

## ATAP, a discussion Platform on Accessible Tourism in the Asia Pacific Region started on Facebook

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Increasing awareness about the rights of persons with disability and realization of the huge potential of disabled travelers as customers, helped to make accessible tourism relatively common in the 'Western World'. It is now also emerging in Asian countries.

While Asian people are known for their hospitality, a lot of countries have vast challenges to overcome in the attempt to make their infrastructure and services accessible. Many organizations in the Asia Pacific Region are actively lobbying for accessible and inclusive tourism, engage in training for service suppliers such as hotel and airline staff, and offer tours for people with disabilities.

The Asia-Pacific Network for Accessible Tourism (APNAT) was established after the ICAT2014 Conference in Malaysia by experts and stakeholders in inclusive tourism.

Feeling the need to engage even more actively in discussions and exchange, and to involve a broad range of stakeholders from around the world, a discussion group was created on Facebook: ATAP (Accessible Tourism – Asia Pacific) aims at raising awareness and increasing understanding about accessible and inclusive tourism.

Everybody interested in accessible tourism in the Asia Pacific region and worldwide is invited to join, which particularly includes travel agencies interested to engage in this largely unexplored area.

Members actively exchange experiences, best practices and discuss questions around the topic of accessible tourism. They share information about their accessible tours, events, training facilities, assistive devices and equipment etc. ATAP now has 142 members from around the world.

The initiators of ATAP, Veneranda Mateo from the Philippine International Network for Accessible Tourism (PINATI, [www.travelforall.org/](http://www.travelforall.org/) - under construction, please visit FB Page Accessible Philippines for Inclusive Tourism) and Kerstin Beise from AccessibleIndonesia ([www.accessibleIndonesia.org](http://www.accessibleIndonesia.org)) hope that through this discussion group more people with disabilities and more stakeholders from the tourism sector will get to know about the opportunities to travel barrier-free in Asia Pacific countries.

The ATAP Discussion group can be found at  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1358844074145388/>