NEXT TOURISM GENERATION SKILLS ALLIANCE (NTG)

Skills Assessment Methodology

NKA2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices -

Sector Skills Alliances - Call: EACEA/04/2017

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Skills Assessment Methodology (SAM)

1. Introduction

The Next Tourism Generation (NTG) Skills Alliance (https://nexttourismgeneration.eu) project was launched in 2018, funded by the European Commission. The NTG project aims to provide a European Blueprint Strategy to respond to the fast-changing and increasing skills gaps in **digital, environmental management (green) and social skills sets** in **five tourism subsectors** (accommodation; food & beverage; travel agencies & tour operators; visitor attractions; destination management). The Next Tourism Generation Alliance has brought together a unique partnership of tourism companies, education and training providers, industry associations, governments, social partners and other relevant stakeholders to work on identifying current and future skills needs.
As a key element of the Blueprint strategy, the **NTG Skills Assessment Methodology** was developed: a research-based, structural mechanism for the analysis of rapidly changing skills and skills needs in order to develop strategies for addressing skills gaps in the EU tourism sector.

Tourist arrivals are projected to grow in the years to come and the tourism industry is likely to change substantially as tourism, just as other industries and societies in general, is affected by worldwide socioeconomic and geostrategic forces, such as technological innovations, demographic changes, environmental pressures and changing values. The World Tourism Organization (2019) stipulates that tourism is deeply influenced by the ongoing social and technological transformations, which are shaping new - and disruptive - business models (such as collaborative platforms and the internet as a direct distribution channel) and different consumer's patterns. To cope with all these changes, new and other skills are necessary for the tourism sector. **Digital skills** are increasingly needed (e.g. for data management, conducting online business, using augmented reality technologies, artificial intelligence or blockchain technology). At the same time, **social skills** will remain key for delivering innovative and personalized services to an increasingly diverse (e.g. Millennials, generation Z, seniors, travellers with special needs) and the international range of customers. **Environmental management** or **green skills** are also increasingly important, as there will only be a future for tourism when more sustainable practices are incorporated into the consumption and production of tourism.

Keeping track of rapidly changing skills needs and bridging skills gaps in order to cope with a world in constant flux are therefore major challenges for tourism businesses, education providers and governmental bodies; this involves not only the acquisition of **new skills** but also **life-long education** and continuous **reskilling** and **upskilling**. To address this urgent situation **the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology** was developed to support the tourism industry, education and training providers as well as government bodies to continuously and longitudinally identify, assess, and monitor skills needs in order to make strategic choices to eradicate skills gaps for a future-proof tourism industry in the EU.

2. The NTG Skills Assessment Methodology: Executive Summary

What is the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology?

A Skills Assessment Methodology is designed to identify current and future workforce skills in order to enable evidence-based decision making around workforce strategies required to achieve sustained organisational performance and to build a capable workforce. Workforce skills, in the broadest sense, are the capabilities, competencies, qualities, talents, and knowledge that enables people to perform successfully in the labour market.

The NTG Skills Assessment Methodology is **a six-step voluntary skills management tool** for collecting and analysing data to assess skills, skills needs, and address skills gaps within the tourism and hospitality industry. An important benefit is that it can be used at multiple levels: local, regional, national or international, adding flexibility and improving feasibility. The NTG Skills Assessment Methodology provides **an innovative and comparable common approach** for assessing and identifying changing skills needs along the tourism value chain and ensuring that education and training systems are responsive to the evolving labour market needs. It does not set any fixed standards nor does it provide any certification.

The NTG Assessment Methodology was developed for assessing digital, green and social skills needs in five tourism subsectors; it can, however, easily be expanded and used to address skills needs in **other tourism ecosystems.**

Why implement the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology?

The Skills Assessment Methodology developed by NTG represents **a common and comparable methodology for skills assessment** in tourism and enables stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding strategies to address skills gaps.

Through **a step-by-step guide**, stakeholders are provided with an **effective process** for future analysis of rapidly changing skills, skills needs and skills gaps, starting from establishing **an NTG Collaborative Platform**, **engaging stakeholders**, and reviewing the principal instruments for **collecting data and analysing results**. A key characteristic is the **multi-stakeholder approach** that encourages countries, regions or destinations to form an **interdisciplinary** NTG Collaborative Platform, which stimulates cooperation and a sharing of responsibility, ownership, and decision-making.

