be at least 100 cm wide. The **access ramps** must not exceed a gradient of 5%. The **central part** of the flat tub must be at least 100 cm long.

## SHOWER

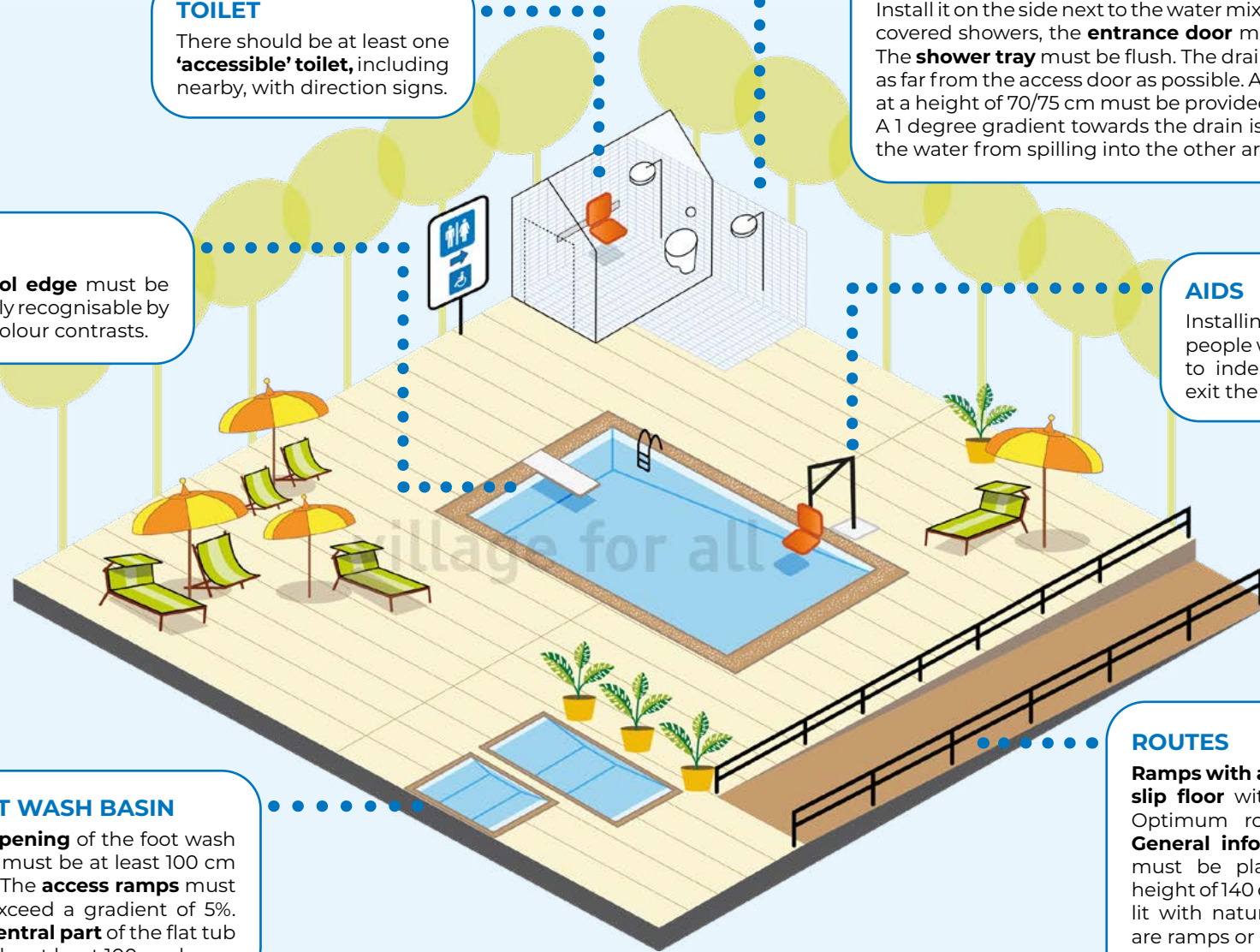
The shower's **water control system** must be at a maximum height of 100 cm, or ideally 80 cm. Provide a **foldable seat** with armrests, ideally removable, with the seat (45 cm deep) 45 cm from the ground and a load capacity of no less than 100 kg, ideally 150 kg. Install it on the side next to the water mixer. In the case of heated and covered showers, the **entrance door** must be at least 85 cm wide. The **shower tray** must be flush. The drain cover must be positioned as far from the access door as possible. At least one **handle** installed at a height of 70/75 cm must be provided on the side of the shower. A 1 degree gradient towards the drain is recommended to prevent the water from spilling into the other areas.

