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**COUNTRY  
SKILLS  
PROFILE  
REPORT**



**GERMANY**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| INTRODUCTION .....  | 8   |
| 1. GENERAL TOURISM CHARACTERISTICS, FACTS & FIGURES OF GERMANY.....                       | 9   |
| 1.1 TOURISM FACTS & FIGURES .....   | 9   |
| 1.2 TRAVEL AND TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT.....                                  | 15  |
| 1.3 DIRECT AND TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM TO GDP IN 10 YEARS' TIME .....               | 16  |
| 1.4 DIRECT AND TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM TO EMPLOYMENT OF TOURISM IN 10 YEARS' TIME.. | 16  |
| 1.5 MAIN FOCUS POINTS OF NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR TOURISM .....                              | 16  |
| 1.6 COUNTRY-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN TOURISM.....                          | 17  |
| 2. CURRENT SKILLS TRAINING DELIVERY IN GERMANY.....                                       | 18  |
| 3. SURVEY RESULTS .....   | 31  |
| 4. EXPERT INTERVIEW RESULTS.....  | 40  |
| 5. BEST PRACTICES UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING.....  | 59  |
| SKILLS SYNTHESIS .....  | 105 |
| REFERENCES .....  | 107 |
| Appendix 1. Examples of Digital training providers .....                                  | 115 |
| Appendix 2. Examples of 'Green' training providers .....                                  | 117 |
| Appendix 3. Examples of Social/Cultural training providers .....                          | 118 |



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary provides an overview of the field research (survey, interviews, best practices analysis) conducted to explore the significance of digital, socio-cultural, and environmental/green skills development in the German tourism industry. Due to the small size of the German sample (n=33), the results of the survey do not represent a representative picture from the perspective of the German tourism industry.



In all three attention fields (Digital/Green/Socio-cultural) German tourism is actively engaged in developing its Skills. Evaluating tourism demand and behaviour and using results to develop new study programmes is seen as very important.

Some results can nevertheless be used to provide inspiration for decisions at various levels. Advanced skills such as robotics, digital applications and AI are currently considered less relevant to the German tourism industry but are expected to get more and more important.

More traditional skills such as information processing, digital marketing and data protection currently represent a higher level of qualification. Despite the unrepresentative number of surveys, a trend can be identified that the introduction and use of modern technologies such as generative AI applications and digital business analyses in the German tourism industry and robotics represent major challenges for the future. In order to be successful in the digital age, investments in training and further education in these areas are essential.

The evaluation of Green Skills shows that environmental awareness has been increasing for a long time and has established itself as an important factor in the German tourism market. Ecologically valuable products and services are increasingly being offered and the search for solutions with minimal negative impact on the environment continues. However, the lowest ones shows skills gaps where action is needed given by the current situation. “Measuring CO2 emissions” and “communication about the organisation’s efforts towards a green economy” were identified as the greatest needs in the area of green skills.

With regard to socio-cultural skills, it can be stated that a high level of willingness to provide service, efficient communication with guests and colleagues and efficient teamwork are very important in German tourism and are already perceived as being well implemented. Since domestic guests make up the majority of tourists in Germany, the focus here is strongly on well-known values. The ability to communicate in other languages is currently not seen as increasingly important and, according to the research, will not be at the top of the priority list in the future. It is important to point out here that due to the small number of surveys, no precise picture can be created and that perceptions are likely to differ greatly in the various tourism regions of Germany. A further intensive investigation would certainly be recommended to uncover the actual need.

The biggest gap is the adaptability to change and handle unexpected situations, followed by the ability to resolve conflicts.

However, since strong climatic changes, changed travel behaviour due to the Covid pandemic and rising inflation have a strong influence on people's travel behaviour, there will be an increased need for training that can be implemented quickly, especially in this area.

In all three attention fields (Digital/Green/Socio-cultural) German tourism is actively engaged in developing its Skills. Evaluating tourism demand and behaviour and using results to develop new study programmes is seen as very important.

The interviews revealed that digital skills will become increasingly crucial in the tourism sector within the next couple of years. Digital marketing and digital social networking were identified as the most important future digital skills. Especially social networking skills combine digital and social-cultural skills which is important to digital natives as well as to digital immigrants as both realise the value of social networking in a more and more digitalised world. It also can have an economic value, especially if it comes to remote work which saves some business trips and is therefore of ecological benefit. Digital marketing skills are essential in order to be seen especially by younger target groups or those who are young at heart and tech-savvy.

Furthermore cyber security already plays an important role as well as data protection. Both skills most likely will get more important in the future. Continuous learning and adaptation are necessary due to the dynamic nature of digital technology in the tourism industry.

The interviews highlighted the significance of efficient teamwork and effective communication with guests and colleagues. Both skills are crucial for positive workflow as well as for retaining regular guests and generating new guests based on recommendations. Resolving conflicts is seen as an important skill for the future as well but was also identified as one of the main gaps. Communication techniques and resilience could therefore be important training content for future skill development

The importance of green skills development in the German tourism industry was emphasised in the interviews. These skills aim to reduce the environmental impact of tourism and promote sustainability. Skills such as energy and water conservation, waste management, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy technologies, eco-friendly transportation, and environmental education were identified as crucial for sustainable tourism practices especially since rural tourism plays a big role in the German travel market. The participants highlighted the need for skills development in these areas to effectively manage climate change and meet the demand for sustainable and authentic tourism experiences.

It is important to highlight the role of training and development for tourism employees. Many organisations have recognized the importance of providing digital, socio-cultural and environmental/green skills training to their employees. Training methods vary widely and can be tailored to the needs of companies and their employees: some organisations offered online courses and tutorials, while others preferred in-house training or invited external training providers. Continuous learning, upskilling and reskilling are perceived as important to keep pace with new digital tools and technologies as well as changing socio-cultural and environmental trends. There were different opinions on the necessity and effectiveness of environmental labels. Some organisations have concerns about “greenwashing,” while others see such seals as a promotional quality feature that gives guests a measure of security.

In summary, it can be said that continuous learning and thus the development of digital, socio-cultural and ecological/green skills is important for the further development of the German tourism industry. Continuous learning, adaptation and skills development are crucial to meet the changing demands of the digital age but also the ever-growing environmental awareness and the desire for a healthier working world. All of these capabilities will undoubtedly impact customer experiences and provide opportunities for the future of tourism.

The best practice companies all show a very appreciative attitude towards their employees. Employees are seen as the company's most important resource. The perception of individuality plays a major role and so there are various offers ranging from coaching and training, health-promoting workplace design to memberships in fitness studios, massage vouchers and regular team events. All of this serves to keep employees happy and motivated. effects are

- lower fluctuation saves the expensive search for employees and training phases and gives a comfortable feeling, especially to returning guests.
- higher employee motivation and identification with the company, which is noticeable both in the external image and in fewer sick days
- a greater willingness to adopt new ways of organising and to continue training for the organisation.

The willingness to develop skills seems to be very strongly influenced by the way in which employees are treated.

# INTRODUCTION

The Erasmus+ PANTOUR Project is a European partnership for improving a collaborative and productive relationship between education and industry. PANTOUR is the follow-up project of the NTG project (Next Tourism Generation Skills Alliance; 2018-2022). The PANTOUR project aims specifically at designing innovative solutions to address skills needs in tourism.

With the exploitation of its outputs, PANTOUR seeks to benefit job seekers, employed and unemployed workers from the tourism industry, employers, SMEs, sector associations and policy makers. Therefore, it has dedicated special attention to the reskilling and upskilling of the generic workforce on future skills needs. To be able to achieve this goal, research has been conducted in every country of the project consortium, to investigate the future of tourism, skills gaps between current levels of skills in the tourism industry and the future skills needed in the future.

As a start, up to date information is needed. This will be covered with this Country Skills Profile Report: a comprehensive document, covering one country that provides an in-depth analysis of the general tourism and skills landscape, gaps, needs and workforce capabilities within a particular country. It serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, government officials, employers/employees, and educational institutions to understand the current state of skills and make informed decisions regarding workforce development strategies.

The purpose of this Country Skills Profile Report is to provide on the basis a comprehensive overview of the following:

General information of each country in the PANTOUR consortium regarding tourism and tourism employment, i.e., tourism facts & figures;

Summary of the current situation regarding the delivery of Digital, Green and Social Skills training provision for the main types of suppliers of education/training;

Analysis of online survey results within each country in the PANTOUR consortium, held among tourism professionals, HR managers and decision makers;

Overview of contemporary developments in tourism, trends in tourism employability, and the existing gaps between current levels of skills in the tourism industry and the projected future skills needed in 2030;

An inventory of Best Practices (i.e., innovative initiatives, projects, programs, philosophies, tools, methods, ideas, solutions, and concepts) in relation to upskilling, reskilling, attracting, and retaining staff in order to improve the knowledge on digital, social, and green skills development in tourism.



# 1. GENERAL TOURISM CHARACTERISTICS, FACTS & FIGURES OF GERMANY

The primary aim of this chapter of this Country Skills Profile report is to elaborate on general information and give a summary of the tourism situation in the country. This is conducted by collecting and analysing data from country sources and summarising these. The analysis is built upon existing online sources, course content, reports, existing research results, articles, books.

## 1.1 TOURISM FACTS & FIGURES

### *Tourism globally*

The tourism industry is a vast and complex sector that encompasses many industries, including accommodation, transport, attractions, travel companies, and more. According to the international statistics portal Statista (2023 [1]), the total contribution of travel and tourism to the global economy was \$ 7.71 trillion in 2022 (Statista, 2022), a 7.6% share of the total global GDP, remaining 5% below pre-pandemic levels.

Prior to the pandemic, Travel & Tourism was one of the largest sectors in the world and accounted for 1 in 4 jobs. Growth is expected at 5.8% annually between 2022 and 2032, outpacing the general economy.

The same source (Statista, 2023 [2]) reports that the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide was 963 million in 2022.

According to another study of Statista (2023), global employment in the travel and tourism sector rose slightly in 2022 over the previous year, following a sharp drop with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. Despite the increase, the number of travel and tourism jobs worldwide remained below pre-pandemic levels, totaling 295 million in 2022. As forecast, this figure is expected to grow to 320 million in 2023 and to 430 million in 2033.

### 1.1.1 Contribution of travel & tourism to GDP in Germany

In the year 2019, the tourism sector played a significant role in Germany's economy, employing a substantial portion of the workforce and contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the data provided by the Statistisches Bundesamt (2021), as cited in the report by Deutscher Tourismusverband, DTV (2022), several key facts highlight the importance of tourism:

1. Approximately 2.8 million individuals were directly employed in the tourism sector, constituting 6.1% of all employed persons in Germany during 2019.
2. In addition to direct employment, the tourism sector supported 1.3 million indirect jobs in the post-COVID year.
3. The broader workforce was significantly impacted by tourism, as 4.1 million individuals, equivalent to 9% of the workforce, relied on the sector for their livelihoods in 2019 .
4. The domestic tourism segment played a crucial role in the economy, contributing a gross value of 123.8 billion euros, which represented 3.99% of Germany's GDP in 2019 .
5. Accounting for indirect tourism-related production, the overall gross value associated with the sector reached 216.2 billion euros, contributing 6.96% to the GDP in 2019 .

6. The global COVID-19 pandemic inflicted substantial losses on the tourism industry, with projected sales in 2021 experiencing a staggering decline. The estimated loss of sales in 2021, compared to the year 2019, amounted to 58.9 billion euros (dwif-Consulting, 2022).

7. Looking at the broader picture of the sector's contribution to the GDP, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) reported that in 2020, the total contribution of travel and tourism to Germany's GDP was 217.2 billion euros, accounting for 6.3%. In 2021, despite a 5% increase compared to 2020, the sector's contribution remained at 6.4% of the GDP, amounting to 228 billion euros ( WTTC, 2022b). However, these figures still fell short of the pre-pandemic levels observed in 2019, when the overall contribution to the GDP was 355.3 billion euros, representing 9.8% (WTTC, 2022b).

These statistics highlight the role that tourism played in Germany's economy, both in terms of employment and its contribution to the GDP. However, the statistic shows that it is a bigger part of Germany's overall GDP yet not one of the major parts. Also, the industry faces substantial challenges and losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has a notable impact on its overall performance.

### 1.1.2 Size and relevance of the subsectors

The German tourism industry has experienced profound transformations in recent years, with various sectors adapting to changing visitor behaviours, technological advancements, and global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Visitor Attractions and Leisure Industry:** The leisure industry, encompassing a range of visitor attractions, faced a considerable decline in visitor numbers following the onset of the pandemic. In 2021, there were 44 percent fewer visitors compared to 2019 (Tourismusnetzwerk Rheinland-Pfalz, 2022, as cited by dwif-Consulting GmbH, 2022). This trend underscores the significant impact of the pandemic on the tourism sector's vitality.

**Accommodation Trends:** The accommodation sector also witnessed significant shifts in occupancy. In 2019, the sector recorded 495.6 million overnight stays and 190.9 million guest arrivals (Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2022, p. 9, as cited by Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021).