Who will benefit from the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology?

The NTG Skills Assessment Methodology supports all stakeholders involved in skills in tourism. Based on the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology:

- EU, national, regional and local governments bodies can continuously identify current and future skills needs;

- Tourism organisations and companies can identify current and future workforce skills and skills gaps and implement strategies to address these, e.g. through (e-)learning and development; this will support them in workforce planning, aligning skills development to company goals and needs, and increase their competitiveness;

- Education and training providers can assemble relevant input about skills needs and set benchmarks, thereby strengthening the exchange of knowledge and practice between education and the labour market and developing relevant courses and education to bridge skills gaps;

- Individual workers can find relevant information on future skills in order to support their career planning, employability, and life-long-learning aspirations.

How does the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology work?

The NTG Skills Assessment Methodology is organized in two different phases: **the organisational management phase** followed by the **implementation phase**.

The organisational management phase is critical to **define roles and responsibilities** and the **geographical scope** of the initiative. The NTG Skills Assessment Methodology has to be initiated by one or more leading tourism organisations representing a specific geographical area (local, regional, national, transnational). The first NTG Skills Assessment Methodology has been implemented at a transnational level within the EU project NTG Skills Alliance, involving fourteen organisations representing eight countries.

Two decision-making points are needed at the beginning: the selection of organisations leading the Skills Assessment Methodology and the identification of the geopolitical context.

Once the organisational management body has been set up **a Skills Assessment project coordinator** can be nominated. This could be a senior representative from one of the organisations involved or an external expert; he or she should represent a destination management organisation or tourist board; local/regional tourism authorities; a tourism ministry; the private sector or tourism and industry associations or a university or research or training institute.

The local Skills Assessment project coordinator has a key role in the process of the Skills Assessment Methodology. He or she should establish a **Skills Collaborative Platform** by engaging a diverse group of stakeholders, oversees the planning, coordination and monitoring of the assessment process, stakeholders' management as well as marketing and communication. The role of the local project

coordinator can also include the organisation of capacity building modules or other training activities, as well as quality standards.

The easy to follow step-by-step NTG Skills Assessment guide is supported by several documents that have been designed to facilitate the process of skills assessment. These are available on the NTG website.

3. The six-step guide to the implementation of the Skills Assessment Methodology (SAM)

3.1 Establish a Skills Collaborative Platform (step 1)

Once a country, region or destination decides to use the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology, it is important for the project initiator to create a **Skills Collaborative Platform** consisting of **a diverse group of stakeholders, in which the tourism industry is strongly represented**. This will support wide participation, raise awareness of the importance of skills assessment and increase support for strategies to address skills gaps. It will also facilitate long-term, sustainable cooperation between stakeholders and promote closer ties between education and industry.

A Skills Collaborative Platform will generally consist of around 15-20 people (fewer in a small destination). To be able to collect enough data to be representative and meaningful, it will be essential to gather stakeholders from the industry as well as education providers and preferably tourism authorities. The Platform should therefore ideally consist of representatives of some of the following organisations:

- Companies and industry associations; chambers of commerce;
- Education and training providers; research institutes;
- Governments, regional/local tourism organisations;
- Social partners; tourism employee associations and/or unions;
- Tourism boards, destination management organisations, tourism development companies, tourism associations;
- Other relevant stakeholders.

It may prove difficult to gather stakeholders from suitable organisations at the start of the NTG platform. However, as long as there are some relevant stakeholders that are willing to start the skills assessment process, the methodology can be adopted with the size of the platform being expanded over time (see step 5). The aim is for a mixed group of stakeholders who are able to obtain relevant data and are committed to the process. An important outcome from the first platform meeting should be a clear **agreement** on the engagement and responsibilities of the stakeholders and a timeline for data collection. This will also generate a sense of ownership and commitment to the process.

Recommendations from the NTG Skills Assessment pilot

It is essential to involve a diverse group of stakeholders representing different sectors of the tourism industry as well as tourism education and authorities. This will raise awareness of the changes that will face the tourism industry in the future and enhance support for skills assessment and strategies to address skills gaps. Working together on skills assessment will also facilitate data gathering as well as long-term, sustainable cooperation between education and industry.

There is no set formula for establishing a Skills Collaborative Platform; it is important to be flexible and take an approach that best suits the group of stakeholders involved.

