Call for collaboration

Global challenges require global action

Towards a Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organisations

Assistive technology (AT) is an essential solution for millions of people, yet there are significant global challenges to providing these technologies. Some of these challenges are unique, but many more are shared across nations and cultures.

We, six AT professional organisations (AAATE, ARATA, RESJA, RESNA, RESKO and TREATS) in 2016 signed an Agreement founding the International Alliance of Assistive Technology Organisations (IAATO), a non-for-profit informal association of legally established membership organisations from different countries or even world regions.

Our Mission is to advance the field of assistive technology (AT) and rehabilitation engineering (RE) to benefit people with disabilities and functional limitations of all ages.

As International Alliance members we are committed to working towards equitable and reliable access to assistive technology through research, policy advocacy, educating people and organisations within and outside of the field, teaching, training, and knowledge translation. To reach our mission we promote communication and information exchange, support each other's efforts, and speak with a more unified voice on international issues.

**Now it is time to make this Alliance grow further, to enlarge membership, to make the Alliance a resource for others aiming at similar goals and to increase its impact at global level.**

In order to better fulfill our Mission, the intent is to become a leading international, maybe global, AT alliance. In order to realise this intent, the Alliance will need to set goals, to define strategies and to develop activities that increase its outcomes.

It is important to do this together with other organisations and initiatives that are interested in joining the Alliance, whether they are big or small, established or in an initial stage of development.

Interested organisation are therefore invited to contact us and to express their interest, to discuss membership and their possible commitment and to participate in a process of definition of the Plan of Action.

**Next steps**

An information session for interested organisations will be held on **May 24th, 2019,** repeated twice for convenience of participants. **The meeting** starts at  **9.00 AM CEST and will be repeated at 6 PM CEST (Central European Summer Time).** To obtain the link, please send a message to hoogerwerf (at) aaate.net.

During the WHO GReAT Consultation in Geneva (22/23 August 2019) we will further present our plans, while a first General Assembly meeting of the renewed International Alliance will be held in Bologna, Italy on the 27th of August, at 10.00 AM as a side event of the 2019 AAATE Conference. New members will be officially welcomed and we will release the Plan of Action, incorporating GReAT Consultation outcomes. The General Assembly will be followed by a high level international AT meeting during which we will officially launch the Alliance.

**Membership criteria**

The International Alliance of AT Organisations has determined the following criteria for full membership, candidate membership or affiliate membership:

**Full membership**

Full membership is open to legally established membership organisations that recognize the role of Assistive technology (AT) and/or Rehabilitation engineering (RE) in improving the quality of life and well-being for people, in particular, people with disability or those who are aging.

They share the following characteristics:

1. Advancing AT/RE is their main reason of existence and their main area of interest.
2. They have an explicit non-for-profit interest in advancing AT/RE.
3. They are membership organisations themselves; members may be individuals working with AT or independent institutions/organisations with interests in AT/RE from industry, services, research, academia, consumers of technology, national or international funders, or a mixture of these.
4. They have at least 50 registered and voting members.
5. They have an elected board that administers the organisation.
6. They have a minimum of activities going on (e.g. training activities, conferences, publications, other member services)
7. They represent AT/RE interests nationally, regionally, or globally to decision-making bodies, etc.

**Candidate Membership**

Organisations that have the ambition to become full members but that do not meet all the criteria for full membership yet, can apply for Candidate Membership.

**Affiliate Membership**

Affiliate membership is open to any interested membership organisation that conducts activities surrounding AT/RE, even if these are secondary to other activities, or commercial in nature.

**Contact**

Interested organisations are invited to contact one of the IAATO board members below:

AAATE - Luc de Witte – E-mail: l.p.dewitte (at) sheffield.ac.uk

ARATA - Natasha Layton - E-mail: president (at) arata.org.au

RESJA - Takenobu Inoue - E-mail: inoue-takenobu (at) rehab.go.jp

RESKO - Inhyuk Moon - E-mail: inhyukmoon (at) gmail.com

RESNA - Mary Ellen Buning - E-mail: me\_buning (at) mac.com

TREATS - Shih-Ching Chen - E-mail: csc (at) tmu.edu.tw

Or the chairs:

Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf. E-mail: hoogerwerf (at) aaate.net

Roger O. Smith. E-mail: rogeros (at) me.com.