However, due to the pandemic's constraints, the figures dropped substantially in 2020, with only 302.3 million overnight stays and 98.1 million guest arrivals. In 2021, the sector showed some recovery with 310.2 million overnight stays and 96.8 million guest arrivals (Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2022, p. 9, as cited by Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021). This fluctuation reflects the challenges the accommodation sector faced in adapting to changing travel patterns.

**Food and Beverage Sector:** The food and beverage sector, an integral part of the tourism experience, witnessed a decline in revenue during the pandemic. Net earnings decreased from 94.7 billion euros in 2019 to 63.9 billion euros in 2020. Although there was a slight recovery in 2021, with net earnings reaching 64.3 billion euros, the sector continues to grapple with the aftermath of the pandemic (DEHOGA Bundesverband, o. D.).

**Destination Management and Technological Evolution:** In the realm of destination management, the rise of smart Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) has been notable. These DMOs actively drive a paradigm shift in destination management by incorporating technological innovations (Horster, 2022). DMOs function as crucial network nodes, fostering collaboration across various sectors within the tourism industry to enhance the visitor experience and integrate diverse aspects of a destination (Horster, 2022).

**Touroperators and Travel Agencies:** The role of tour operators and travel agencies has evolved alongside changing consumer preferences. In terms of revenue, the sector witnessed a decline, with earnings dropping from 35.4 billion euros in 2019 to 12.5 billion euros in 2020, and further to 10.7 billion euros in 2021 (DRV, 2022). Consumer booking behaviour also shifted, with 72% of Germans preferring online booking, compared to 28% opting for direct bookings at travel agencies (DRV, 2022).

### 1.1.3 Incoming and outgoing tourists

Overnight stays declined from 89.9 million in 2019 to 32 million in 2020, and further to 31 million in 2021 (Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2022, p. 9, as cited by Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021). Similarly, guest arrivals dropped from 39.6 million in 2019 to 12.4 million in 2020, and 11.7 million in 2021 (Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2022, p. 9, as cited by Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021). On the outbound front, German tourists reduced outbound trips from 52.1 million in 2019 to 27.7 million in 2020, before rebounding to 34.9 million in 2021 (Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2022, p. 12, as cited by Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021). These figures provide a succinct glimpse into the evolving dynamics of the tourism sector amid global uncertainties.

### 1.1.4 Share of different transportation modes (plane, car, train) in tourism

According to an evaluation by Deutscher Reiseverband (DRV), in the year 2018 usage of cars for holiday trips of 5 days or more was by 45%, 41% were trips by planes, and 11% with public transportation. Car usage rose from 43% in 2019 to 61% in 2020, stabilising at 55% in 2021 for travels. Plane travel dropped from 42% in 2019 to 26% in 2020, before recovering to 34% in 2021. Bus and train travel remained consistent, both at 6% in 2019, slightly varying to 4% for buses and 7% for trains in 2020, and returning to 4% for both in 2021 (DRV Deutscher Reiseverband, 2021). But trips of 4 or less days are not included in the statistic, which could have a significant impact on the share of transportation modes.

### 1.1.5 Arrivals of international versus national tourists

International and national arrivals in Germany experienced significant shifts over the past few years, reflecting evolving travel patterns and global dynamics. International arrivals registered 39.6 million visitors in 2019, sharply declining to 12.4 million in 2020, and further to 11.7 million in 2021 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021, as cited in Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2022).

Similarly, national arrivals encompassed 151.4 million individuals in 2019, which reduced to 85.7 million in 2020, and slightly further to 85.1 million in 2021 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021, as cited in Deutscher Tourismusverband, 2022).

The most prominent countries of origin for international tourists in Germany, as highlighted by the Federal Foreign Office (2019), included the Netherlands, Switzerland, the USA, China, Russia, and states within the Arabian Gulf. However, a more recent analysis by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2023) for 2022 revealed a shift in the top five countries of origin, which now comprise the Netherlands, Switzerland, the USA, Austria, and Poland. These trends underscore the fluid nature of tourism preferences and highlight the impact of global events on travel behaviours (German online platform for Statistics [Statista], 2023).

### **1.1.6 Type of travel: business travel, consumers/leisure travel**

Business and leisure travel patterns among European and overseas guests in Germany reveal interesting insights into the preferences and dynamics of different segments. These statistics, drawn from the DZT/WTM reports (2021) and IPK (2022), as cited in Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V. (2022), shed light on various aspects of travel behaviour.

Among European guests, business travel constituted 19% of visits, while leisure travel dominated at 81% (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V., 2022). Within the category of traditional business travel in Germany, European guests accounted for 52%, representing approximately 2.3 million trips. In contrast, promotional business travel comprised the remaining 48%, equivalent to approximately 2.1 million trips (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V., 2022).

Looking beyond European borders, overseas business travel accounted for 33%, totaling around 0.6 million journeys, while leisure travel dominated at 67% (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V., 2022). In terms of traditional overseas business travel, the proportion was 30%, while promotional business travel constituted the larger share at 70% (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V., 2022).

### 1.1.7 Company sizes

There are approximately 2,300 tour operators, 4,000 bus operators, 11,000 travel agencies in Germany and according to the Federal Statistical Office, there were a total of more than 235,000 companies in the hospitality industry in 2019, of which 189,000 were in the hospitality industry and 46,000 were accommodation providers. Due to the corona pandemic, the number of companies in the hospitality industry fell to 214,000 in 2020. Since then, there has been an upward trend and demand was back to around pre-pandemic levels in the summer of 2023. (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 2023) The German tourism industry consists largely of small and medium-sized businesses (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 2022). Beyond its direct impact, the tourism industry is interconnected within a broader value chain that influences other sectors such as transportation, trade, crafts, agriculture, health, leisure, and cultural and creative industries (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 2022).

## 1.2 TRAVEL AND TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT

In 2019, Germany's tourism industry was a major player in the job market. Around 2.8 million people were directly employed in tourism, making up 6.1% of all employed individuals (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021, as cited in Deutscher Tourismusverband, 2022). Additionally, another 1.3 million individuals found indirect employment opportunities within the sector during the same year (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021, as cited in Deutscher Tourismusverband, 2022, p. 4). Overall, about 4.1 million people, which is 9% of the workforce, relied on the tourism industry for their livelihoods in 2019 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021, as cited in Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2022, p. 4).

### **1.3 DIRECT AND TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM TO GDP IN 10 YEARS' TIME**

According to a forecast commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (2022) the overall GDP will be raising by 1.14% each year until 2030. The overall share of the GDP was forecast to rise between 2022 and 2028 by a total of 2.3% with a result of 9.23% in 2028 (Statista, 2022). This would be nearly the same level as before the Pandemic where the contribution was at 9.8% (Statista referring to World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2022a).

### **1.4 DIRECT AND TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM TO EMPLOYMENT OF TOURISM IN 10 YEARS' TIME**

Data shows a trend that in 2028 the Tourism Industry would contribute over 3.7 million jobs directly compared to 2018 and a total contribution of over 6.5 million workplaces (WTTC, 2018). Yet a lot of Germany's industries are facing a drastic labour shortage and a lack of job trainees in the last years (dwif-Consulting o. D.). A Report states that in 2030 there will be only 27.8 million people who are of working age with a professional qualification compared to 2020 when it were 31.6 million (IW Köln, 2021).

### **1.5 MAIN FOCUS POINTS OF NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR TOURISM**

The national strategy for tourism in Germany is underpinned by several key priorities. These include a strong emphasis on sustainability, aiming for climate-neutral tourism, as well as the integration of digitization to enhance the industry's efficiency and reach. Moreover, the strategy takes into account the social impact of tourism and strives to ensure the availability of skilled workers in the sector (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 2022c.).



Furthermore, a critical aspect of the strategy is to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, acknowledging the need for recovery and resilience in the face of the unprecedented disruptions caused by the global health crisis. This multifaceted approach encompasses various dimensions to steer the tourism sector towards sustainable growth and navigate the evolving landscape.

## 1.6 COUNTRY-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN TOURISM

One of the challenges the industry in Germany faces is that the long-term consequences of the Corona crisis must be sustained and to ultimately strengthened to initiate a new phase of tourism (Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2020, p. 1). The milestones take up the future topics of climate neutrality/environmental and nature conservation, digitization, securing skilled workers and competitiveness in tourism, which will be included as focus points in the planned work program of the federal government. (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD],2021) The work program will be based on concrete cross-sector and sector-specific measures and is to be presented before the end of this year (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 2022b).

According to the Federal Employment Agency, there were around 19% fewer in 2021 Employees subject to social security contributions in tourism occupations as of 2019 (Agentur für Arbeit 2022,5). The federal government will continue to develop its cross-sector skilled labour strategy. In addition to training and further education one milestone is the immigration of skilled workers. The federal government will support companies in the tourism industry on their way to the digital support ages. It is important to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by digitization to tap better into the challenges associated with digitization to be prepared and to promote the spread of innovations in the industry.

Another challenge is that sustainable tourism also involves the inclusion of people's disabilities which means more accessibility in tourism is needed. The realisation of a "Travel for all", which is a Germany-wide initiative of the federal and state governments (Reisen für Alle, [www.reisen-fuer-alle.de](http://www.reisen-fuer-alle.de)), not only serves to enable travellers with disabilities to participate, but also opens up other customer groups and will be therefore in the interest of the industry itself. The initiative is aimed at barrier-free tourism and barrier-free leisure activities at all levels where freedom from barriers is needed to enable everyone to travel. For example, there are certified cycle and hiking trails that have been labelled as barrier-free and tourism businesses can also obtain certification. Certification can then take place under the following aspects:

- People with walking disabilities and wheelchair users
- People with hearing impairments and deaf people
- People with visual impairments and blind people
- People with cognitive impairments

## 2. CURRENT SKILLS

# TRAINING DELIVERY IN

# GERMANY

In this section, you will find an overview of the training delivery of skills sets in Germany. The mainly state-funded, vocational and higher education institutions predominantly consist of public establishments. As a result, providers of tourism education and training also tend to be public entities, such as vocational colleges and universities of applied sciences. In Germany, a wide range of training opportunities are available, which include different educational paths in order to meet the needs and interests of the people.

One of the most unique types of educational paths in Germany is dual training or studies. This combines the imparting of theoretical knowledge in vocational school or university with practical approaches in a training company. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) is the patron of this system and checks, for example, whether trainers in a company have the necessary qualifications (“Facts on dual training”, 2022). With uniform tests, it ensures that the level of the vocational schools imparts the necessary knowledge. The high level of training allows trainees a good start to their careers with high qualifications and also provides companies with advantages. Vocational schools also offer opportunities for training, without the dual component, a purely school-based vocational training. For practical experience and a deeper insight into the industry, many tourism companies offer internships and trainee programs. These allow trainees to develop practical skills and immerse themselves in different areas of the sector.

For those looking to pursue an academic career, there is a wide range of degree programs in tourism. Bachelor courses such as tourism management, hotel management, event management or tourism science offer a solid academic basis. There are specialised programs at master level, such as International Tourism Management or Sustainable Tourism Management.

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Universities of applied sciences are mainly regional higher education institutions whose activities highlight their connection to working life and regional development. They provide education for professional expert tasks that are based on the requirements of working life. Universities of applied sciences provide *bachelor's and master's degrees*. Bachelor's degrees are mainly targeted to young people without higher education and master's degrees are targeted to adults who have already gained work experience and want to progress in their career. Both degrees are also offered for adults and can be studied while working with the blended learning model. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023b.)

In addition, tourism authorities are very active in skills development. As the tourism industry is dominated by micro and small size companies, it is essential to increase their skills to ensure profitability and competitiveness. For that, different institutions offer different extensive further training opportunities, which can be used after training or studies. These range from certificate courses to specialised seminars and workshops that focus on areas such as digital marketing in tourism, hotel management or event planning.

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#### **a) Academic training delivery in different degrees, training types and numbers**

In Germany in total there are 87 courses to get academic education at 33 different Universities of Applied Sciences and 3 academies. All 33 Universities of applied sciences offer Bachelor degrees, 12 of them also offer Master degrees and 3 offer additional certificate courses as further education for people already working in the tourism industry. Three academies also offer certificate courses for further education reasons to people in the tourism industry.

All certificate courses are offered as distance learning courses in order to enable the participants to develop professionally alongside their work.

Universities of applied sciences offer both, distance learning and on campus learning but are mainly still focused on on campus learning / face-to-face teaching. Therefore in Germany, most universities offer an extension of the study period and part-time studies so that you can take part in academic training alongside your job. A dual system has also been established in the academic field at some universities of applied sciences.

In dual studies, students alternate between three months at the university of applied sciences and three months at their training company. The dual study program is usually completed with a bachelor's degree. In the table below the dual studies are count in the On-Campus-Section as training is offered in presence.

All degree programs in Germany that lead to a bachelor's or master's degree must be accredited. The Accreditation Council Foundation, as an institution of the federal states, is jointly responsible for quality assurance and teaching at German universities. The students can therefore be sure that their degree is recognized nationally and internationally and that they can pursue further qualifications up to a Ph.D. empowered.