3.2   Create a Country / Region / Destination Skills Profile (step 2)

A second step in the process of the NTG Assessment Methodology consists of creating a skills profile of the sector concerned. The primary aim of this skills profile is to **review the current local/regional/national situations** by **identifying and summarizing existing knowledge** (secondary data collection) on tourism and hospitality skills assessment as well as trends and developments that might have implications for future needs regarding the skills under investigation. This output can be realized by **desk research** (secondary data collection and analysis). This should be completed from the perspective of the tourism industry and/or local government organisations (demand side) as well as from a selection of suppliers (universities, training companies, etc.). Providing an overview of the current situation regarding skills and skills needs as well as trends and developments that might lead to a change in demand for future skills are **crucial steps** in the NTG Assessment Methodology. It also will ensure that the Skills Assessment project is building its research on existing knowledge, confirming the validity and relevance of the findings.

Data collection can be a simple process of bringing the various data together in one document to build a picture of the local / regional / national skills situation. Information on the current and future skills needed in the tourism industry is already available, within EU documents and the reports and documents of other international or national organisations, industry reports, previous research and articles. It is therefore important to gain a broad understanding of what has been done already in order to decide what is missing and what needs to be further investigated. The information collected will also provide input for the next step (the survey) in the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology.

It is advised to ask stakeholders to collect and analyse data from existing sources and summarize these in the **NTG Desk Research Template** (see documents below). The template is easy to complete

and provides a useful frame of reference for stakeholders (i.e. the importance of tourism for the local / regional / national economy; the current situation and future needs regarding the skills under investigation from the perspective of the tourism industry and a selection of suppliers of education/training education; implications of findings for the NTG project).

Some **relevant sources** that can be used for this purpose are existing reports and studies, websites (such as the NTG website, https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/), European, national and regional tourism reports, existing research results, articles, books, course content. Some useful reports and studies in this field:

National and regional strategy and policy documents:
It is highly recommended to study national, regional and / or local tourism strategy and policy documents such as national (regional and local) tourism plans; tourism development strategies; training, education and skills development for tourism; tourism workforce policies, et cetera.

EU documents and reports:
- Cedefop (2018). *Insights into skill shortages and skill mismatch: learning from Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey*. Cedefop reference series no 106. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at (December 2019): http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/645011
- European Commission (2019). *Overview of EU tourism policy*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at (December 2019): https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/policy-overview_en
- European Commission (2019). *ESCO handbook European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations. 2nd Edition*. Brussels: European Commission. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Directorate E. Available at (December 2019): https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/document/nl/0a89839c-098d-4e34-846c-54cbd5684d24
- European Commission (2016). *EU tourism skills: 'Mapping and performance check of the supply side of tourism education and training'*. Brussels: European Commission. Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries. Available at (December 2019): https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/eu-tourism-skills-mapping-and-performance-check-supply-side-tourism-education-and-training-0_en

- European Commission (2016). *New Skills Agenda for Europe. Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at (December 2019): https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-381-EN-F1-1.PDF

- European Tourism Manifesto (2017). *European Tourism Manifesto for growth & jobs*. Available at (December 2019): https://www.tourismmanifesto.eu/the-manifesto

- Gonzalez Vazquez, I., Milasi, S., Carretero Gomez, S., Napierala, J., Robledo Bottcher, N., Jonkers, K., Goenaga, X. (eds.), 2019. *The changing nature of work and skills in the digital age*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at (December 2019): https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/changing-nature-work-and-skills-digital-age

- NECSTouR (2019). *NECSTouR Roadmap 2019-2021: The 5 "S" of the tourism of tomorro*w. Brussels: NECSTouR. Available at (December 2019): http://www.necstour.eu/system/files/NECSTouR%20Roadmap%202019-2021%20-Tourism%20of%20Tomorrow.pdf

- Peeters, P., Gössling, S., Klijs, J., Milano, C., Novelli, M., Dijkmans, C., Eijgelaar, E., Hartman, S., Heslinga, J., Isaac, R., Mitas, O., Moretti, S., Nawijn, J., Papp, B. and Postma, A., (2018). *Research for TRAN Committee - Overtourism: impact and possible policy responses*. Brussels: European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. Available at (December 2019): https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/629184/IPOL_STU(2018)629184_EN.pdf

- Weston, R., Guia, J., Mihalič, T., Prats, L., Blasco, D., Ferrer-Roca, N., Lawler, M. and Jarratt, D. (2019). *Research for TRAN Committee – European tourism: recent developments and future challenges.* Brussels: European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. Available at (December 2019): http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2019)629200