## AIDS

Installing a **lift** that allows people with motor difficulties to independently enter and exit the water.

## ROUTES

**Ramps with a gradient of 5%. Non-slip floor** with a regular gradient. Optimum route **width: 120 cm**. **General information and notices** must be placed at a maximum height of 140 cm, in an area perfectly lit with natural light. Where there are ramps or steps, a **handrail** of up to 20 cm should be provided before and after the start of the steps.



# BEACH

## SHOWER

The shower's **water control system** must be at a maximum height of 100 cm, or ideally 80 cm. Provide a **foldable seat** with armrests, ideally removable, with the seat (45 cm deep) 45 cm from the ground and a load capacity of no less than 100 kg, ideally 150 kg. Install it on the side next to the water mixer. In the case of heated and covered showers, the **entrance door** must be at least 85 cm wide. The **shower tray** must be flush. The drain cover must be positioned as far from the access door as possible. At least one **handle** installed at a height of 70/75 cm must be provided on the side of the shower. A 1 degree gradient towards the drain is recommended to prevent the water from spilling into the other areas.

## TOILET

There should be at least one **'accessible' toilet**, including nearby, with direction signs.

## SUN LOUNGERS AND DECKCHAIRS

**Sun loungers and deckchairs** at least 50 cm high or with the option to install mounts of about 10 cm. Consider the possibility of **installing** removable or fixed platforms under the beach umbrella.

## AIDS

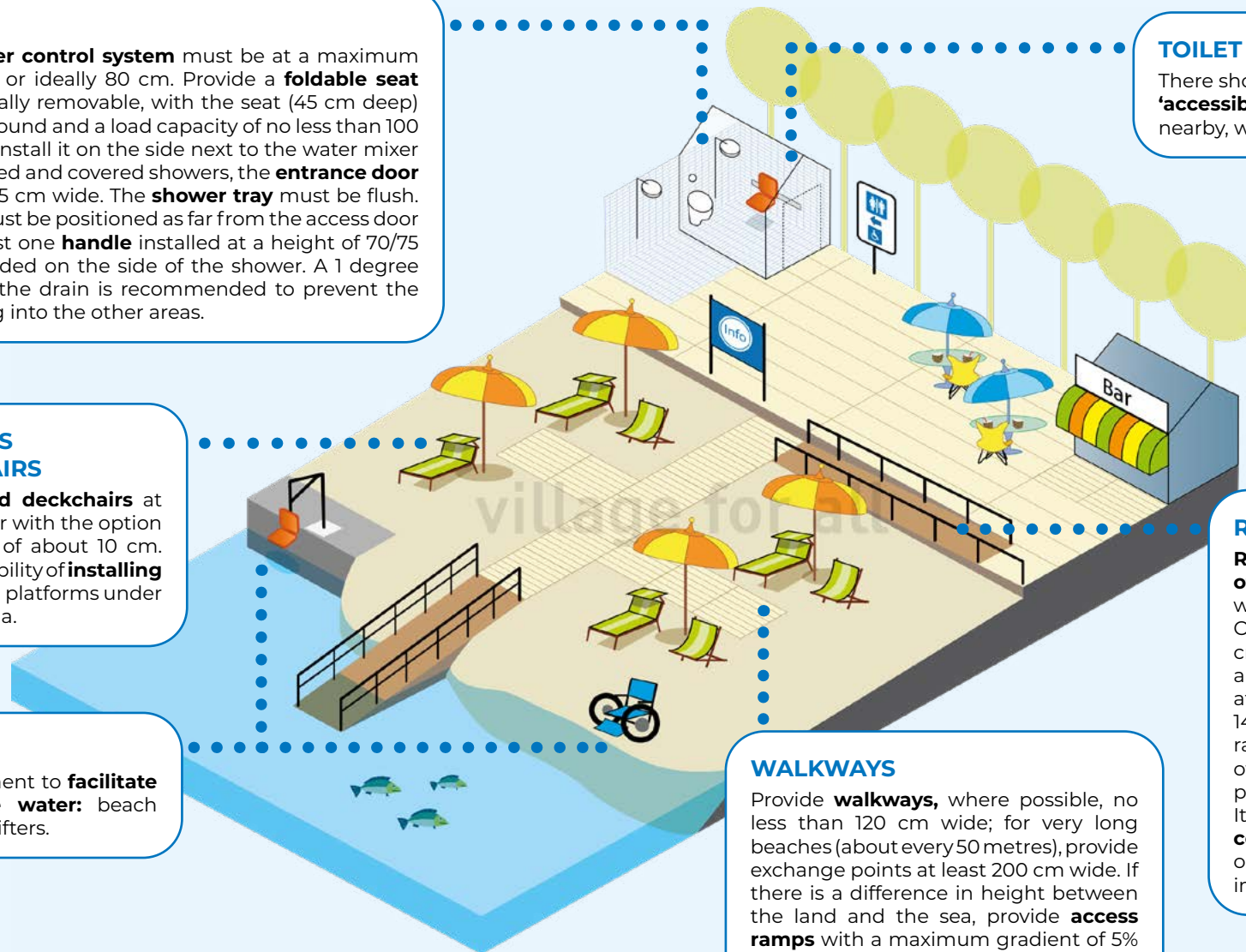
Provide equipment to **facilitate access to the water**: beach wheelchairs or lifters.