### **Innovative example: Three academic providers worked as a team to develop an academic offering in the area of future tourism**

The master's degree program Transformation and Sustainable Habitat Development - Redesigning Tourism, newly founded in 2023, is part of a cooperation between the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and the Deggendorf, Kempten and Munich universities - all of which have a high level of tourism expertise. The master's program offers a combination of academic qualifications (through the university) and professional competence (through the universities) by linking well-founded theories with course-specific application contexts and current developments in practice.

The courses in the master's program in Transformation and Sustainable Habitat Development take place digitally as distance learning. However, blocked portions of selected modules per semester are carried out in person. The digital master's program Transformation and Sustainable Habitat Development - Redesigning Tourism is a university offering that is characterised by an interplay of disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary development expertise. The focus is on research-oriented transfer with close links to practise. After completing their first professional degree, students can acquire important skills in the areas of social

skills, green skills and digital skills in 4 semesters and complete their studies with a Master of Science.

## **b) Vocational education in the dual System**

Vocational education in the dual system takes place both in companies and in schools. As a rule, you work 3-4 days a week in the training company and attend vocational school 1-2 days a week. Thus, the trainees receive practical training and professional experience in the training company and theoretical knowledge in the vocational school.

Typical apprenticeships in tourism include:

- Travel agent
- Hotel specialist
- Salesperson for tourism and leisure
- Event manager
- Aviation clerk
- Cook
- Restaurant specialist

Building on this vocational education training, various further training courses can be taken later in professional life. In Germany, these are offered both by state further education institutions, in particular the IHKs, and by private further education providers as well as private and state universities of applied sciences. At the universities of applied sciences, these are usually certificate courses (see table above).

In some cases, after several years of professional experience in tourism and/or successfully completed further training, it is also possible to qualify for studying at a university of applied sciences to get a Bachelor's degree without having a high school diploma.

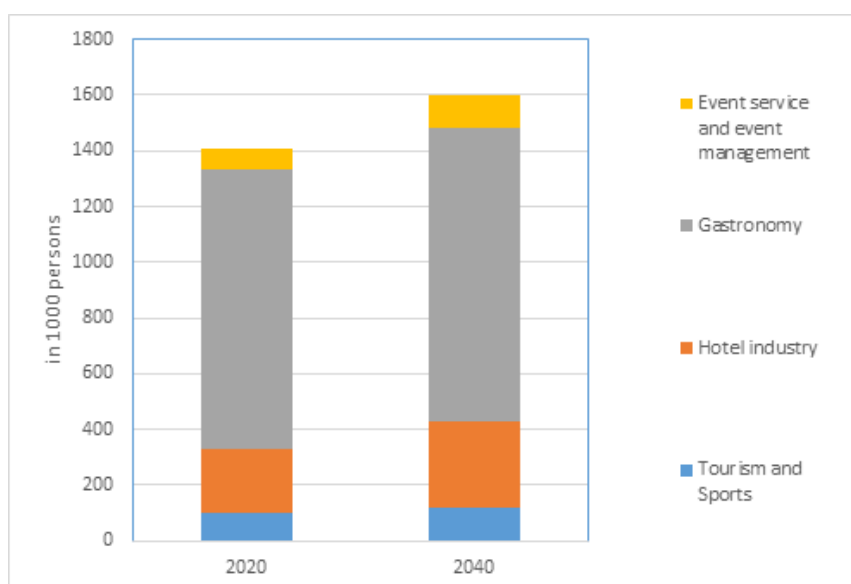
Since 2010, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) and the Institute for Labor Market and Vocational Research (IAB), in collaboration with the Society

for Economic Structural Research (GWS), have been producing a basic projection every two years on the long-term development of labour demand and supply according to qualifications and occupations ([www.QuBe-Projekt.de](http://www.QuBe-Projekt.de)). Tourism professions are summarised in the main professional group “tourism, hotel and restaurant professions”. A main occupational group combines occupations based on the similarity of the activities, knowledge and skills that characterise them. The main professional group “tourism, hotel and restaurant professions” includes the following professional groups:

- Tourism and sports
- Hotel industry
- Gastronomy
- Event service and management

The current survey shows the expected development of tourism jobs in these professional groups until 2040. The diagram clearly shows once again that most jobs in tourism are carried out in the hotel and catering industry. This once again illustrates the great importance of quality standards for vocational training and non-academic further training.

Fig.1: Long-term development of labour demand and supply by qualifications and occupations  
 Source: QuBe-Projekt, QuBe-Basisprojektion6.Welle, Statistisches Bundesamt



In order to show the relevance of digitization for the demand side of the tourism industry, the study "The mobile traveller" was published by Google, TUI Germany and two market research institutes, called TNS and GfK, in 2016. According to this, 90% of all bookings are researched online at least at one point in time, 50% of them via smartphone. According to the study, the Internet is used heavily for inspiration. The booking process itself also shows a strong tendency to shift to the digital world. 50% of all holiday trips and 32% of package tours were booked online at the time of the survey. This makes it clear that customer orientation today also includes the provision of digital information and booking options. Therefore employees in the tourism sector need to understand how digital processes work and how to deal with it from the tourism supply side.

These assessments are also consistent with a BitCom study from 2021. According to this, the digital world now plays an important role in motivating/inspiring people to take a trip. For 25% of all trips booked, the inspiration for the destination comes from the Internet.

Equally exciting about the above named study are the findings of a survey in which the respondents express their wishes for the tourism industry in connection with digitization. According to this, 78 percent of those surveyed would be happy to have tablets and/or other electronic devices as support for personal advice. 70 percent would like to see 360-degree images of their travel destination on a screen in a travel agency. 51 percent stated that they would use virtual reality glasses for a realistic experience of the holiday destination. And here, too, it is important that employees in tourism have the appropriate skills to be able to help guests if necessary and support all processes in dealing with digital media and thus offer an optimal service in the area of digital support.

In theory, there is an awareness of the necessity and use of digital skills, and this awareness is being met more and more often in practice. In addition to the needs of the demand side, there are of course also the needs and requirements of the supply side, which must take into account the financial and human resources. To fulfil different needs in Germany and there are a wide variety of offers from private and state providers, from simple office training to scrum master training



as well as from social networking and handling online reviews to programming apps. Special training courses for the tourism industry often relate to booking systems such as Amadeus Fire. Local tourism associations are increasingly offering training courses on how to use digital media, which is then also used by consumers. In addition, larger tourism companies often offer internal training courses by particularly qualified employees or hire external trainers for training courses and coaching that are specially tailored to the company's needs.

The demographic data shows that in Germany we live in an ageing society, in which more people have died than have been born since 1972. Since the 1970s, Germany has been one of the countries with a very low birth rate. Due to the good medical care, life expectancy is increasing at the same time. The retirement age has already been raised to 67 and there are occasionally people who are happy to continue working beyond that age. This development means that the number of digital immigrants in companies is significantly higher than the number of digital natives and there is a need for training that must be adapted to older learners. In addition, there is a lack of skilled workers and companies increasingly have to resort to career changers, who often have a greater need for training at the beginning.

So key challenges on the supply side are training digital skills to employees with little digital knowledge as well as training digital skills to employees with no or little experience in the tourism sector. On the demand side dealing with the demographic change also is a challenge as employees in the tourism sector will have to be able to show guests with little digital experience how things like apps, digital maps and digital menu cards work.

In Germany, sustainability and environmentally friendly travel have long played a role in tourism education. Particularly in the field of academic education, there are study programmes that deal intensively with this, such as Sustainable Tourism Management in Eberswalde, the international Applied Leisure Science degree programme in Bremen and the Tourism Future degree programme in Kempten. Overall, the teaching of green skills is integrated into almost all tourism training and study programmes.

The Federal Environment Agency regularly publishes tourism-related studies and data on ecological trends and needs, particularly with regard to climate change. It also offers digital training courses on green skills. The regions in Germany with the highest demand for tourism, namely the Alpine and low mountain regions as well as the coastal regions, are most affected by climate change. Snow reliability in the Alps and low mountain ranges is no longer the same as it was 20 years ago and water quality is also changing due to the rise in average water temperature (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 2022c).

On the one hand, the Alpine regions are responding to the warmer winters with modern snowmaking systems in order to maintain ski tourism. Tourism concepts for the summer months are also increasingly specialising in family-friendly and adventure-oriented offers close to nature. The demand for sustainable and rural tourism is high, which is also due to the fact that people's environmental awareness is increasing and many people are consciously deciding against travelling by air because of climate change. This awareness also benefits coastal regions. Despite the change in water quality mentioned at the beginning, swimming in the North Sea and Baltic Sea is still good and there are constant checks on water quality, which gives a feeling of safety. Older people in particular often make a conscious decision to holiday in Germany because the heat in warmer countries can sometimes be very difficult for them. Here it becomes clear that, despite all the problems that climate change also brings for incoming tourism in Germany, there are ways of dealing with the situation. Ultimately, however, this only means that a dilemma can be dealt with as well as possible, but that this approach cannot last for long as climate change progresses. Climate protection and the associated skills must be a major priority for tourism, as it has been noticeable in recent years what a fragile and incredibly valuable asset the climate is for tourism.

Digital developments can also play their part in improving environmental awareness. Things like saving paper by using digital cards are already well accepted by consumers. As already noted in the study mentioned under 2.1, interest in virtual alternatives to real experiences is also increasing. These offers can make a contribution to environmental protection if, for example, sensitive

ecosystems can be better protected. Against this backdrop, climate change is one of the greatest challenges for sustainable tourism and has an impact on all areas of this study. It is precisely these challenges that are dealt with intensively in the above-mentioned study programmes in order to develop and promote green skills for the future.

## 2.2 GREEN SKILLS

In Germany, sustainability and environmentally friendly travel have long played a role in tourism education. Particularly in the field of academic education, there are study programmes that deal intensively with this, such as Sustainable Tourism Management in Eberswalde, the international Applied Leisure Science degree programme in Bremen and the Tourism Future degree programme in Kempten. Overall, the teaching of green skills is integrated into almost all tourism training and study programmes.

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## **2.3 SOCIAL SKILLS**

Awareness of the importance of sociocultural skills has been steadily increasing since the 1970s. Soft skills training for employees is in great demand in all customer-oriented industries and is now part of the training standard, including in vocational trainings on the tourism sector. Due to advancing digitalization and increasing environmental awareness, a multidisciplinary field of adult educational

offerings for the tourism industry has emerged. Communication and behaviour training is usually already involved in university studies and takes this multidisciplinary field into consideration. In some cases, even complete courses in the field of communication psychology with a specific point of view on tourist needs have a permanent place in the curriculum.

The sociocultural level also plays an important role in personnel management. There is increasing awareness in management that satisfied employees have a positive impact on customers and that low fluctuation leads to trust on both the employee and customer sides. The human factor therefore plays a significant key role in tourism. Trends in exactly this field were intensively examined by the German National Tourist Board and the Federal Tourism Competence Center.

As in other areas, tourism is also faced with a major challenge from a socio-cultural perspective due to the ageing population. Accessibility is playing an increasingly important role as the older generation represents an important target group for tourism. For those working in tourism, this also means being trained to deal with older people.

In addition, awareness of inclusion is increasing, which offers great opportunities for employers and employees, especially in the tourism and hospitality industries. However, vocational schools and training providers must adapt their curricula to the new situation and enable inclusive learning. The Federal Participation Act stipulates throughout Germany that people with disabilities must be given access to education and training. Schools and other training centres have become increasingly better prepared for this in recent years.

In German social legislation, "... a distinction is made between offers for "people with disabilities" (SGB IX § 2) and offers for "young people in need of support" (SGB III. § 78). This distinction means that young people have different vocational training options and support services available at different learning locations. Young people with learning disabilities and social disadvantages who are likely to have difficulty completing vocational training are considered to be in need of support. This group of people is also summarised under the term "disadvantaged

young people”: young people who, due to social, individual and structural disadvantages, do not have access to training or need support to complete it.

Offers for people with disadvantages:

- Vocational training in external institutions (BaE) (SGB III, §76)
- Assisted training flexible (AsA flex) (SGB III, §§ 74 – 75a)
- Youth social work (SGB VIII, § 13)

Offers for people with disabilities:

- Dual vocational training on the basis of the Vocational Training Act (§64 - §66) and the Crafts Code (§42k - §42n)
- Benefits for participation in working life (SGB IX, § 49)
- Budget for work (SGB IX, § 61)
- Budget for training (SGB IX, § 61a)
- Accompanied in-company training (SGB III, §117)

Additional organisational and financial support options are provided for the companies.

There are also other offers that offer young people long-term support in the transition to working life, for example interlinked training with vocational training centres, voluntary advice and support services (e.g. job sponsorship model). In addition, a variety of other offers are anchored at the municipal level.

