



***\*ADOPTED by IDA Board at online meeting on 27 May 2024***

## **International Disability Alliance Reasonable Accommodation Policy 2024**

### *Purpose*

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all IDA staff/employees with disabilities can be free from discrimination in the context of their right to work as per Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by providing reasonable accommodations that enable equal access and opportunities for all staff members. This workplace reasonable accommodation policy is established in accordance with the standards of the CRPD to ensure that IDA fulfils its legal obligations and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in any employment-related matters.<sup>1</sup> This policy is also designed to ensure that all members of the Board of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) with disabilities can fully participate in Board activities without discrimination, in line with CRPD standards.

### *Scope*

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, contract staff, consultants, job applicants, interns, and other individuals who are part of the workplace environment. It covers all aspects of employment, including recruitment, training, career development, promotion, and conditions of work.

This policy also applies to all members of the IDA Board, including permanent, temporary, and advisory members, regardless of their status or the duration of their terms. It encompasses all Board-related functions such as meetings (online or offline), decision-making processes, official representation activities, and other official engagements. Other IDA applicable policies (including the travel policy) are to be read in light of this policy.

### *Policy*

**1. Non-Discrimination:** IDA adheres to a strict non-discrimination policy in line with CRPD standards, ensuring all employees and job applicants are treated equally, without discrimination on the basis of disability. Reasonable accommodation measures are a component of the non-discrimination obligation, and this is defined as: Any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that enables an employee with a disability or other requirements to perform essential job functions (i.e. tasks that are fundamental to perform a specific job).

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<sup>1</sup> CRPD Article 27 1(a) refers to the duty of States parties to “prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions”

The general definition of reasonable accommodation is “Any necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights and fundamental freedoms”. The scope of this policy is informed by the relevant human right being exercised is the right to work, as per Article 27 of the CRPD.

**2. Identification and assessment of needs:** As an initial step, staff/Board members with disabilities are encouraged to identify their needs for accommodations in relation to their specific duties and work environment. This will then be subject to an objective and independent external assessment, i.e. an assessment of needs based on a medical evaluation of the underlying impairment. The costs of the assessment will be covered by IDA.

**3. Request process:**

- Employees or applicants can request accommodations by contacting the Human Resources Senior manager, and in the cases of Board members, the Board Governance and Compliance Officer.
- A process of dialogue between IDA and the employee/individual will take place, which should be cooperative and interactive and aim to strike the best possible balance between the needs of the employee and the employer.
- All requests will be treated confidentially and responded to promptly.

**4. Implementation:**

- Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis considering the individual’s specific needs and job requirements.
- Consideration will be given to the impact on the workplace, the specific needs of the employee, and the nature of their job functions.
- Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to, modifications to the work environment, flexible working hours, provision of assistive devices, and modification of work duties.
- There are two phases of independent external assessment: (i) the request phase, with an expert opinion provided on the underlying impairment and potential needs arising from that; and (ii) the approval phase, where an independent expert on reasonable accommodation from a legal perspective will consider the request and will decide on whether to approve, adjust, or reject the request in light of IDA’s policy, relevant local law, the CRPD standards, considering also the question of undue burden.
- Accommodations will be periodically reviewed to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the employee and the organization.
- Adjustments to the accommodations may be made in response to changes in the employee’s needs or job functions.
- Individuals may ask for reconsideration of their request if they are not satisfied with the response.
- Procurement for goods/services should be informed by the individual’s choice, but where possible purchases and contracts should be between IDA and the company/service-provider.
- In cases where the individual is directly purchasing/contracting the approved goods/service, it must be in line with done with advance approval with cost-estimates and reimbursement after validated proof-of-payment with invoices etc.
- Direct cash payments as a ‘reasonable accommodation allowance’ are not permitted under this policy.

**5. Undue burden:** If an accommodation is considered to impose an “undue burden” on the operation and finances of IDA, this will be communicated clearly with detailed explanations. Alternative

accommodations will be explored to meet the individual's needs without imposing an undue burden on the organisation.

**6. State support:** In the first instance, where employees with a recognised disability are entitled to public support for reasonable accommodation in the workplace, IDA will support each employee to ensure they receive any public support they are entitled to, and IDA will also apply for any public support offered to employers for reasonable accommodation schemes. When there is a delay in receiving public funds to cover reasonable accommodation costs, IDA would cover the necessary adaptations using its own resources until the time any public subsidies can be transferred to the Secretariat.

**7. Confidentiality:** All information regarding the employee's disability and accommodation needs will be kept confidential and shared only with those involved in the accommodation process.

**8. Training and awareness:** Regular training will be provided to all employees, including management and HR personnel, on the importance of reasonable accommodations and how to create an inclusive workplace.

**9. Monitoring and Feedback:** The effectiveness of provided accommodations will be monitored, and feedback will be sought from the employees receiving accommodations to ensure their needs are being met effectively.

**10. Complaints:** Employees can report any issues or grievances related to reasonable accommodations through established internal channels. Board members can do so at Board meetings. All complaints will be investigated promptly and impartially.

#### **11. Responsibilities**

- HR Manager: Manage the accommodation process, maintain records, and ensure compliance with relevant laws and policies.
- Managers: Work with HR to implement accommodations and support affected employees.
- Employees and Board members: Communicate their needs and cooperate with the accommodation process.

**12. Policy review and updates:** This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed to ensure compliance with CRPD standards and to address the evolving needs of our employees, as well as organizational needs and resourcing.

#### *Examples of reasonable accommodation measures*

- Physical changes to the office, including e.g., modifying office equipment, accessible office spaces and desks.
- Assistive technology e.g., screen reader and voice recognition software, magnifying text on a computer screen.
- Communication e.g., ensuring information accessible to the individual, sign-interpreter provided in meetings.
- Policy changes e.g., permitting work from home, allowing rescheduling of work, allowing flexible time/breaks.
- Providing support personnel, offering additional training or orientation, mentors or job coaches for individuals who may benefit from additional support.
- Accessible transport costs to and from work (in the absence of accessible public transportation systems).

- Personal assistance or support person during work hours.