International Labour Organization (ILO):

- International Labour Organization (2019). *Work for a brighter future – Global Commission on the Future of Work*. Geneva: ILO. Available at (December 2019): https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_662410.pdf

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018). *Analysing megatrends to better shape the future of tourism*. OECD Tourism Papers, number 2018/02. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at (December 2019): https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/analysing-megatrends-to-better-shape-the-future-of-tourism_d465eb68-en

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018). *OECD tourism trends and policies 2018*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at (December 2019): https://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/oecd-tourism-trends-and-policies-20767773.htm

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018). *Job creation and local economic development 2018: Preparing for the future of work*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at (December 2019): https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264305342-en

World Economic Forum:

- World Economic Forum (2016). *The future of jobs. Employment, skills and workforce strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Geneva: World Economic Forum. Available at (December 2019): http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs.pdf

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):

- World Tourism Organization (2019). *The future of work and skills development in tourism – Policy Paper*. Madrid: UNWTO. Available at (December 2019): https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284421213

- World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme (2019). *Baseline Report on the integration of sustainable consumption and production patterns into tourism policies*. Madrid: UNWTO. Available at (December 2019): https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284420605

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC):

- World Travel and Tourism Council (2019). *Travel and tourism: Generating jobs for youth*. London: WTTC. Available at (December 2019): https://www.wttc.org/economic-impact/social-impact/generating-jobs-for-youth/

Supporting online documents:

1. The NTG Desk Research Template. Available the NTG website via https://bit.ly/372V4Sp

2.   The NTG Desk Research Summary (2019) on the Future of Digital, Green and Social Skills in

       Tourism Report. Available at https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/research/

Recommendations from the NTG Skills Assessment pilot

For the NTG Desk Research, partners were asked to first create an overview of the general tourism situation in their countries and regions as well as national and / or regional tourism strategies in order to provide context for the skills assessment. Next, they made a secondary data analysis for:

* the currently required digital, environmental management and social skills in each of the five subsectors;
* the current situation regarding the delivery of the three skills sets for a selection of five main suppliers of education/training (universities, businesses, trade associations, private training providers);
* the future needs regarding the investigated skills in each subsector.

Finally, preliminary conclusions - based on this desk research - regarding future skills needs and gaps could be drawn.

The NTG Desk Research Template can be adjusted to the needs and wishes of each Skills Assessment project. It is, however, highly recommended to respect the structure of the final document when answering the questions. Only in this way, comparable results can be collected which can provide input for the next step, the Skills Assessment survey.

3.3   Conduct a Skills Assessment Survey on Digital, Green, and Social skills (step 3)

As a next step, a Skills Assessment survey can be conducted. The purpose of the survey is **to map the importance of the skills sets under investigation and to detect if a gap exists** between current levels of skills and the skills and levels that will be needed in the future in the targeted subsectors.

It is highly recommended to construct an **online survey**. Online surveys can easily be sent to large numbers of potential participants, are more user-friendly, and easier to process than printed surveys. The assistance of one or more persons who are **experienced in constructing online surveys and processing the results** is required for this. **Survey questions** can originate from the desk research: topics that emerge as relevant from the desk research can be used to create questions.

Some suggestions for **NTG survey topics and questions** (see supporting documents below for the online link to the NTG survey list of questions):

- **General information** on the subsector and the company/organisation.

  Sample questions:

  - Which sector does your organisation operate?
  - What is the size of your organisation?
  - What is your role in the organisation?
  - Et cetera.

- **Current levels** of proficiency in digital, environmental management and social (or other) skills.

  Sample questions:

  - Please rate the **current level of proficiency** in the following **digital** skills in your organisation on a scale from 1 (no skills present) to 5 (expert):
    - Microsoft Office skills (e.g., Word, Excel, PowerPoint);
    - Online marketing and communication skills;
    - Monitoring online reviews;
    - Computer programming skills;
    - Applying digital hardware technologies, such as Augmented and Virtual Reality;
    - Data analytics, business intelligence, big data;
    - Et cetera.