Due to demographic change and the effects of the Corona pandemic, there is a major shortage of skilled workers in the hotel and hospitality industry, which is in Germany currently probably the biggest challenge from a socio-cultural perspective. The industry relies on skilled workers from abroad as well as career changers. This requires intensive training in the areas of intercultural competence, service orientation and guest care as well as language courses.” (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, 2223-10-02:

<https://www.bibb.de/de/66304.php>)

# 3. SURVEY RESULTS

In this chapter, an analysis is provided of the online survey results within Germany, held among tourism professionals, HR managers and decision makers. This survey aimed to investigate the gap between current levels of (green, social, digital) skills in the tourism industry and the future skills needed in 2030 – resulting in quantitative data about the skills gaps and future needs. In summary:

- Key trends are extracted from the survey results of {COUNTY NAME} to establish how the sector is responding to the skill sets, highs, lows, current and future level of proficiency in Green, Digital and socio-cultural skills sets.
- An explanation and discussion of the results is provided.
- Gaps are indicated in the current and future level of proficiency in Green, Digital and Socio-cultural levels of proficiency. Comments are made on specific shortages or excellent/good proficiency in different skills and the areas of significant weakness.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Total number of responses Germany</b>           | <b>33 (including category 'Other' =5)</b> |
| <b>Number of responses per tourism sub sector:</b> |   |
| Destination management organisations:              | 5   |
| Accommodation providers:                           | 11  |
| Food & Beverage:                                   | 2   |
| Visitor attractions:                               | 2   |
| Travel agents and tour operators:                  | 8   |

## 3.1 DIGITAL SKILLS

### Digital Skills

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Current existing level of proficiency</p>         | <p><b>Highest:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 3,82 Use of office applications (text processing, spreadsheets, presentation software)</li><li>2. 3,48 Use of digital marketing systems and communication platforms (social media networks, e-mail and direct marketing systems, content management systems)</li><li>3. 3,33 Secure information processing (backing-up, cybersecurity, data protection)</li><li>4. 2,97 Digital privacy and ethics</li><li>5. 2,45 Digital business analysis, business intelligence, data-driven decision making</li></ol>           |
|  | <p><b>Lowest:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 1,42 Use of robots</li><li>2. 1,58 Use of digital technologies to create guest experiences (e.g., for Virtual- and Augmented Reality)</li><li>3. 1,67 Use of generative AI applications (e.g. ChatGPT, Midjourney, DALL-E, etc.) for generating text and visuals</li><li>4. 2,15 Web&amp; app development and programming</li></ol>   |
| <p>Future necessary level of proficiency in 2030</p> | <p><b>Most necessary:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 4,36 Use of digital marketing systems and communication platforms (social media networks, e-mail and direct marketing systems, content management systems)</li><li>2. 4,33 Secure information processing (backing-up, cybersecurity, data protection)</li><li>3. 4,24 Use of office applications (text processing, spreadsheets, presentation software)</li><li>4. 3,88 Digital privacy and ethics</li><li>5. 3,52 Digital business analysis, business intelligence and data-driven decision making</li></ol> |
|  | <p><b>Least necessary:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 2,27 Use of robots</li><li>2. 2,64 Use of digital technologies to create guest experiences (e.g., for Virtual- and Augmented Reality)</li><li>3. 2,94 Use of generative AI applications (e.g.</li></ol>  |



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | ChatGPT, Midjourney, DALL-E, etc.) for generating text and visuals<br>4. 3,15 Web & app development and programming  |
| Skills gaps between existing and future level of skills sets | <p><b>Largest gaps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,27 Use of generative AI applications (e.g. ChatGPT, Midjourney, DALL-E, etc.) for generating text and visuals.</li> <li>1,07 Digital business analysis, business intelligence, data-driven decision making</li> <li>1,06 Use of digital technologies to create guest experiences (e.g., for Virtual- and Augmented Reality)</li> <li>1,0 Web &amp; app development &amp; programming</li> </ol> <p>1,0: Secure information processing (backing up, cyber security, data protection) &amp;<br/>1,0 Secure information processing (backing up, cyber security, data protection)</p> |
|  | <p><b>Smallest gaps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0,42 Use of office applications (text processing, spreadsheets, presentation software)</li> <li>0,85 Use of robots</li> <li>0,88 Use of digital marketing systems and communication platforms (social media networks, e-mail and direct marketing systems, content management systems)</li> <li>0,91 Digital privacy and ethics</li> </ol>   |

The biggest gaps in digital skills appear to be in the area of using AI and data based intelligence. These are new technologies that are still treated with a certain degree of scepticism in a previously people-oriented professional field such as tourism. The strongly internalised phrase “*Never change a running system*” may subconsciously contribute to the scepticism towards new technologies. However, introducing new technologies is always a cost factor. The losses incurred by many tourism companies as a result of the corona pandemic are also leading, among other things, to greater reluctance to invest in this area, as studies by DTV and the Bavarian Center for Tourism showed (Statista, 2022).

Nevertheless, the development and promotion of digital skills is considered to be of great importance for the future tourism generation.

Digital marketing systems and communication platforms (4,36), secure information processing (4,33) and the use of office applications (4,24) are seen as important skills of the future. On the other hand, digital marketing and networking as well as security-relevant topics such as data protection and the prevention of cybercrime are seen as very important. This also reflects the understanding of values established in German society as recorded by Statista, in which the need for security often goes hand in hand with scepticism towards rather new things such like digitalisation.

In summary, one can say that in Germany in general there is a higher level of scepticism towards new technologies such as artificial intelligence in the area of digital skills and that skills in the area of robotics or virtual and augmented reality are not viewed as particularly important for the near future, which is also shown by a BearingPoint consumer survey in 2023.

## 3.2. GREEN/ENVIRONMENTAL SKILL SETS

### Green Skills

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Current existing level of proficiency         | <p><b>Highest:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3,06 Efficient use of resources (e.g., energy, water, materials)</li> <li>2. 2,82 Green marketing and product development</li> <li>3. 2,76 Promotion and encouragement of sustainable practices among guests</li> <li>4. 2,73 Understanding of environmental laws and regulations</li> <li>5. 2,70 Use of technology to speed up the green transition</li> </ol> <p><b>Lowest:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2,09 Measurement and management of CO2 emissions</li> <li>2. 2,42 Adoption of environmental certifications and management systems</li> <li>3. 2,52 Communication about the organisation's efforts towards a green economy</li> <li>4. 2,61 Green procurement and greening the supply chain (working with green suppliers)</li> <li>5. 2,64 Measurement and management of waste</li> </ol>          |
| Future necessary level of proficiency in 2030 | <p><b>Most necessary:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4,27 Efficient use of resources (e.g., energy, water, materials)</li> <li>2. 4,0 Promotion and encouragement of sustainable practices among guests</li> <li>3. 3,94 Use of technology to speed up the green transition</li> <li>4. 3,91 Green procurement and greening the supply chain (working with green suppliers)</li> <li>5. 3,88 Understanding of environmental laws and regulations &amp; 3,88 Measurement and Management of waste</li> </ol> <p><b>Least necessary:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3,42 Adoption of environmental certifications and management systems</li> <li>2. 3,48 Measurement and management of CO2 emissions</li> <li>3. 3,82 Green marketing and product development</li> <li>4. 3,85 Communication about the organisation's efforts towards a green economy</li> </ol> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Skills gaps between existing and future level of skills sets | <p><b>Largest gaps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1,39 Measurement and management of CO2 emissions</li> <li>2. 1,33 Communication about the organisation's efforts towards a green economy</li> <li>3. 1,30 Green procurement and greening the supply chain (working with green suppliers)</li> <li>4. 1,24 Measurement and management of waste</li> <li>5. 1,24 Use of technology to speed up the green transition</li> </ol> <p><b>Smallest gaps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1,0 Green marketing and product development</li> <li>2. 1,0 Adoption of environmental certifications and management systems</li> <li>3. 1,15 Understanding of environmental laws and regulations</li> <li>4. 1,21 Efficient use of resources (e.g. energy, water, materials)</li> <li>5. 1,24 Promotion and encouragement of sustainable practices among guests</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

Measurement and management of CO2 emissions is still seen as one of the largest gaps (1,39) although measuring results are published relatively often in statistics in various media. However, measurement for individual companies often does not seem to be taking place yet and there is obviously a desire for more transparency in this area in order to uncover individual weak points and be able to carry out concrete actions. Communication about the various efforts of tourism stakeholders is also not yet considered sufficient (1,33). There is obviously still a need for action and improved communication skills in order to communicate existing efforts and progress to the outside world. The fact that efforts and progress are being made can be seen from the fact that the efficient use of resources is rated as good. In addition, green marketing and green product development as well as the promotion of sustainable practices among guests are also rated as being at a high level.

“Efficient use of resources (e.g., energy, water, materials)” (4,27), “Promotion and encouragement of sustainable practices among guests” (4,0) and “Use of technology to speed up the green transition” (3,94) were named as the most

necessary green skill in the future which demonstrates a high awareness of the implementation of sustainable strategies and a strong need for practical action.

### 3.3 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SKILL SETS

| <b>Social-cultural skills</b>                        |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Current existing level of proficiency</b>         | <p><b>Highest:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3,85 Provide excellent customer service</li> <li>2. 3,76 Communicate effectively with guests and colleagues</li> <li>3. 3,73 Work effectively in a team</li> <li>4. 3,73 Support diversity, equality and inclusivity</li> <li>5. 3,67 Resolve conflicts</li> </ol> <p><b>Lowest:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3,15 Communicate effectively with guests in their native language</li> <li>2. 3,48 Adaptability to change and handle unexpected situations</li> <li>3. 3,48 Understand the cultural setting of the own destination and share this information with guests</li> <li>4. 3,52 Communicate and interact with people from different cultural and social backgrounds</li> </ol>                 |
|  |   |
| <b>Future necessary level of proficiency in 2030</b> | <p><b>Most necessary:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4,48 Provide excellent customer service</li> <li>2. 4,45 Communicate effectively with guests and colleagues</li> <li>3. 4,42 Work effectively in a team</li> <li>4. 4,42 Resolve conflicts</li> <li>5. 4,36 Adaptability to change and handle unexpected situations</li> </ol> <p><b>Least necessary:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3,61 Communicate effectively with guests in their native language</li> <li>2. 3,97 Understand the cultural setting of the own destination and share this information with guests</li> <li>3. 4,03 Communicate and interact with people from different cultural and social backgrounds</li> <li>4. 4,14 Support diversity, equality and inclusivity</li> </ol> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p><b>Largest gaps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 0,88 Adaptability to change and handle unexpected situations</li> <li>2. 0,75 Resolve conflicts</li> <li>3. 0,69 Work effectively in a team</li> <li>4. 0,69 Communicate effectively with guests and colleagues</li> <li>5. 0,63 Provide excellent customer service</li> </ol>   |
| Skills gaps between existing and future level of skills sets | <p><b>Smallest gaps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 0,42 support diversity, equality and inclusivity</li> <li>2. 0,46 Communicate effectively with guests in their native language</li> <li>3. 0,49 Understand the cultural setting of the own destination and share this information with guests</li> <li>4. 0,51 Communicate and interact with people from different cultural and social backgrounds</li> </ol> |

The largest gap in the socio-cultural field is seen in the adaptability to handle unexpected situations (0,88). After tourism was exposed to an extremely challenging, unexpected situation with the pandemic, which caused high economic damage and whose effects can still be felt even after all pandemic-related measures have been ended, this is understandable. The desire for a strategy to be able to deal with such situations is perceived as essential and was named as very important. The survey shows that customer service and an effective communication with guests and colleagues already is perceived at a high level (3,85 and 3,76) but still is seen as most necessary skills for the future (4,48 and 4,45). Communicating with guests in their native language therefore is not seen as very important (3,61) which could have something to do with the fact that most tourists in Germany still come from their own country. The highest number of foreign guests come, according to DZT/Germany travel, from the Netherlands and the second highest number from Switzerland. (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus [DZT], 2022) the Dutch guests are known to have a relatively good knowledge of German and/or to show a great willingness to speak German during their trip. Furthermore they have very good knowledge of English. After the Dutch, as mentioned above, the Swiss are a nation that books a relatively high number of vacation trips to Germany. Here too, there is only a very small language barrier, as German is one of the official languages in Switzerland. The

surveys revealed that this is one reason why intensive language skills are sometimes not yet viewed as very important in the German tourism industry. Since most foreign guests who travel to Germany have at least a basic knowledge of the German language, many people who work in the tourism industry find that it is sufficient to speak German and (school) English. Nevertheless, it is important to keep an eye on developments in order to be able to react quickly to changes.

A great awareness of service quality seems to be firmly anchored among tourism players in Germany. However, there is still work to be done on openness and willingness to interact with guests from other cultures as well as conflict management skills.

# 4. EXPERT INTERVIEW

## RESULTS

In this chapter, the results are presented of the semi-structured interviews that have been held with experts in tourism in Germany. With these interviews, we are seeking more detailed knowledge and fresh insights regarding trends in tourism, in tourism employment and in the development of Digital, Green, Social and Cultural skills in tourism. Semi-structured interviews are an appropriate tool for this purpose, since they allow for new understandings and thoughts to surface during such interviews, which further facilitate participants' responses and elaborations.

In total, 12 interviews have been held, equally divided over the five tourism subsectors (travel agents/tour operators, destination management organisations, visitor attractions, accommodation providers and food & beverage providers). Interviewees were senior managers; human resource managers; company owners; entrepreneurs; heads of department.

