

The future of green, digital and socio-cultural skills in tourism



- The tourism sector accounts for around 10% of employment in the EU
- The sector provides 313m jobs worldwide



- Tourism accounts for 10.4% of the global GDP
- In 2017 there were 671m tourist arrivals in the EU

Key findings

Desk research, in-depth interviews and a survey with the tourism industry were used to identify key industry trends and current and future skills needs

Industry trends:

1. Evolving visitor demand
2. Growth of geo-tourism
3. Demand for highly skilled workers
4. Shrinking employment pool
5. Enabling technology

"The way that tourism is perceived generally will change quite significantly over the next decade in terms of the workforce as well as customer demand."

Impact on skills:



· There is a lack of digital skills across the industry with smaller organisations struggling to effectively use social media.



· The levels of social skills were fairly good, however the workforce needs up-skilling in regards to understanding other cultures.



· It was found that green tourism is becoming more popular however businesses are lacking awareness in terms of sustainability and conservation of biodiversity.

Key skills in 2030:



- Promotion of environmentally friendly activities and products
- Knowledge of climate change
- Ability to minimise the use of energy and water consumption

"For sustainable development, there must be a balance between the interests of visitors, local residents, and companies. That triangle - in balance - is essential for a strong destination and to combat both over- and under-tourism."

NTG research interviewee from the EU tourism industry



- Social media skills
- Online marketing and communication skills
- Skills to monitor online reviews

"Digitization and automation will continue to impact all tourism sectors. One of the main developments is the ongoing integration of systems and processes such as reservations, booking, check-in, ordering, billing, payment, stock control, maintenance, and repair."

NTG research interviewee from the EU tourism industry



- Customer orientation
- Promoting a positive work environment
- Ethical conduct and respect

"Visitors do not consider themselves to be 'tourists' but want to be immersed in a locality, looking for local experiences, wanting to live and be treated like 'locals'. This opens up opportunities for local cuisines but also for food tourism and storytelling around food in general."

NTG research interviewee from the EU tourism industry

In summary

- The tourism industry will change quite significantly over the next 10 years.
- The employment pool is expected to shrink and there will be a demand for higher skilled staff.
- Better digital fluency - "High Tech with a Human Touch"- will be important in developing future tourism skills
- There will be a growth in geo-tourism and an increased focus on tailor-made provisions.
- Skills in creating unique and personalised experiences will be important.
- Key future skills will centre around the promotion of environmentally friendly activities and products, customer orientation and the awareness of local customs.
- Self-learning capacities of workforce is needed to cope with fast changing digital innovations and disruptive business models
- To future proof the workforce, training needs to incorporate biodiversity, sustainability, effective use of social media as well as cultural and disability awareness.

To download the full NTG country interview and survey reports:
visit: www.nexttourismgeneration.eu/research

The Next Tourism Generation Alliance (NTG) is the first European partnership for improving a collaborative and productive relationship between education, industry and governments. It will establish the first European Blueprint for Tourism Skills which aims to address digital, socio-cultural and green skills gaps to meet future needs.

* Industry figures from Visit England

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