## WALKWAYS

Provide **walkways**, where possible, no less than 120 cm wide; for very long beaches (about every 50 metres), provide exchange points at least 200 cm wide. If there is a difference in height between the land and the sea, provide **access ramps** with a maximum gradient of 5% and a **handrail/rail** on both sides.

## ROUTES

**Ramps with a gradient of 5%. Non-slip floor** with a regular gradient. Optimum route width: 120 cm. General information and notices must be placed at a maximum height of 140 cm. Where there are ramps or steps, a **handrail** of up to 20 cm should be provided before and after. It is recommended to use a **contrasting colour guide** on the routes to help visually impaired people.



# ROUTES

## INFORMATION PANELS

Provide information panels on which **general information and notices** must be placed at a maximum height of 140 cm, in an area perfectly lit with natural light, ideally written in block letters with a large font, such as Arial, Verdana, Helvetica or Calibri. Ensure that the characters are **raised, in Braille and where possible also in AAC** (Augmentative and Alternative Communication); also provide **audio information** stations.

## GUIDANCE SIGNS

Provide clearly visible guidance signs (between 130 and 160 cm) for both the **main and alternative routes** to reach services, ideally written in block letters with a large font, such as Arial, Verdana, Helvetica or Calibri, taking care to write black on white and never white on black; use colours and pictures to **help children and elderly people** (text/colour/image), where possible also in AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication). Provide **tactile maps** for guiding blind people.

## AIDS

Installing a **lift** that allows people with motor difficulties to independently enter and exit the water.