### 4.1 THE FUTURE OF TOURISM AND TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

#### 4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Several societal megatrends - already visible today but with their full impact still unknown - are heavily influencing the future of tourism. Demographic developments - the continued growth of the global middle class, increasingly elderly tourists, digital natives coming of age and entering the travel market, more Asian tourists - will result in additional and diverse tourist preferences and choices. Technological innovations (AI, robotization, virtual and augmented reality, etc.) will continue to impact tourism and transform business models, jobs in tourism and tourist experiences. Social developments (Covid and health issues, migration, economic uncertainty, uproar and wars) will also have their impact on tourism.



The inclusion of more sustainable practices is also a widely debated topic in the consumption, production, and development of tourism.

Looking at developments in employment, the tourism and hospitality sector has special characteristics: e.g., working on weekends and holidays, multiple shifts, seasonal work, etc. These atypical forms of employment include a variety of work contracts (e.g., temporary work, part-time work, temporary agency work and other multi-party employment arrangements).

In order to keep pace with all these developments, the tourism sector needs to be prepared for these changes: to transform the tasks expected by employers into new jobs, thereby making the jobs attractive to future employees and offer them career perspectives.

In this section, we aim to get an overall understanding of the interview participants' ideas of the evolution of the tourism sector, tourism employment and the emergence of new job profiles – in tourism in general and specifically in relation to the own organisation, in about seven years' time.

Questions that have been discussed with participants were the following:

- What will the sector and your organisation and the sector look like around 2030? Which new changes do you perceive could occur in your business?
- What impact do the current megatrends and crises (Covid-19 / health; Ukraine War; migration; demographics; environment and climate; energy; cost-of-living) have on employment in your organisation and how does your organisation deal with the consequences of these crises?
- What kind of people will be working in your organisation around 2030? Will there be a significant increase/decrease in the number of employees? And if so, how are these employees different from your current workers?
- How is your organisation changing the tasks that will be required into new job profiles?

- The above-mentioned developments have also transformed the way people work. New concepts such as working from home (WFH); digital nomads; hybrid working; workations; remote working; etc. have emerged or intensified. Which work forms are you now experiencing in your organisation and what effect does this have on recruiting new personnel?
- How does your organisation deal with societal developments such as diversity, inclusion, and flexibility within the recruitment process?
- Which new job profiles do you see emerging in your organisation in the next seven years (2030) and why? Which new job positions will emerge and/or will be 'copied' from other sectors?

#### 4.1.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

##### The industry is changing

The interviews emphasised that the tourism industry is experiencing very turbulent times, which makes it very difficult to predict the future. A major portion of the interviewees emphasised that the industry must adapt and move away from mass tourism to more individualised tourism concepts, as this is becoming more relevant. Organisations are taking steps to attract a wider audience, including younger generations, and are exploring ways to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. It is believed that travel will become more expensive for potential tourists, but there won't be a collapse in travel. It is believed that people will become more conscious about the regions they visit.

##### Recruitment and Workforce

Many interviewees raised concerns about tourism as the industry is not a popular employer. A common challenge mentioned throughout the interviews is the shortage of skilled workers, and consequently, the difficulty of recruiting. Younger generations entering the job market have different expectations and preferences when it comes to work arrangements. They seek flexibility, work-life balance, and opportunities for growth and development. Organisations must adapt their offerings to align with these changing expectations while also catering to the needs of experienced workers.

The interviews have shown that organisations have acknowledged the value of their employees and offer benefits to retain and attract talent. Additionally, some of the interviewees have shown that seasonality makes tourism employment very challenging. Seasonality is a significant problem in tourism employment. Business operations must be developed year-round to increase tourism employment. As a major proportion of the employees are seasonal, organisations try to recruit the same employees who worked during the past season, which makes the introduction slightly easier. To find employees, tourism organisations use various innovative means to market themselves.

One of the key points in tourism employment will be the need for an international workforce, which already plays a significant role in employment in tourism and will increase. Due to this, long-term concepts are needed to attract, retain, and promote them.

Remote work has become increasingly relevant due to factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, technological advancements, and changing workforce expectations. Distance work has become possible in the tourism industry in all back-office operations, e.g. sales, marketing, administrative tasks. This division of roles between remote and on-site work requires careful planning to ensure operational efficiency and maintain the quality of customer service.

### Sustainability and Environmental Consciousness

Interviewees across the board highlight the evolving mindset of travellers towards sustainability and the growing importance of sustainable practices in the tourism sector. Multiple interviewees emphasise that travellers are expected to become more conscious of the environmental impact of their choices, leading to a greater consideration of regions visited and companies supported. Organisations are recognising the importance of sustainable practices, such as reducing resource waste, promoting eco-friendly transportation, and supporting local communities. This trend indicates that the tourism industry is evolving to align with global environmental concerns. However, the interviews also showed that this is not of great relevance in all organisations.

In addition to the ecological awareness of guests, the ecological awareness of employees is also increasing. One statement from the interviews was, for example, "Fortunately, the younger generation of employees is also demanding ecological awareness from their employer. Constant printing has become a no-go and waste separation is a matter of course." The development of sustainable offers is also pursued by employees "with great intrinsic motivation because it fits in with the values of the young generation."

### Adaptation to Technological Advancements

Digitalization is expected to drive the creation of specialised roles within the tourism sector. Roles related to technology, such as digital marketing, content creation, and management of virtual experiences, will become more prominent

While digitalization introduces new roles, there's also an acknowledgement that certain traditional roles might evolve or require additional digital skills. For instance, historians may need to incorporate digital storytelling methods or utilise digital platforms to engage audiences effectively. Also interviewees suggest that digitalization, particularly the integration of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), is expected to have "a significant influence on tourism employment".

The discussions also touch on the potential for automation in the tourism sector due to digitalization. Routine tasks, such as customer service interactions or administrative duties, might be automated using technology. This suggests that while some routine roles might diminish, the industry will place a higher emphasis on roles that require critical thinking, creativity, and technological expertise.

### Transformation and Evolution of Job Profiles

The continuous evolution of job roles is a recurring focal point within various industries. It's widely acknowledged that future job positions in the field of tourism will necessitate a fusion of skills sourced from diverse disciplines. This acknowledgment underscores the industry's realisation that blending proficiencies from different domains will be indispensable in addressing shifting requirements and in furnishing comprehensive visitor experiences.

This acknowledgment underscores the industry's realisation that blending proficiencies from different domains will be indispensable in addressing shifting requirements and in furnishing comprehensive visitor experiences.

While customary responsibilities such as animal care and visitor services retain their significance, there is a foreseen emergence of specialised roles in areas like technology, marketing, sustainability, and other related fields. Interviews with industry experts reveal their anticipation for the rise of distinct positions tied to technology, content creation, and sustainability. Notably, larger organisations are seeking individuals with exceptionally specialised skills. On the other hand, smaller enterprises demand employees with a multitude of proficiencies as they juggle tasks, such as managing the front desk, tending to the restaurant, and overseeing housekeeping.

Resource limitations often prevent them from hiring new personnel or acquiring specific expertise, which in turn poses substantial challenges for business growth and necessitates an exceedingly innovative mindset from entrepreneurs.

The advent of automation is poised to impact certain manual duties, while there is a deliberate focus on ongoing skill enhancement and inventive educational endeavours to ensure that employees are adequately prepared for the evolving needs of the sector. The transformation in the job landscape within the tourism industry underscores the paramount importance of adaptability, versatility, and a forward-looking approach to fostering the workforce.

## 4.2 DIGITAL SKILLS

### 4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Technological innovations will continue to impact tourism and change business models, jobs in tourism and tourist experiences. This section focuses on digital skills for the future. These are defined as skills related to working with computers, software, digital equipment, internet, online safety.

This comprises not only Microsoft Office skills, skills for implementing online safety procedures or skills to adjust digital equipment such as Wi-Fi connectivity, sound systems and video equipment but also desktop publishing skills, computer programming skills, website development skills, social media skills, skills to monitor online reviews, data analytics, business intelligence, big data skills, AI and robotic skills (ChatGPT, Dall-E) and skills related to applying digital hardware technologies such as AR and VR.

This section provides an overview of digital skills that the interview participants rate as the most important in about seven years' time.

Questions that have been discussed with participants were the following:

- Which digital skills are important in your company today?
- Which digital skills are currently lacking in your company?
- How important will these skills be around 2030? Which ones will be most important?
- Which other digital skills can you think of that will be vital for the future?
- Which changes do you anticipate will be necessary within your organisation regarding digital skills (2030)?
- Does your company provide training or education for these skills? If so: what kind of training; if not: why not?
- Do you use an external organisation to help train your staff in digital skills? If so: which ones and what kind of training do they provide?
- What would be the most effective training method in digital skill development for your employees?

#### **4.2.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS**

Different organisations emphasise a variety of digital skills that are crucial for their specific operations. These skills range from social media management, technical support, and internet connectivity to more advanced skills like digital innovation, data management, and emerging technologies like AR and VR.

## Artificial intelligence

AI are acknowledged as trends in the digital landscape, there is some variation in how much impact interviewees anticipate these technologies will have by 2030. Some foresee significant changes, while others expect more incremental shifts. But the belief that digital skills will be crucial by 2030 suggests AI's growing influence. Anticipated changes in digital competencies, integration of systems, and preference for team-oriented learning also align with AI's multidisciplinary and data-driven nature. Overall, the interviews indirectly imply AI's relevance in enhancing efficiency, data analysis, and guest experiences within various industries.

In the context of digital technology becoming challenging for some, there's a desire to make technology, including AI, more accessible through user-friendly interfaces.

## Virtual and augmented reality

The interview statements consistently highlight the growing significance of virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) technologies across diverse industries. These technologies are recognised for their potential to revolutionise experiences, marketing strategies, and engagement with customers or visitors. While interviewees acknowledge the value of VR/AR in enhancing operations, they emphasise that these technologies should be integrated in ways that complement, rather than overshadow, core objectives. For instance, in the context of nature and wildlife experiences or hotel stays, VR/AR is seen as a tool to enrich the existing offerings. Moreover, the statements emphasise a practical approach to skill development in the realm of VR/AR.

## Integration and Efficiency

Several interviewees pointed out the importance of integrating different digital tools and platforms in order to optimise processes. The challenge is to ensure effective communication between different software applications. The need for digital skills runs through all levels. For example, it was mentioned in the interviews that "even janitorial work, which used to be 100% about manual skills, can no longer be done without digital skills".

Digitalisation has arrived in all areas of tourism services" and must therefore also be taken into account in skills training.

### Marketing, Sales & Communication

The interview statements collectively emphasise the growing importance of online marketing, sales, and communication across diverse industries. They recognize the significance of digital skills, such as social media management, in enhancing customer engagement and marketing effectiveness. The integration of technology, including AI and automation, is acknowledged as a means to streamline operations and reach wider audiences. The emphasis on user-friendly technology and practical training highlights the need for accessible platforms and hands-on skill development. Overall, the statements underscore the essential role of digital strategies in modern business landscapes.

### Adaptability and Future Skills

Interviewees consistently stress the importance of adaptability in the face of evolving technology. They acknowledge that the digital landscape will continue to change, and employees must be prepared to learn and adapt to new tools and platforms. While some specific skills are highlighted, the ability to learn and adjust is considered paramount.

### Skills Gap and Misalignment with Job Roles

One prevalent challenge in various industries is the existence of a skills gap, where employees lack essential digital competencies required for their job roles. This misalignment between skill requirements and employee capabilities can result in frustration and hinder learning new skills. The impact of this gap is profound, leading to overwhelmed employees who feel less engaged and capable of contributing effectively to their organisations' objectives. Addressing this challenge is crucial to enhance employee confidence, engagement, and overall organisational performance.



## 4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL/GREEN SKILLS

### 4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the secondary data section of this report, it was demonstrated that green skills comprise more than skills for reducing the impact of tourism on the environment (minimise the use and maximise the efficiency of energy and water consumption; manage waste, sewage, recycling, and composting; conservation of biodiversity; knowledge of climate change). They also involve developing and promoting sustainable forms of transport and tourism in (rural) areas as an option to diversify local economies, create economic growth and decent jobs for local people (including women and youth) as well as conserve local natural and cultural heritage. On the other hand, managing and reducing the impact of overtourism is also a part of sustainable tourism.

The results of this section provide an overview of environmental management skills that the interview participants rate as the most important in seven years' time.

Questions that have been discussed with participants were the following:

- What would you consider green / environmental management skills?
- How important will these skills be around 2030? Which ones will be most important?
- Which green/environmental management skills are important in your organisation today?
- Do you expect any changes regarding the necessity of staff with green skills in your organisation between today and 2030? If so, which changes? If not, why not?
- Does your company provide training or education for these skills? If so: what kind of training; if not: why not?
- Do you use an external organisation to help train your staff in green/environmental management skills? If so: which one and what kind of training does it provide?
- What is your opinion on green certification/awards / eco-labels? Are you a member of one of these? Why? What are the benefits for you? If not, why not?

