Letter of agreement to ABE Lab

*Between Name of the publisher represented by Name of representative*

*and ABE Lab consortium partners : EDRLab, Foundazione LIA and KB National library.*

*Place, date*

Dear ABE Lab Consortium partners

I, the undersigned XXX, director of XXX, express my full appreciation for the work that project partners do to ensure the social and cultural inclusion of people with visual disabilities.

In this context, having read the contents of the ABELab – Accessible Backlist Ebook Laboratory project (Annex A) and sharing its objectives and the articulation of project actions, XXX declares its support for the implementation of this initiative.

In particular, XXX will allow the project partners Fondazione LIA, EDRLab and KB to use EPUBs files for XXX titles published in EPUB2, EPUB3 or PDF format (Annex B) to test some remediation tools aimed at creating a digital version accessible print impaired people in EPUB3 format and to identify the recurrent issues in regards to the EU Act accessibility requirements.

To enable this activity, the EPUB2, EPUB 3 or PDF files of the chosen ebooks will be provided to project partners. The materials provided may be used solely and exclusively for the above experimentation, and the accessible digital version may be tested by print impaired people selected by project partners to verify that it actually meets their needs.

To share the files project partners created an SFTP account dedicated to the publisher and will store the files on a secure server.

Project partners agree not to store the files in charge for processing on any computer support, whether physical or virtual, beyond the time strictly provided for the execution of this assignment, and not to make or disclose copies of them. The same also undertakes to use the works, information, documentation and any other material however received by XXX exclusively for the purposes provided for in this agreement.

At the end of the testing activities project partners will provide the publishing house with a detailed report of the results of the test carried out with the different tools.

The publisher will allow the project partners to include the company name and its logo within the reports of the project. All the other information related to the activities done with the provided ebooks will be confidential and must not be used in any manner, directly and/or indirectly, wholly and/or partially from project partners except in the execution of the permitted purpose identified above, and cannot be disclosed to third parties without XXX’s prior written consent.

The contact person designated by the publishing house to follow up on this activity will be XXX, whom project partners undertake to keep him/her constantly informed of all the steps involved and what emerged during the work.

Yours faithfully

# ANNEX A - ABE Lab project description

The project ABE Lab - Accessible Backlist Ebooks Laboratory is a small-scale European Cooperation project. Coordinator of the project is **European Digital Reading Lab (EDRLab)**, partners are **Fondazione LIA** and **Koninklijke Bibliotheek** (the National Library of the Netherlands).

Project partners are experts in various fields: accessibility for Fondazione LIA, technology for EDRLab and public services for the National Library of the Netherlands. Their knowledge and experience of different markets and contexts (France, Italy and the Netherlands) will also be useful for the success of the project.

ABE Lab a 18-month research and development project, starting in January 2023 and ending in June 2024.

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

The aim of the ABE Lab project is to provide guidelines to European publishers for boosting the remediation of their ebook backlist and convert them into accessible.

## CONTEXT

By June 2025, the European Accessibility Act (EAA) will come into force and it will be a requirement for all ebooks sold in Europe to be fully accessible. The publishing industry, worldwide, agrees that EPUB is the only digital book format which allows, with a few efforts, the creation of fully accessible ebooks. Most titles are already published in EPUB, and the first accessible titles are now on sale.

There will still be an issue with most ebooks published before 2025 (a “backlist” of probably 2.5 million files in Europe). Since the objective of the directive is to end the “book famine” endured by visually impaired people, it is thus necessary to transform as many titles as possible into accessible EPUB files before 2025.

## **ACTIVITIES**

The main objective of the project will be achieved by analyzing and testing the processes and workflows by which ebooks of different types and formats can be transformed into accessible EPUB in the easiest and less expensive way. During this phase of the project, multiple tests will be developed and carried out, using existing open-source and commercial tools. The study will consider different levels of complexity of source ebooks and will evaluate the associated costs of remediation.

To do so, different activities will be undertaken:

* Collection of data on ebooks backlists at a European level;
* Identification of recurrent accessibility issues and development of workflows to remediate each typology of issue;
* Identification of available open-source and commercial tools for remediating inaccessible ebooks;
* Testing of the tools to identify shortcomings and potentials and define the most effective workflow depending on the ebook level of inaccessibility and complexity. The study will in fact consider different levels of complexity of source ebooks to evaluate the associated costs of remediation.

Activities will not be limited to collection of data and testing in a controlled environment: during the span time of the project, 5 workshops and 3 events will be organized to disseminate the progress and results of the project.

# **ANNEX B –** L**ist of provided ebooks**

| Title | ISBN | Format | Comment |
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