## WALKWAYS

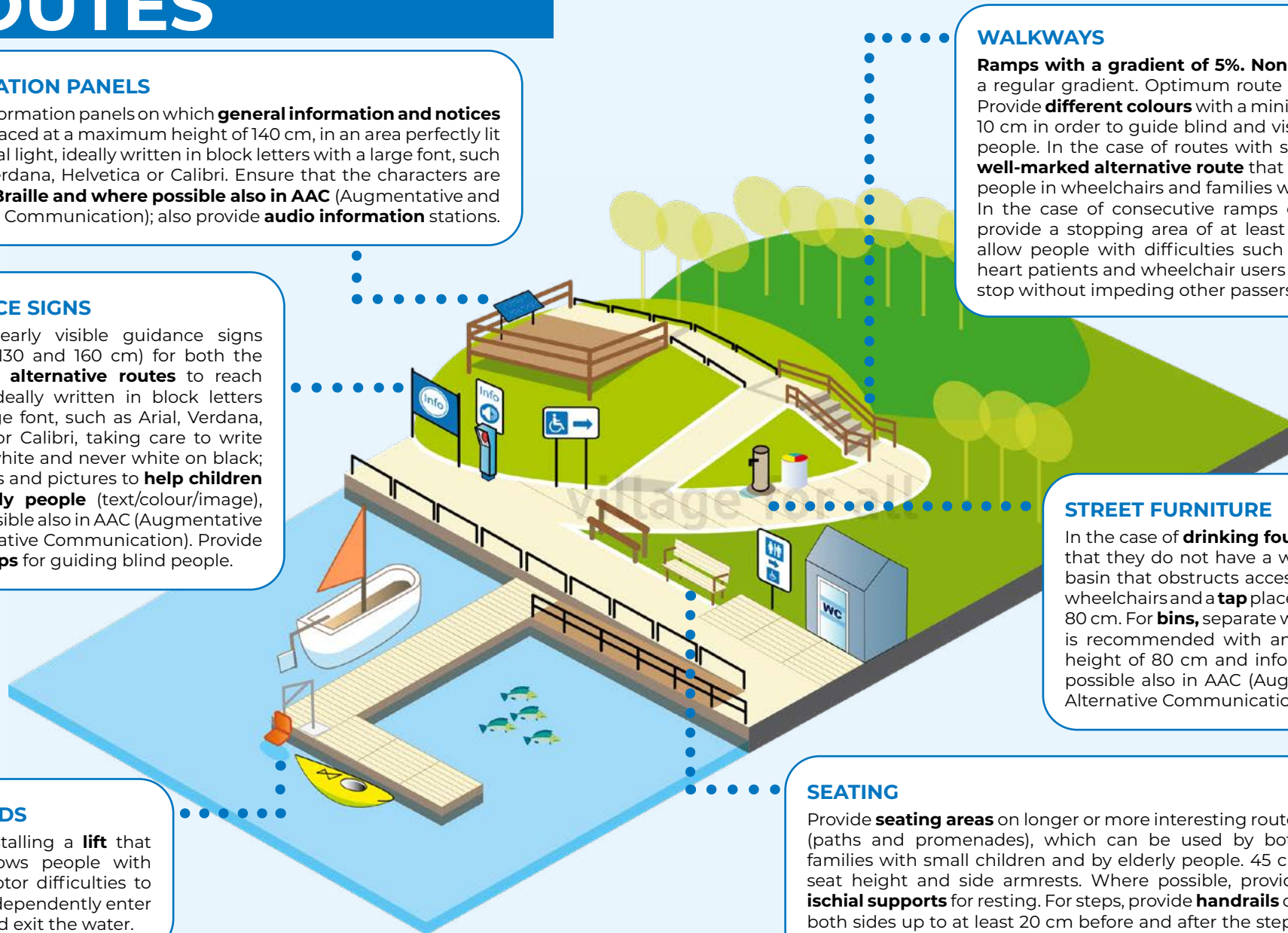
**Ramps with a gradient of 5%. Non-slip floor** with a regular gradient. Optimum route **width: 120 cm**. Provide **different colours** with a minimum height of 10 cm in order to guide blind and visually impaired people. In the case of routes with steps, provide a **well-marked alternative route** that can be used by people in wheelchairs and families with pushchairs. In the case of consecutive ramps or step ramps, provide a stopping area of at least 150x150 cm to allow people with difficulties such as the elderly, heart patients and wheelchair users to comfortably stop without impeding other passers-by.

## STREET FURNITURE

In the case of **drinking fountains**, ensure that they do not have a water collection basin that obstructs access for people in wheelchairs and a **tap** placed at a height of 80 cm. For **bins**, separate waste collection is recommended with an opening at a height of 80 cm and information where possible also in AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication).

## SEATING

Provide **seating areas** on longer or more interesting routes (paths and promenades), which can be used by both families with small children and by elderly people. 45 cm seat height and side armrests. Where possible, provide **ischial supports** for resting. For steps, provide **handrails** on both sides up to at least 20 cm before and after the steps. For children's safety it is advisable that the handrails are at least 70 cm high, with horizontal rails down to the ground.





# CONCLUSIONS

It is therefore clear that **no special projects are necessary**, but it is essential to **know 'everyone's' needs** in order to respond concretely, without special solutions, to these needs. The benchmark for technicians should be **universal design**, which aims to **'make life easier'** for everyone by creating environments, **means of communication and products** that can be used by a larger number of people, minimizing or eliminating additional costs. This approach to design targets everyone regardless of age, gender and ability.'

**This approach is based on 7 universal principles:**

1. *Equitable use*
2. *Flexibility in use*
3. *Simple and intuitive*
4. *Perceptible information*
5. *Tolerance for error*
6. *Low physical effort*
7. *Size and space for approach and use*

As we can see, these rules are quite simple, but they require a wealth of knowledge and skills regarding the needs of all our guests.

The specifications of measurements, dimensions, widths, etc. given in these guidelines are the result of experience in the field and are not based on national or international technical regulations and specifications.