### 4.3.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

#### Environmental Management and Conservation

A recurring theme is the commitment of organisations to actively manage their environmental impact. Initiatives such as waste reduction, efficient energy management, and sustainable procurement practices are consistently emphasised. For instance, organisations are adopting measures like energy-efficient lighting, reducing water consumption, and minimising single-use plastics. The interviews collectively emphasise that environmental management is central to sustainable practices. This encompasses waste reduction, energy efficiency, collaborative efforts, measurement, training, and stakeholder engagement. Environmental management requires a comprehensive approach, and organisations recognize the need to adapt, innovate, and maintain a long-term commitment to address environmental challenges effectively.

The Interviews show that some organisations understand that sustained effort is required to embed sustainable practices into their operations and align with evolving environmental expectations.

A part of the Interviewees from partially big Organisations emphasise that effective environmental management involves continuous measurement and monitoring of resource consumption, waste generation, and energy usage. A part of the organisations track their performance against sustainability goals and use data to inform decision-making.

#### Resource-Efficiencies

The interviewees consistently stress the significance of resource efficiency within the realm of green skills. Organisations emphasise optimising energy usage, minimising waste, adopting sustainable procurement, and raising awareness among employees. These practices align with broader goals of reducing environmental impact, enhancing sustainability, and preparing for evolving expectations. Collaborative efforts, certifications, and future projections underscore the growing importance of resource efficiency in promoting a more sustainable future.

### Sustainability communication

The interviews collectively underline the pivotal role that green certifications play in the realm of sustainable communication. These certifications offer essential elements of credibility, transparency, and differentiation, which in turn attract environmentally conscious customers and employees. While the advantages of certifications are evident, organisations also acknowledge the challenges associated with choosing certifications that hold genuine meaning and aligning internally with the criteria of these certifications.

The decision to pursue certifications is grounded in strategic intent. It aims to elevate the effectiveness of sustainability communication, all the while tackling concerns related to misleading environmental claims and maintaining an authentic image. However, the interviews also reveal that organisations sometimes prioritise other practices over certifications. This could be due to perceived complexities, resource limitations, or a preference for concentrating on concrete operational changes that can be directly observed.

Several interviewees note challenges linked to green certifications. An issue of concern is the proliferation of various certifications, leading to potential confusion among consumers. Additionally, not all certifications carry equal weight in terms of their perceived significance. "Some can be seen as an attempt at greenwashing", where claims of environmental friendliness are exaggerated or disingenuous. The process of selecting relevant and reputable certifications is therefore a complex task. where claims of environmental friendliness are exaggerated or insincere. Thus, the process of selecting certifications that are relevant and reputable is acknowledged as a complex task.

### Carbon management

The individuals interviewed highlight "the paramount importance of effectively managing and diminishing carbon emissions". Through the adoption of sustainable transportation alternatives and the optimization of travel protocols, organisations strive to mitigate their carbon footprint and actively participate in the preservation of the environment.

Collaborative efforts and partnerships emerge as key strategies in tackling carbon emissions related to transportation. Initiatives like carpooling and the promotion of eco-friendly commuting choices for employees are acknowledged as potent methods to collaboratively curtail carbon emissions. These actions represent effective collective approaches to reduce the overall environmental impact.

### Final remarks

The interviews collectively underscore the growing significance of a combination of green and digital skills within the framework of sustainability and the achievement of organisational goals. The capacity to harness technology to monitor energy usage, enhance waste reduction practices, and foster stakeholder engagement via digital channels is acknowledged as indispensable. As businesses persist in their journey of infusing sustainability into their operations, digital competencies take on a pivotal role, serving as a vital catalyst that empowers them to navigate the intricate landscape of environmental obstacles and adeptly convey their sustainability initiatives in the era of digitalization. Yet the challenges stay for medium and smaller organisations to go deeper in such changes due to other problems like the shortage of labour and the lack of resources which are needed. So undoubtedly, ensuring the profitability of businesses remains a foundational imperative. The viability and continuity of any enterprise hinge upon profitability, as it serves as the cornerstone upon which businesses sustain their existence.

## 4.4 SOCIAL-CULTURAL SKILLS

### 4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Social/cultural skills can be divided into personal skills, communication/cultural skills, and diversity skills. These skills are related to behavioural and practical attitudinal competencies in teamwork, interpersonal communication, cross-cultural understanding, and customer service orientation. Particularly related to working in the tourism sector are competences towards managing personal relationships, understanding the needs and feelings of others, cooperating with others, showing a positive attitude, showing respect, making appropriate contact

and active listening. Furthermore, social/cultural skills deal with competencies that promote social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone; accessible tourism provision for those with disabilities; gender equality. These skills are expected to be of major importance for the tourism sector, to match the needs of a “high tech” society with “the human touch” needed in personal and human interactions in the tourism sector.

This section provides an overview of the social/cultural skills (i.e., personal-, communication/cultural-, and diversity skills) that the interview participants rate as the most important in seven years’ time.

Questions that have been discussed with participants were the following:

- What do you consider the most relevant and important social and cultural skills for people working in the tourism sector?
- How important will these skills be around 2030? Which ones will be most important?
- Can you think of more or other social/cultural skills that might be important around 2030?
- What changes do you expect for your organisation with regard to necessary social/cultural skills in the future (2030) compared to today?
- Does your company provide training or education for these social/cultural skills? If so: which ones; if not: why not?
- Do you use an external organisation to help train your staff in social/cultural skills? If so, which ones and what kind of training do they provide?
- What would be the most effective training method in social/cultural skill development for employees?

#### **4.4.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS**

##### **Communication and Interpersonal Skills**

In the realm of the tourism industry, the significance of adept communication remains consistently paramount. This significance extends beyond mere verbal exchanges and delves into the realm of non-verbal interaction, active and engaged listening, as well as the adeptness to articulate information in a manner that is both clear and empathetic.

The emphasis on interpersonal proficiencies serves to underscore the pivotal role they play in establishing and nurturing positive relationships with both colleagues and guests alike. In essence, these skills form the backbone of seamless interactions and successful collaborations within the dynamic landscape of the tourism sector. Interviewees stated that these social and cultural skills will remain highly important even in an increasingly digital age, stating that empathy and a customer-oriented approach are essential regardless of technological advancements. As an interview participant said: "No matter which industry, an employee must possess the quality of empathy in order to be able to truly empathise with the customer's situation and provide assistance."

Also many interviews underline the importance of working well with others, both within the organisation and when interacting with customers. Collaboration is seen as essential for creating a harmonious work environment and delivering seamless customer service.

### Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

The international workforce has already established a significant presence within Germany's tourism sector, and its importance is poised to grow further in light of the ongoing labour shortages. Recognising and comprehending cultural distinctions and subtleties is now more crucial than ever. This encompasses the imperative to honour a multitude of cultural heritages, adjust to diverse cultural expectations, and foster a welcoming atmosphere both for incoming staff members and visitors from various global regions. "Given the international nature of the industry, emphasising intercultural competence is of the utmost importance", said one of the interviewees, nicely summarising the value of intercultural competence.

### Digitalisation and In-Person Interaction

As the world becomes more digital, the value of personal interactions remains high. The interviewees emphasise that digital communication should not replace face-to-face interactions, as the latter often lead to deeper connections and understanding.

In the hotel industry, it was noticeable that digitalisation does not necessarily mean that jobs will be lost during check-in, for example. Rather, it was seen as an opportunity that the reception staff no longer have to enter data, but can instead use the time to deal directly with the guests' needs. This will be perceived by guests as a very positive development. Of course, the employees need digital skills to be able to help with digital check-in if necessary and often also improved communication skills and detailed local knowledge to help guests plan their leisure time.

### Flexibility and Adaptability

The tourism sector is known for its dynamic nature, where circumstances and tasks can change quickly. The analysis of the interviews shows that flexibility and adaptability are crucial skills in the different tourism sectors and organisational contexts. These skills enable individuals to cope with change, solve problems, embrace diversity, drive innovation, and promote growth. Flexibility and adaptability are not just about responding to challenges, but also about approaching situations with a positive attitude, openness to learning and the ability to be resilient. Individuals who embody these skills contribute to their own success and that of their organisation.

An example from the interviews is a company that, in cooperation with hotels, offers rooms for mobile working and thus ensures that people can move their work to a holiday destination. In a rural and structurally weak region, this adaptability meant that hotels were well occupied all year round, even during the pandemic, which secured jobs and thus also contributed to increased acceptance among the local population.

### Community Engagement

Numerous studies emphasise the importance of the ability to interact effectively with communities to promote tourism acceptance. (see DTV 2022, p. 3) This includes understanding community needs, fostering connections and making positive contributions. This ability is a critical factor in implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts that bring benefits to both the local and larger community.

In addition, skilful engagement with a range of stakeholders, including employees, customers, partners and communities, is a fundamental competency. Skilfully engaging and monitoring the expectations of different stakeholders is also an essential ingredient for the success of CSR initiatives. The small and medium-sized companies surveyed in particular have given a great deal of thought to the topic and ensure a high level of acceptance among the population. They achieve this, for example, by using regional products and services and creating jobs for the local population.

### Preparation for the Future

The consensus is that these social and cultural skills will continue to be important in the future, despite potential technological advancements. However, some interviewees express the need for ongoing optimisation and adaptation to align with changing needs and trends.

In the future of employee management, hybrid or mobile working/home office will play an important role, both due to the experience of the pandemic and advancing digitalisation. The possibility of hybrid or mobile working creates improved family friendliness. Travel times are eliminated and working hours can often be made a little more flexible. On the other hand, it can also lead to overtime if the workplace is in your own home. One respondent said that as a result of this, an agreement was created to introduce an obligation to work after work to ensure that employees had sufficient rest time.

However, it was also mentioned that the possibility of working from home, at least partially, was introduced during the pandemic and has now largely been abolished in some companies. This sometimes leads to dissatisfaction among employees because, for example, it creates the feeling that managers do not trust their employees enough to give them the freedom to work remotely. Things become difficult when, on the other hand, mobile working is still possible when employees' children are sick or employees are unable to get to work for other reasons. In interviews, this was seen as a rather incongruent approach to employee management.



At the management level, there was still a need for skill development in the area of employee management in general and in particular in the area of decentralised management.

### Conclusion

In summary, the consistent social and cultural skills highlighted in the statements include effective communication, empathy, cultural awareness, collaboration, adaptability, ethical decision-making, community engagement, stakeholder management, inclusivity, interpersonal skills and strategic thinking. These skills are considered essential for success across various industries and contexts, enabling individuals to navigate complex situations, maintain positive relationships, and make a positive contribution to organisations and society.

In the accommodation and catering sector, acceptance by the local population proved to be a particularly important success factor for tourism businesses. According to some interviewees, a high level of acceptance of tourism offers by the local population leads to a much more harmonious neighbourly relationship, increased attractiveness of tourist jobs and ultimately also to a positive perception among guests. Good communication and networking as well as an awareness of sustainability were cited as important skills in this area. The latter was also positively received by the local population, as, according to the interviewees, fear of negative effects on nature can lead to a negative attitude among the local population, particularly in rural tourism.

In the area of tourism associations, travel agencies and tour operators, the willingness to use digital tools and the possibility of hybrid or mobile working were perceived as particularly important. In order to implement this well, a high level of leadership competence, leadership at eye level, building trust and congruence were mentioned as important skills.

An awareness of digital developments and trends in general was cited as particularly important by tourist attractions.

In addition, the benefits of foreign languages and intercultural competence as well as the involvement of the local population were pointed out in this area.

# 5. BEST PRACTICES

## UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING

In each country that is represented in the Pantour consortium, partners have each selected, analysed and interviewed **5 best practices** in upskilling, reskilling, attracting/retaining staff in the five tourism sub sectors. The goal of the analysis is to have an inventory of innovative initiatives, projects, programs, philosophies, tools, methods, ideas, solutions, and concepts in relation to upskilling, reskilling, attracting, and retaining staff in order to improve the knowledge on digital, social, and green skills development in tourism.

In short, a Best Practice in upskilling, reskilling, attracting staff has all or many of these characteristics:

1

It has a clear goal.

2

It purposely addresses the bridging of existing skills gaps and future skills needs in tourism.

3

The organisation and individual staff members have a set of core values that strengthen their dedication, morale, and resolve a shared sense of purpose for the work.

4

It looks at urgent skills development challenges and human capital in their context – on macro level (sustainable/digital transition in tourism), sector/subsector level or skills level (digital, social, green skills).

5

It targets the underlying causes in addition to the challenge in upskilling and reskilling, attracting/retaining.

In the following sections, a short overview and analysis will be provided of each of the Best Practices investigated in the frame of the PANTOUR project.



## 5.1 BEST PRACTICE: Insel Öhe

Matthias Schilling, founder of the brand Insel Öhe is a farmer and restaurateur with a growing family business based on 2 islands of Germany. The organisation specialises in producing and directly marketing organic agricultural products, as well as engaging in fishing and operating in the hospitality sector. The organisation's core philosophy centres around regional development, growth, and strengthening the local area through sustainable practices. They aim to establish enduring economic sustainability while contributing positively to the wider community. The organisation operates multiple businesses within agriculture, fishing, processing, and gastronomy sectors, all interconnected and driven by the goal of regional enhancement.