- **Future levels** of proficiency in digital, environmental management and social (or other) skills:

  Sample questions:

  - Please estimate **the future level of proficiency** in the following **environmental management skills** needed in your organisation in 2030 on a scale from 1 (no skills present) to 5 (expert):
    - Promotion of environmentally friendly activities and products;
    - Promotion of sustainable forms of transport (e.g. public transport);
    - Knowledge of climate change;
    - Ability to minimise the use and maximise efficiency of energy and water consumption;
    - Ability to manage waste, sewage, recycling and composting;
    - Conservation of biodiversity
    - Et cetera.

- **Training** provided by companies and organisations:

  Sample questions:

  - o Does your organisation provide any training for its employees in social skills?
  - o What type(s) of training in social skills does your organisation provide for your employees?
  - o Et cetera.

Subsequently, an analysis of the **survey results** should be compiled and presented in a **report,** exploring the **skills gaps** per skills sets type (see supporting documents below for the link to NTG Country Survey Reports). The survey results provide important information for the next steps in the NTG Skills Assessment Methodology: The Interviews (step 4) and the Skills Assessment Response Strategies (step 6). The outcomes of the survey can be distributed and discussed via the Skills Collaboration Platform and website and used to make the tourism sector to be future proof.

It is recommended to create **Survey guidelines** to be used by all partners involved, covering:

a) The **time frame** for the survey research: when will the survey be ready; which and how many people will test the survey; when will it appear online; how long will it be online; when are the results expected.

b) If applicable: a procedure for the **translation** of the English survey to the national language; who is responsible for this; who will check the quality.

c) A procedure for **sampling**: how many respondents are needed; from which sectors / companies / organisations. During the pilot survey, the target was to receive a minimum of 50 respondents per subsector in each participating country with a healthy mix of large and small companies/organisations to represent the tourism business landscape. The number of respondents can obviously be adjusted to the size of the NTG project at hand.

d) A procedure for **contacting potential participants** in the survey: consent and anonymity in accordance with EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); a concept text for the letter or e-mail to inform participants about the NTG project and the purpose of the survey (see supporting documents below).
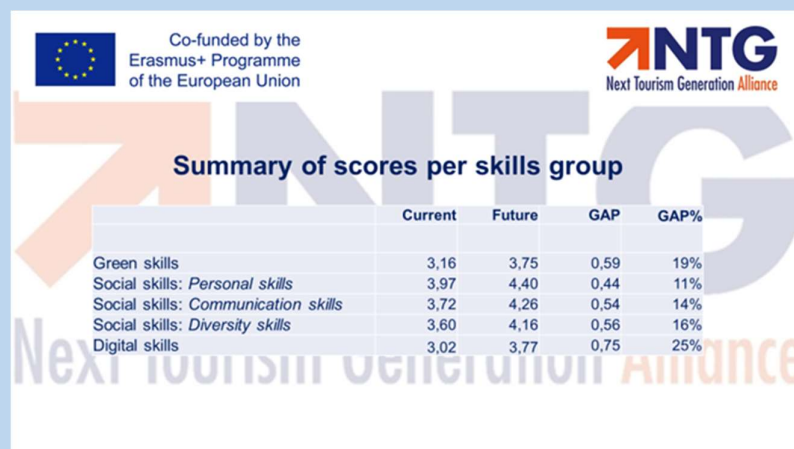
Supporting online documents:

1. The Skills Assessment Survey List of Questions. Available on the NTG website via https://bit.ly/372hKlR

2. NTG Country Survey Reports. Available at https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/research/

3. Letter/e-mail example of communicating and promoting the NTG project and survey to

potential participants. Available on the NTG website via https://bit.ly/2tsET1Z

Recommendations from the NTG Skills Assessment pilot

From January-March 2019, a European survey was conducted in the eight partner countries of the NTG Project (Spain, UK, Hungary, Netherlands, Italy, Bulgaria, Germany, and Ireland). The aim was for 250 responses in total for each country, so altogether 2,000 participants. However, the total sample of the survey on a European level amounted to 1,404. In some countries, it turned out to be quite difficult to attract the targeted number of participants. In order to maximize response, it is advised to create surveys that can be completed within a timespan of five to ten minutes.

To get a clear and concrete grasp of the skills needs and gaps under investigation, it is recommended to use the survey results to calculate the gap for each skill set (please refer to the NTG Skills Assessment pilot shown in the example below).

