

Next Tourism Generation (NTG) Alliance - project summary

The Next Tourism Generation Alliance project will establish a BluePrint for Sectoral Skills Development in Tourism to provide concrete innovative and highly relevant Skills Products and Tools for improving the relationship between Industry and Education Providers in the Tourism sector and respond to skills needs. The project will develop, deliver and test the new Next Tourism Generation (NTG) Skills Products for professionals, trainers, students, university tourism departments, local authorities, companies to respond to the fast changing and increasing skills gaps in digital, green and social skills sets and Specialist Sub-Sector Tourism Skills such as Destination Management, Blue Economy Tourism, Heritage Interpretation, Gastronomy and Collaborative Economy provision with appropriate, flexible learning and training methods to enhance skills responses and training provision to ensure a more competitive, sustainable and contemporary and authentic visitor experience. The Blue print strategy will directly assist destinations, enterprises and higher education institutions to support regional strategies and plans in employment and sustainable development. The new modules and learning methods will be integrated into the current European VET system, providing a standard benchmark for sustainable tourism management, digital and technological innovation and social skills in tourism.

The project has set out a comprehensive methodology to respond to the needs of a new sectoral skills strategy that is innovative, relevant and responsive to the current and future skills scenario for the Tourism Sector. It builds on previous research such as Tourism Skills Mapping exercises (EC 2016) and Panorama Skills in Tourism (EC 2005), and work by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). These focused on encouraging accessible, relevant and mobile European Vocational training opportunities, as well as addressing skills needs and gaps. In addition, specific work has been done around the issues relating to youth perception of tourism employment (IdEATE - Improvement of Employability and Apprenticeship In Tourism Sector).

This project will incorporate emerging parts of the tourism offer that have high impact on flows and structure of tourism services for example the “collaborative economy”. This is becoming a mainstream player with more bed-places on the market than the traditional accommodation sector. However, there is no adequate knowledge about skills and training needs for this sector, nor about the formats to address them.

The multi-stakeholder consortium put together for the Next Tourism Generation Alliance covers the wide range of tourism services and represents the whole tourism value chain. It includes training structures, research, and public authorities that will benefit from new core skills sets in digital, social and green skills. The uptake of opportunities provided by digitalization will include consumer feedback into the continuous analysis and update of training content and formats and will be reflected in the development of Work Package 2, 3 and 4 with support of the WP 5 Quality Framework. The Next Tourism Generation Alliance is established to last both as a body for professional interaction and communication, to represent all of the stakeholders, and to operate as

an online service platform. This will be the first European partnership and alliance for improving a collaborative and productive relationship between education and industry. The Blue Print Sectoral Strategy and Action Plan will increase awareness with all EU member states, piloting the new programmes and approaches in the 8 partner countries at regional and national level.

This project will also provide professional progression routes, horizontally and vertically, to reflect the transient nature of the tourism workforce and enable movement and transfer between tourism careers and job positions at different levels across Europe. In order to establish a long-term Action plan and flexible industry-led VET system that articulates across countries and offers inclusive progression opportunities, it is imperative that a collaborative relationship is established between the key stakeholders; employers, government and education and essentially tourists, the customer. This must be activity based and measured by the impact on business. This approach has been adopted throughout the work packages 1-8 and will take into consideration the different expectations and goals of the partners. This requires each stage and work package of the project to examine the needs for workforce development and how future industry demands are reflected in the new Tourism Skills Toolkit and associated Skills Products.

Skills gaps were assessed in conjunction with the existing research by the European Commission on Skills Gaps and Needs (EC 2016, 2005), and previous EU projects such as the Smart Project Experience and E-Tourism Training Guidelines. In addition, national research provided by the partners such as People 1st demonstrates that tourism employment and consumer landscapes of the future will be more culturally diverse, digitally dependent and resource intensive, moving tourism employment away from the persistent view that tourism jobs are low skilled and low pay. As digitalization of services increases, an increasing percentage of jobs will belong to the non-accommodation sector, i.e. resort planners, sustainable tourism building design, E-Tourism Marketers, MICE specialists, adventure guides, experience creators, marine sport instructors and sustainable destination tourism managers.

This will require more efficient and innovative methods of skills assessment in the future. The project creates the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology that will establish NTG Core Skills Sets (digital, green and social skills) and NTG Specialist Sub-Sector Skills Sets in tourism career areas lacking training provision and skills criteria, such as destination management, sustainable events planning, cultural and heritage interpretation. A pilot suite of six Pan European NTG Modules reflecting the 3 Core Skills Sets and 3 Specialist Sub-Sector skills will be developed, delivered and evaluated. Accessible and mobile transferability throughout Europe will be achieved using appropriate ECVET systems and quality frameworks for different levels (EQF 3-7) and Industry-based learning methods including WBL, Internships, CPD and In-house training and Blended Learning. These learning methods will underpin a contemporary, comprehensive, easy to navigate NTG Skills Matrix. This will illustrate a range of competencies, entry levels, progression routes and qualifications related to ESCO occupational profiles.

New and existing Occupational Profiles will integrate the 10 NTG-Core Skill sets and illustrate new Sub-sector Specialist skills sets. The Occupational profiles match industry focused learning methods including WBL, CPD and more informal and blended learning opportunities for the self-employed, family-owned businesses and shared economy businesses, aligning skills to industry and public sector requirements and their implementation at work via embedded Human Resource Strategies.

Using these Skills products and tools, a Skills Assessment and Response Methodology will be utilized as a practical response mechanism to skills needs, offering transferable routes within Tourism Careers for a wide range of learners of different ages and experience and reflecting full range of opportunities up to Executive and Senior Management Level. The Tourism Skills Toolkit will be hosted and supported by a new European Wide Employer focused Next Tourism Generation Hub for Tourism Skills. It will support the sharing of knowledge and provide Industry and Education Partnerships with information about a wide spectrum of tourism jobs, competences, skills, location of training provision, career and progression routes and methods of learning including dynamic new areas of training such as the role of robotics in tourism and destination management. These strategies will feed into existing EU mechanisms supporting the development of Tourism Skills under EU wide education and training strategies.

The **consortium** is a multi-disciplinary partnership which comprises 14 partners from 9 countries: 7 Industry Partners and Tourism Sector Representatives (Federturismo Confindustria, UnionCamere, Eurogites, IHK Academy Chamber of Commerce, People 1st UK, VIMOS, CEHAT); 6 Universities (NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, Dublin Institute of Technology, Cardiff Metropolitan University, University of Sopron, Alicante University, Varna University) plus ATLAS Europe, the Association of Tourism Lecturers and Students in Tourism in Europe.