SESSION 23 – KEY TECHNOLOGIES FOR ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Moderator: Xun Ji

Speakers: Louise Rabier, Ryan Smith, Eleonora Censorii

The session "Key Technologies for Accessible Tourism" explored how digital innovation, artificial intelligence, and data sharing are shaping a new era of inclusion in tourism and destination management. Moderated by **Xun Ji, representing Rare & Roll, China,** the panel presented cutting-edge initiatives that integrate accessibility, sustainability, and technology across continents.

Unfortunately Louse Rabier couldn't join the session.

Ryan Smith, Accessibility Ambassador and consultant from Australia, opened with a detailed case study of Queensland Country Tourism's Accessible Travel Guide, a large-scale accessibility mapping project covering 40 sites across a vast rural region. Conducted over 25 days and supported by Queensland's "Year of Accessible Tourism" initiative, the project produced over 7,000 measurements and 1,000 photographs to create an accessible PDF guide for visitors. Each site was evaluated according to 64 accessibility criteria based on Australian Standards (AS1428.1), with professional photography, scannable layouts, and clear, plain-language descriptions. Smith emphasised the dual value of the project—raising awareness among small tourism operators and providing visitors with reliable, data-driven information. He noted that "the only thing worse than no information is bad information," underscoring the importance of accuracy and maintenance over time. The guide, integrated within the region's main marketing materials, aims to redefine rural tourism through inclusive design and storytelling, while preparing Queensland for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Eleonora Censorii, cultural anthropologist and founder of WheelTribe (Italy), presented a project that combines community-based tourism, AI-powered trip planning, and social sustainability. Designed as a collaborative travel platform "made by and with persons with disabilities," WheelTribe connects local actors, disability-led businesses, and NGOs to co-create accessible travel content for lesser-known destinations. Censorii described how AI supports the platform's Trip Planner tool, which suggests adaptive activities and inclusive itineraries based on user needs. The initiative also promotes regenerative

travel, creating long-term opportunities for local communities and travellers alike. She emphasised that accessibility and sustainability must converge to foster equitable tourism ecosystems, extending employment beyond the high season and strengthening local economies. Finally, moderator Xun Ji shared insights from China's growing accessible tourism sector, highlighting collaborative projects that engage persons with disabilities as experts and consultants. He presented the Accessible Museum Guide Project, developed in partnership with major online platforms and recognised by international institutions. The initiative produces inclusive digital content for cultural venues, integrating user-generated data and AI translation tools.

The session concluded with an open discussion on data governance, standardisation, and cross-sector collaboration. Panelists agreed that inclusive technology must go beyond convenience: it must empower people, connect communities, and ensure that accessibility becomes a core dimension of tourism innovation worldwide.

Watch Session 23 on YouTube. (run time 1:06:15)