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Summary of scores per skills group

	Current	Future	GAP	GAP%
Green skills	3,16	3,75	0,59	19%
Social skills: *Personal skills*	3,97	4,40	0,44	11%
Social skills: *Communication skills*	3,72	4,26	0,54	14%
Social skills: *Diversity skills*	3,60	4,16	0,56	16%
Digital skills	3,02	3,77	0,75	25%

This example demonstrates that for the NTG Skills Assessment pilot, the gap between the current level of digital skills and the expected future level of digital skills needed in the tourism industry was by far the largest gap (25%), implicating that training, and upskilling is most urgent in this area.

3.4   Conduct interviews on the Future of Digital, Green and Social Skills (step 4)

After the desk research and survey, more **in-depth insights and understandings** on the future of digital, environmental management and social (or other) skills should be collected from the perspective of (people working in) the tourism industry through **interviews**. **Possible participants**

include senior managers; human resource managers; company owners; entrepreneurs; heads of department et cetera.

It is advised to use **semi-structured interviews** of around 45 minutes. Semi-structured interviews with **open-ended questions** that generate lengthy and descriptive answers are a suitable tool for gathering in-depth knowledge and fresh insights. They allow for new ideas and perceptions on the topics to be discussed because of the interviewees' responses and elaborations.

However, the interviews should deliver **reliable and comparable qualitative data** and facilitate **a comparison** of the insights gathered during the interviews. Therefore, an **interview guide** (see supporting documents below) should be constructed with **interview themes** to provide a coherent **focus** for the interviews as well as some **example questions**, which the interviewer can tailor to the interview context and the interview participants.

All participants should be provided with a **Participant Information Sheet** (see supporting documents below), explaining the purpose of the research and the interviews as well as confidentiality and anonymity procedures in line with the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The interview data should be kept confidential; participants' and their companies' identities should not be revealed to third parties or to the research analysis team; at the end of the study, the documentation used to gather the data should be destroyed. Participants also need to sign a **Participant Consent Form** (see supporting documents below), agreeing to be interviewed and for the interview to be recorded. If the interviewee does not wish the interview to be audio recorded, notes should be taken instead.

The **number of interviews** is dependent on the size of the Skills Assessment project at hand. During the Skills Assessment pilot, 30 interviews (six for each of the five subsectors) per country were conducted with a mix of small and large companies and organisations. The gathered interview data should be used anonymously to compose **a report**, which can be shared with the Skills Assessment partners, trade associations, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders.

Some suggestions for Skills Assessment **interview topics and questions** (see supporting documents below for the link to the entire *NTG Interview Guide for Semi-structured Interviews on the Future of Digital, Environmental Management and Social Skills in Tourism*):

- **Introduction to the project and the research:**
  First, an explanation of the Skills Assessment research, the purpose of the interview and the use of the interview data should be provided. Furthermore, participants should be informed

on the confidentiality and anonymity procedures as well as the recording of the interview. Participants should **sign** the Participant Consent Form before proceeding with the interview.

- **Company and background information:**

Sample questions:

- o Which sector does your organisation operate?
- o What is the size of your organisation?
- o What is your role in the organisation?
- o Et cetera.

- **The future of tourism:**

Sample questions:

- o What will your company and the industry look like around 2030? Do you perceive any changes from today?
- o Who will be your (main) clients/customers then? Any changes from today?
- o Which skills will be most in demand in ten years' time in your company? What will be the changes from today?
- o Other relevant points.

- **Digital, environmental management, and social (or other) skills**:

Sample questions:

- o Which digital / environmental management / social (or other) skills are important in your company today?
- o Which digital / environmental management / social (or other) skills is your company currently short of?
- o How important will these skills be around 2030? Which ones will be most important?
- o Can you think of more / other digital / environmental management / social (or other) skills that will be important in the future?
- o Which changes do you expect for your organisation regarding digital / environmental management / social (or other) skills in the future (2030)?
- o Does your company provide training or education for these skills? If so: what kind of training; if not: why not?
- o Do you use an external organisation to help train your staff in these skills? If so: which ones and what kind of training do they provide?
- o What would be the most effective training method in digital / environmental management / social (or other) skill development for your employees?
- o Other relevant points.

Supporting online documents:

1. The Skills Assessment Interview Guide for Semi-structured Interviews on the Future of Digital, Environmental Management and Social Skills in Tourism. Available on the NTG website via https://bit.ly/2RlIIze

2. NTG Interview Report Template. Available on the NTG website via https://bit.ly/3ajTzkM

3. Participant Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form. Available on the NTG website via https://bit.ly/364VbLI

4. Executive Summary of the NTG Country Interview Reports on the Future of Digital, Green and Social Skills in Tourism. Available on the NTG website via https://bit.ly/372tLaV

Recommendations from the NTG Skills Assessment pilot

During the NTG pilot, interviews took place with over 200 tourism directors, heads of department and entrepreneurs, delivering a wealth of in-depth insights into (the future of) digital, environmental management, and social skills. Many of the interviewees communicated that they would like to stay in touch with the NTG Skills Alliance. The personal contacts established during the interviews between the NTG researchers and the interviewees are not only important for gaining valuable information but also for convincing participants of the relevance of the NTG project and getting new partners on board.

3.5 Organize Skills Collaboration Platform Stakeholder Meetings (step 5)

One of the main challenges of any Skills Assessment project is the **continuous expansion** of the Skills Collaboration Platform. This is important for:

- raising awareness of the changing skills that are needed for tourism in the EU;
- creating support for continuously identifying, assessing, and monitoring skills needs in tourism;
- supporting the tourism industry, education and training providers to make strategic choices regarding the closing of skills gaps;
- disseminating the results of the research and contributing to a future-proof tourism industry in the EU.

For these purposes, the Skills Assessment project coordinator should organize regular **meetings** in which the partners come together to discuss the progress of the project; results so far can be shared and reviewed, and upcoming plans explained to and discussed with all the key partners.

It also important and recommended to organize and attend other events **to create exposure and support** for the important topic of future skills in tourism and **to attract new partners**. Examples can be found on the NTG website (https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/events/) and include, for example:

- organizing webinars such as the INCOME Tourism / NTG webinar on tourism education, employability, and industry which was held in November 2019 and focused on employability of tourism students by addressing the right skills and on effective methods of teaching and training in close cooperation with the tourism industry (see for more information https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/income-tourism-ntg-webinar-on-tourism-education-employability-and-industry/);
- attending and speaking at industry and official events (holiday fairs; tourism expos; industry meetings; roadshows). The NTG Alliance was, for example, present at a meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in October 2019 to discuss the progress of the NTG project (see for more information: https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/silvia-barbone-represents-ntg-at-the-oecd-meeting/);
- organizing workshops or round table meetings on skills for tourism or share best practices;
- giving interviews to travel and other media;
- the NTG website and social media.

> **Recommendations from the NTG Skills Assessment pilot**
>
> Digital skills are one of the focus points of the NTG project. It is therefore recommended to create a digital project strategy to inform stakeholders, potential partners, and interested third parties as well as to disseminate the results of the project. A relevant and easily accessible project website with information on the project, the skill sets, the partners, research results, news, and events is indispensable and should be regularly updated. The NTG website also features a blog with regular posts on current topics or background information on NTG related themes (for some examples see https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/blog/).
>
> The NTG Skills Assessment pilot is also active on social media (Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/nexttourismgeneration/; Twitter, https://twitter.com/NTGAlliance and LinkedIn, https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13595036/).

3.6 Formulate Skills Assessment Response Strategies (step 6)

During **step 6** of the **SAM Methodology**, all the information collected during the desk research, the survey and the interviews should come together and needs to be analysed and evaluated, to generate a combined **Industry Skills Needs Report and a Skills Strategies Report,** to support the implementation of the Blueprint Strategy.

These Reports, which should be discussed and validated by the Skills Collaborative Platform, can be used with a dual scope:

1. to identify **the gaps** between current and future levels of skills for the different skill sets;
2. to develop **response strategies** to address skills needs at business and industry level as well as at university and college levels.
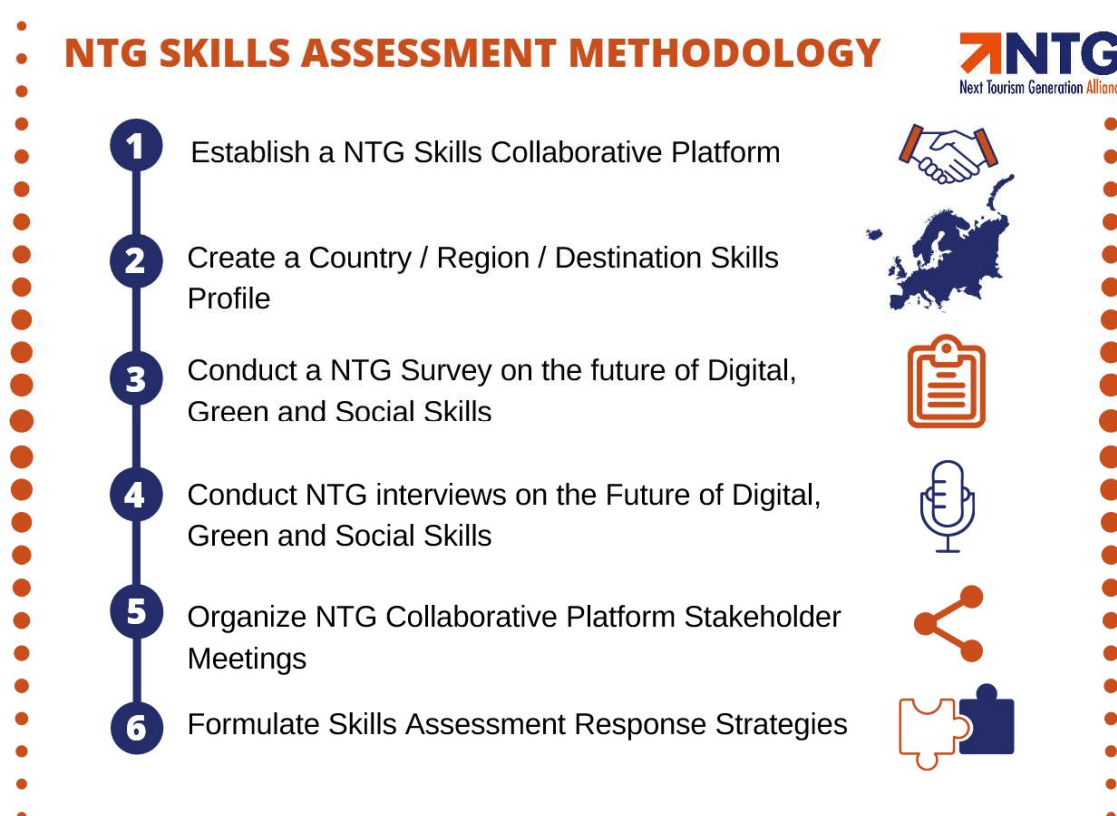
Response strategies can include:

- Integrating the findings of the research and other relevant sources with other, already existing, tools for skills assessment at a national level (such as skills monitors or observatories) or with the **NTG Skills Matrix**. The NTG Skills Matrix is a dynamic online tool that explains and presents the different digital, environmental management and social skills required for various job positions in the tourism industry as well as the levels of competence needed for each position; it also comprises education possibilities in different European countries. The NTG Skills Matrix can be used by all stakeholders in the tourism industry for gaining an overview of required skills, relevant and current skills gaps, as well as skills development and training options to improve job performance.

- Developing **guidelines** and **quality standards** on future skills, expected skills gaps and closing these gaps for human resources departments in the tourism industry and public organisations in tourism as well as for educational organisations.

- Collecting and compiling **best practices** related to working with and training of digital, environmental management and social skills from both tourism industry and education perspectives and disseminate these via the project website, workshops and / or meetings. Ten case studies with best practices collected by the NTG Skills Assessment pilot **will be presented online in 2020**.

- Designing **new training modules** tailored at closing the gaps that have appeared from the research. The NTG Skills Assessment pilot is working on three newly designed and quality tested **European NTG Modules** reflecting the three NTG core skills sets, which can be **retrieved from the NTG website in 2020**. These modules and learning methods will be integrated into the current European VET system, providing a benchmark, tools and good

practice for environmental management and social skills to support sustainable development and digital and technological innovation within the five NTG subsectors.

- All the strategies mentioned above (skills matrix, guidelines, best practices, new modules) can be combined into a **Skills toolkit** for addressing skills needs and gaps.
- The research results can also be used for finding **funding opportunities** needed to develop best practices, modules, training projects and / or an NTG toolkit.

4. The NTG Skills Assessment Methodology: an overview

NTG SKILLS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1. Establish a NTG Skills Collaborative Platform
2. Create a Country / Region / Destination Skills Profile
3. Conduct a NTG Survey on the future of Digital, Green and Social Skills
4. Conduct NTG interviews on the Future of Digital, Green and Social Skills
5. Organize NTG Collaborative Platform Stakeholder Meetings
6. Formulate Skills Assessment Response Strategies

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