### 5.1.1 Background information

Matthias Schilling, along with the company, serves as an exemplary case in the realm of talent attraction and retention. They offer a comprehensive package that encompasses accommodations and meals for their workforce. Notably, the company operates on an island, enhancing the unique appeal of their setup. Additionally, they actively involve their employees in their overarching mission, underscoring that their roles are not merely jobs, but integral to the betterment of the region.

The company discussed how its approach to employee retention and skills development aligns with his organisation's broader perspective on skills development in tourism, highlighting the importance of viewing employees not as mere money-makers, but as individuals who take pride in it , the company's ability to sell products.

This philosophy extends to both customers and employees and promotes a feeling of respect and recognition. This can create a positive connection between the company, its products and the region. By focusing on creating products with distinctive value and promoting recognition, they aim to leave a lasting footprint in the community.

Furthermore, they predict that in the context of the future development of tourism, the concept of individualization will be crucial, as mass tourism does not represent a sustainable solution. The challenge is to create individual experiences while dealing with staffing shortages. An example of their work in this context is to create a learning environment around their location, the small island Öhe and the special needs of that ecosystem. To offer a learning experience to their guests, staff needs to develop social and green skills to interact with guests (almost in German but sometimes in English, too) and know about the importance of sustainability in that special ecosystem.

They believe that language is of utmost importance for communication and that they need to increase acceptance of language difficulties among employees. They also recognise the need to address tensions between foreign employees and the local community in order to bridge cultural differences and promote mutual understanding.

With regard to sustainability, the company emphasises the need for energy-efficient concepts and short transport routes. They recognise the need to change the energy consumption of the tourism industry given its impact on society. Balancing environmental concerns with the economic dynamism that tourism brings to the region is a challenge that requires careful consideration. The approach to employee support and motivation at Insel Öhe also includes the provision of accommodation and meals as an independent initiative without the involvement of external partners or organisations.

### 5.1.2 Analysis and overview

The basic principles of Insel Öhe lie in the identification of employees, customers and the region with the brand and the company. In order to achieve this, appreciative treatment of employees plays a key role. Employee benefits such as accommodation and food convey a feeling of appreciation. It is also valuable for the company if employees are convinced of the product through their own experience.

The fact that cultural differences are taken into account among employees in order to promote mutual acceptance also contributes to employee motivation on the one hand and, on the other hand, makes an important social contribution, considering that a shortage of skilled workers in the hospitality industry in Germany represents a major challenge the industry and relies on skilled workers from abroad.

Using regional products and paying appropriate purchasing prices when purchasing products strengthens the region and can therefore also secure jobs. This also increases the company's recognition in the region and the acceptance of new business ideas.

#### *Key principles*

Successfully building a brand in a rural region, establishing it and creating acceptance for it were certainly the economic goals of Insel Öhe. Paying attention to all pillars of sustainability, actually using resources responsibly and offering the customer an authentic experience was implemented very well by Family Schilling/Insel Öhe and was awarded the Ostdeutsche Sparkassen Entrepreneurship Prize in 2019.

(<https://vorpommern.sparkasseblog.de/unternehmen-des-jahres-kommt-aus-geschaeftsgebiet-der-sparkasse-vorpommern/>)

A key function at Insel Öhe is employee motivation and retention.

Identifying with the company also increases the desire and willingness of employees for professional developments. This forms an important basis for a general willingness to learn, which is an important basis for the creation of new skills and the further development of existing skills.

Effective public relations work also contributes to the company receiving great recognition in society and thus becoming an attractive employer. Constantly growing with the rapidly developing digital world will continue to be an important challenge for successful public relations in the future and requires constant support of digital skills.

In the area of social skills, intercultural competence can be seen as important. On the one hand, this results from an increasing number of employees from different cultural backgrounds, and on the other hand, the number of guests from abroad is also increasing in the German coastal regions.

Since Insel Öhe is an organic-certified business, green skills are essential. The socially competent nature of personnel management also promotes a willingness to learn in this field. In order to promote ecological skills and the willingness to learn green skills, social skills are therefore a decisive factor for managers responsible for human resources.

All in all key principles of Insel Öhe are

- Creating acceptance by promoting regional products and networks
- Employee loyalty and employee identification with the company through appreciative treatment of employees and the recognition of individual needs
- Healthy company growth in which everyone related to the company is involved, regionality and authenticity are not overlooked and which meets with broad acceptance through good public relations.

Most necessary skills for the next future will be

- Language skills to support an international workfield as well as deal with a growing number of foreign guests
- Intercultural skills (for same reasons)
- Digital skills to go with the times and remain future-proof

### *Examples and Case Studies*

As mentioned above, employees are offered food and hospitality within the Company which helps identifying with the company and the company goals and which helps especially new employees who moved there for the job to enter in a kind of family.

Besides that there is an impressive history behind the little island Insel Öhe which is well promoted. The tiny island is owned by the Family Schilling for more than 700 years but the family never made it to be able to live from the island. Matthias Schilling had the vision to be able to live from it and did even more. When he got the idea, he started learning to become a restaurateur and afterwards studied agriculture. He started running an organic cattle farm at the island and built a brand around it. It really seems everything he did, he did by heart and this authenticity was one of the key factors for his success. Being appreciative towards nature, his cattle and all employees that entered the company over the time felt real. After being successful producer of organic meat products and opening the first restaurants the company expanded to include its own fish brand and thereby supported the regional fisheries. Within this the gastronomic area was able to grow and today even more families than just the Schilling Family can live from Insel Öhe. This is an example of how sustainability in combination with entrepreneurial spirit can start a positive chain reaction even in a very rural area.

### *Potential Pitfalls and Challenges*

In rural areas in Germany one challenge is to find workers and sometimes it even is a challenge to realise new and innovative ideas. To understand peoples needs and thoughts, appreciate the people to work with and to grow in a period of time that allows others to keep up with the pace can be seen an important learning by looking at Insel Öhe as a Best Practice example.



### *Examples and Case Studies*

As mentioned above, employees are offered food and hospitality within the Company which helps identifying with the company and the company goals and which helps especially new employees who moved there for the job to enter in a kind of family.

Besides that there is an impressive history behind the little island Insel Öhe which is well promoted. The tiny island is owned by the Family Schilling for more than 700 years but the family never made it to be able to live from the island. Matthias Schilling had the vision to be able to live from it and did even more. When he got the idea, he started learning to become a restaurateur and afterwards studied agriculture. He started running an organic cattle farm at the island and built a brand around it. It really seems everything he did, he did by heart and this authenticity was one of the key factors for his success. Being appreciative towards nature, his cattle and all employees that entered the company over the time felt real. After being successful producer of organic meat products and opening the first restaurants the company expanded to include its own fish brand and thereby supported the regional fisheries. Within this the gastronomic area was able to grow and today even more families than just the Schilling Family can live from Insel Öhe. This is an example of how sustainability in combination with entrepreneurial spirit can start a positive chain reaction even in a very rural area.

### *Potential Pitfalls and Challenges*

In rural areas in Germany one challenge is to find workers and sometimes it even is a challenge to realise new and innovative ideas. To understand peoples needs and thoughts, appreciate the people to work with and to grow in a period of time that allows others to keep up with the pace can be seen an important learning by looking at Insel Öhe as a Best Practice example.

### *Benefits and Outcomes*

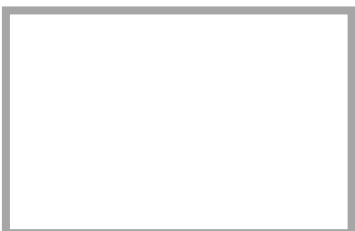
Main benefits were a support of the regional fishing companies as well as creating and maintain jobs in the tourism and F&B industry while supporting an understanding of Sustainability and focussing on a target group who appreciate exactly these values.

### *Measuring Success*

The success of the company can be measured by booking numbers and inquiries. Customer feedback is also used to measure success. This includes customer feedback directly on site and online. The reach in social media can also provide an indication of the company's success and can be recorded using social media analysis tools.

Since value is placed on good personal contact and openness, employee satisfaction and thus the success of employee management is preferably recorded and evaluated in personal feedback discussions.

Even if no other measuring tools have been mentioned yet, the need for such tools usually increases as the size of the company increases. In German companies, it is generally common practice to record employee satisfaction once a year using questionnaires in order to determine the needs of employees and to help improve employee development plans. Another valuable tool for a company to improve employee retention is to strive for a professional onboarding process as well as a fair offboarding process and to document them well in order to be able to measure both successes and failures (as long as failures are seen as feedback and thus open up an opportunity to improve and become more successful). The individual consideration of employees plays a major role as it promotes trust and in turn creates a good learning basis for employers, even when it comes to an offboarding process.



### *Conclusion*

The individual consideration of employees plays a major role as it promotes trust and in turn creates a good learning basis for employers, even when it comes to an offboarding process. This is an example of how sustainability in combination with entrepreneurial spirit can start a positive chain reaction even in a very rural area.

*Königstein Fortress  
demonstrates a strong  
commitment to training  
and skills development*



## **5.2 BEST PRACTICE: Festung Königstein / Königstein Fortress**

Königstein Fortress is one of the largest mountain fortresses in Europe. It is located in Saxony in the middle of the Elbe Sandstone Mountains on Mount Königstein, a table mountain above the town of Königstein on the left bank of the Elbe River. The 9.5 hectare rocky plateau rises 240 metres above the Elbe. According to fragments found, it was already inhabited in the Late Bronze Age. The fortress was first mentioned in writing in 1233. Today it is used as a tourist attraction and houses a non-profit GmbH museum and a restaurant. The Elbe Sandstone Mountains area (Elbsandsteingebirge) is a specific region, known for its historical structures and heritage significance and therefore a popular travel destination for both national and international visitors.

Functioning both independently and on behalf of the local authority, the museum attracts tourists and seeks to preserve and present European historical and cultural aspects. The Deputy Managing Director, who was our interview partner, oversees the Personnel and Administration Department and joined in 2016 with expertise in Leisure Sciences and Project Management.

### **5.2.1 Background information**

Festung Königstein represents a best practice case in the context of implementing wellness initiatives. They recommend that such programs should offer a neutral selection of services, ideally available within the workplace or nearby, in order to accommodate diverse employee needs and preferences.

Maintaining a separation between work-related health offerings and personal well-being is essential to ensure that employees feel comfortable participating. Furthermore, additional benefits are offered by the company, such as providing financial assistance for workplace eyewear and implementing a job bicycle program where employees can purchase bicycles through a leasing arrangement. It can be highlighted that the company provides equal opportunities for all employees, irrespective of their roles, which helps prevent discrimination and encourages engagement.

### 5.2.2 Analysis and overview

#### *Key principles*

According to Königstein Fortress the training for the mentioned skills is in its early stages and has not yet involved external organisations. Currently, the communication on these skills is happening within the department. The emphasis has been on internal communication, with a main responsible person overseeing the process. The museum is focused on achieving a family-oriented certification rather than green certifications, and the organisation is in the initial stages of exploring these possibilities. Family-oriented certifications in Germany are awarded and monitored by local or national authorities and/or associations to ensure a high level of quality in this area including.

For example, for Saxony, where the fortress is located, the “Family-friendly Experience DE” label is a certification that proves the family-friendliness of a visitor attraction like for example offering reduced entry prices for families, family-friendly equipment such as safe play equipment, children's toilets, changing areas and child-friendly imparting of knowledge, barrier-free facilities. Königstein Fortress received this label in 2021 and is in a constant monitoring process to keep it and thus make the family-friendliness visible through the label.

In terms of skill development it was highlighted that the importance of communication, enthusiasm, and teamwork in the tourism sector are seen as crucial even in the face of digitalization.

They emphasised the significance of both digital and interpersonal communication for effectively conveying the museum's history and engaging visitors.

The practical aspect of training and workshops is also seen as particularly important with the aim of meeting customer satisfaction and at the same time promoting the resilience and satisfaction of employees.

Daily interactions with visitors provide an opportunity for the immediate application of skills. The health initiative, which includes health vouchers as a reward for prioritising well-being, also has a motivating effect on employees. An important measurable effect for Königstein Fortress is good cooperation and a willingness to learn as crucial characteristics for the organisation's workforce.

When discussing social and cultural skills, Königstein Fortress underlined the importance of qualities like tolerance and intercultural competence, particularly in the context of their museum's role.

In terms of training methods, it was mentioned that the organisation maintains a balance between theoretical learning, as taught in seminars, and practical application in the form of on-the-job trainings. The use of team collaboration for training was also highlighted, where small groups within the organisation engage in continuous learning and support each other's growth.

Overall, Königstein Fortress demonstrates a strong commitment to training and skills development, as well as the organisation's focus on employee well-being and a balance between traditional and digital methods in the context of a museum and the tourism industry.

### *Examples and case studies*

Königstein Fortress represents a best practice case in the context of implementing wellness initiatives. They learned and recommended that such programs should offer a neutral selection of services, ideally available within the workplace or nearby, in order to accommodate diverse employee needs and preferences. Maintaining a separation between work-related health offerings and personal well-being is essential to ensure that employees feel comfortable participating. The company provides equal opportunities for all employees, irrespective of their roles, which helps prevent discrimination and encourages engagement. For example staff are offered health club memberships and sport classes such as yoga or fitness classes.

### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

- **Neutrality, diversity and privacy in employee offerings:** The interviewee emphasises the importance of offering wellness services that take place on neutral ground outside the workplace and ensure that employees' health data is protected. He points out that employees may have personal preferences regarding their health or privacy and it is important to take this into account. "A balance needs to be struck between catering for individual needs and ensuring that employees feel comfortable using these services. The challenge is to cater for the different needs of staff", according to the principles of the Königstein Fortress in relation to staff health promotion. It was pointed out that some employees may feel excluded if health and wellness offerings are too specific. As health issues are private matters, it is difficult to create a one-size-fits-all solution that meets everyone's needs.
- **Separation from work:** It is critical that health and wellness offerings remain separate from work to maintain a sense of personal space. Some employees prefer to engage in these activities outside of work hours. Incorporating them into breaks or offering flexible working hours to allow for wellness activities can be complicated.

- Equal access to work-related health opportunities regardless of hierarchy within the organisation: The organisation emphasises the need for equal access to offerings, regardless of an employee's role or position. It is a challenge to ensure that every employee has the opportunity to benefit from these initiatives without feeling discriminated against. According to the interviewee, work-related health and well-being offers include massages (once a month per employee), height-adjustable desks, ergonomic computer keyboards or mice or office chairs. "On individual request, we are prepared to purchase additional ergonomic work equipment etc. Finally, we offer the JobRad to motivate employees to be more mobile and do something for their health at the same time."
- Implementation and integration: Integrating wellness services into the working environment requires careful planning and execution. Offering services such as height-adjustable desks for the workplace or the job bike programme requires logistical considerations that need to be managed effectively.
- Different work requirements: Employees from different departments or functions have different physical requirements. Someone in a technical role will often have different health promotion needs than someone who oversees displays all day. Fulfilling these different requirements can be complex.
- In summary, the interviewee emphasises the importance of maintaining a neutral and adaptable approach to health and wellness initiatives while managing the challenges of privacy, individual preference, work-life balance and equality. The organisation implements a strategy that offers a variety of benefits to meet the diverse needs of employees, thus motivating them and promoting health maintenance.



### *Benefits and Outcomes*

As mentioned above, the health initiative which includes health vouchers as a reward for prioritising well-being, also has a motivating effect on employees. The primary advantage is having healthier and more motivated employees who arrive at work in good physical condition. This contributes to their ability to take breaks and clear their minds, enabling them to re-engage effectively. Given the organisation's seasonal nature, with up to 500,000 visitors annually, there are periods of high demand that can be quite taxing. The wellness program provides an opportunity for employees to recharge during these stress phases, promoting motivation and facilitating regeneration. Consequently, there are fewer vulnerabilities in the work schedule, increased endurance among older employees, and heightened motivation to perform well (Goleman, 2003). The program serves as a source of motivation and gratitude among staff and also adds value when recruiting new employees. Overall, the program leads to a motivated workforce, reduces weaknesses in scheduling, and contributes to the organisation's ongoing success.

### *Measuring Success, Responsibilities and Accountability*

The individual consideration of needs in connection with different working conditions is seen as a socio-cultural task. In human resources work at Königstein Fortress, they have learned that taking individual health and well-being needs into account makes a major contribution to employee motivation. Someone who works at a computer is exposed to a different physiological stress than someone who, for example, supervises an exhibition. Employees who can tailor their health program to their individual needs are more likely to take note of this, are motivated and healthy and therefore ready to work for the company. This can be measured, for example, by looking at the number of sick days employees take and the fluctuation rate. An important aspect of this is investing in management training, too, and, above all, in the resilience of managers so that they can live what they offer their employees, set a good example and of course benefit from being healthy and resilient themselves (Roth, 2021).

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WELLNESS

WORK-LIFE  
SEPARATION

EQUALITY

### *Conclusion*

In summary the organisation underscores the importance of maintaining a neutral and customizable approach to wellness initiatives while addressing the challenges of privacy, individual preferences, work-life separation, and equality. They provide insights into their company's strategy of offering a variety of benefits, such as the workplace eyewear supplement, to cater to diverse employee needs. As a result employees are motivated and healthy and show a high level of loyalty.

*Müritzhof Knust excels as a best practice model in fostering inclusivity and diversity by actively engaging with employees who have disabilities.*



## 5.3 BEST PRACTICE: Müritzhof Knust

### 5.3.1 Background information

Müritzhof Knust (<https://www.muertzhof-knust.de/>) is a family owned business owned by the family Knust. It is a combination of a mostly organic farm with a focus on all pillars of sustainability and of a guest accommodation offering.

As a company which employs disabled people, Müritzhof Knust plays an important role and is supporting tolerance and shows a special social responsibility. The Interview was held with Anne Carolin Knust.

Müritzhof Knust as an employee collaborates with partner organisations, particularly in the area of inclusion, with a strong focus on training and upskilling. Specifically, they work with the Bildungswerk, the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Federal Employment Agency), and the Integrationsamt (Integration Office). These partner organisations are involved to support the employment and integration of individuals with disabilities into the workforce. The Bildungswerk focuses on providing education and training to individuals without high school diplomas or those with disabilities to help them enter the job market. The Bundesagentur für Arbeit is responsible for helping individuals transition from school to work, and the Integrationsamt plays a role in promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace.

The reason for involving these partner organisations is to provide guidance, training, and support for people with disabilities as they enter the workforce and to ensure that their integration is successful. These organisations help address challenges and provide resources to make the process smoother, thereby contributing to the organisation's goal of employing individuals with disabilities and promoting inclusion.

### 5.3.2 Analysis and overview

Müritz Hof Knust excels as a best practice model in fostering inclusivity and diversity by actively engaging with employees who have disabilities. This commitment not only addresses the shortage of workers but also showcases their dedication to creating a workplace where everyone can contribute their unique skills and talents. So by employing disabled people, Family Knust assumes a special social responsibility. In addition, ecological sustainability also plays a major role, as the farm raises organic cattle, keeps free-range chickens and sells regional products directly from the farm. By providing on-farm vacation rentals, tourists have the opportunity to enjoy nature and learn about the farm and its values of sustainability and inclusivity.

The organisation stands out as a pioneer in working with employees with disabilities, fostering inclusivity and diversity. This commitment is driven by the founder's experience with a customer, which led to hiring individuals with disabilities who gradually became integral to the team. The organisation values motivated employees and focuses on flexibility, adaptability, and a mix of enjoyable tasks. While technology advances, they believe some roles require a human touch. The company collaborates with external agencies like the Integrationsamt and the Bundesagentur für Arbeit for support. The organisation's approach also reflects regional commitment and the promotion of local products.

### *Key principles*

Müritzhof Knust discusses how the organisation employs individuals with disabilities and their approach to skills development in tourism. They mention hiring employees with disabilities, both mental and physical, who have different levels of education. The organisation provides training and adapts tasks to suit the capabilities of these employees.

They believe that inclusivity and diversity are essential and mention the challenges and rewards of working with people with disabilities. They emphasise the importance of open-mindedness, acceptance, and trying out new approaches. The organisation's strategy involves offering tasks that can't be easily automated and focusing on local products and sustainable practices. They also anticipate that skills related to the environment and technology, such as reducing CO2 emissions and digitalization, will become increasingly relevant in the future.

Overall, the organisation's best practices align with their general view on skills development in tourism by valuing inclusivity, providing training, and adapting to the unique abilities of their employees.

Anne Carolin Knust anticipates that in the near future (2030), skills related to environmental sustainability, such as reducing CO2 emissions and addressing environmental concerns, will become increasingly necessary. They also suggest that adapting to technological advancements and digitalization will be relevant, although they also mention that some tasks may not be easily automated and will still require human intervention. Therefore, a mix of skills related to sustainability, technology, and adaptability will likely be important for the organisation and the industry as a whole in the coming years.

### *Examples and Case Studies*

The company's commitment is based on the founder's experience with a client, which led to the hiring of people with disabilities who gradually became an integral part of the team. The organisation values motivated employees and values flexibility, adaptability and a mix of fun tasks.

Although technology is advancing, they believe some roles require a human touch. To provide support, the company cooperates with external bodies such as the Integration Office and the Federal Employment Agency. This collaboration can serve as an example for other companies to give people with disabilities a chance in professional life and at the same time get the chance to recruit new, often urgently needed employees. Within the company, the focus should be on individual potential and strengths, regardless of disability or non-disability. This does "...not only result in clear progress for employees with disabilities, but also reflects a positive attitude of a company or administration: The consistent implementation of the diversity approach leads to better individual development opportunities for all employees, increased productivity, a clear increase in positive working atmosphere characterised by appreciation and thus a variety of business advantages." (Böhm et al. 2013).

The organisation's approach also reflects regional commitment and the promotion of local products. Through regional recognition and identification with the company and its products, employees also show great loyalty and motivation. This is received very positively by customers and the work can help to reduce prejudices against people with disabilities and makes a decisive contribution to inclusion both in everyday life and in the world of work.

### *Potential Pitfalls and Challenges*

The challenges related to working with individuals with disabilities in the Best Practice organisation as well as learnings include:

- **Overcoming prejudices:** One of the challenges mentioned is the need to overcome prejudice and bias. The organisation points out that it is important to accept people without prejudice and to give them a chance to prove their abilities.
- **Dealing with differences:** Dealing with people with disabilities who may have different needs or require special accommodations can be challenging. This can include finding new ways of doing things to effectively integrate them into the workforce.

- **Dealing with setbacks:** The organisation recognises that there may be setbacks or difficulties for people with disabilities, possibly due to personal challenges or external circumstances. Improved legal bases for people with disabilities, such as the Federal Participation Act, have also improved the situation from a legal perspective. "Nevertheless, there is still a lot to do here too. Overcoming these setbacks and providing appropriate support can sometimes be a challenge," says the organisation.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** It can be a challenge to create a working environment that is flexible and adaptable to the different needs of employees with disabilities. This includes adapting to different working styles and time requirements, e.g. through individualised schedules.
- **Workload balance:** Another challenge is to find the right balance between work tasks that can be performed effectively by people with disabilities and tasks that may require additional support or adaptation. Here it is particularly important to promote mutual acceptance between employees, whether with or without a disability and regardless of the type of disability.
- **Training and further education:** Training people with disabilities can be another challenge. In order for them to acquire the skills required for their tasks, especially if the tasks require a certain level of complexity or technical knowledge, a special type of training and further education is necessary. This is possible through cooperation with training centres, but the organisation still requires some resources, particularly in terms of time.

### *Benefits and Outcomes*

From the provided conversation, several benefits have resulted from the Best Practice initiative of employing individuals with disabilities in the organisation:

- **Diverse Workforce:** The organisation benefits from a diverse workforce by employing individuals with different abilities and backgrounds, contributing to a more inclusive and varied work environment.



- **Motivated Employees:** The initiative has led to motivated employees who are eager to work and contribute to the company. The opportunity to engage in meaningful work has boosted their job satisfaction.
- **Skill Development:** The program has facilitated skill development among individuals with disabilities. Through training, workshops, and hands-on experience, employees have gained new skills that enhance their abilities and job prospects.
- **Community Engagement:** The initiative fosters community engagement and local employment. By hiring individuals from the local region and focusing on regional products and services, the organisation strengthens ties within the community.
- **Reduced Stigma:** The initiative helps combat stereotypes and reduces stigma associated with disabilities by showcasing the capabilities and contributions of employees with disabilities.
- **Innovation:** The organisation has seen innovative ideas from its employees with disabilities, which contributes to the company's growth and adaptability.
- **Social Impact:** The initiative has a positive social impact by promoting the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce and challenging societal norms.
- **Collaboration with Partner Organisations:** Partner organisations such as the Bildungswerk, Bundesagentur für Arbeit, and Integrationsamt provide additional support, resources, and expertise to facilitate the integration of individuals with disabilities into the workforce.

- **Skill Transfer and Exchange:** The initiative encourages the exchange of skills and knowledge between employees, both with and without disabilities, leading to a more collaborative and productive work environment.
- **Employee Empowerment:** Employees with disabilities are empowered to take on responsibilities, contribute to the organisation's success, and take pride in their accomplishments.

Overall, the Best Practice of employing individuals with disabilities has not only positively impacted the organisation's workforce but also contributed to societal change and the promotion of equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

### *Measuring Success*

Thanks to the collaboration with partner organisations such as schools, educational institutions and the Federal Employment Agency, monitoring takes place to a certain extent, as trainings provided by the above named different providers lead to measurable training success shown by passed exams and placement on the employment market can be measured.

### *Responsibilities and Accountability*

Partner organisations are involved to support the employment and integration of individuals with disabilities into the workforce. There are particular difficulties when determining individual needs, as there is no central institution in Germany for determining participation needs and granting benefits. "We are dealing with different institutions and professions, each with different perspectives on needs." (Schäfers & Wansing, 2016).

The focus of the educational organisation involved in the example is on the education and training of people whose highest school qualification is at most a secondary school diploma, or of people with disabilities, in order to make it easier for them to enter the job market. The Federal Employment Agency is responsible for supporting the transition from school to work and the Integration Office is committed to promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace.

#### *References and External Resources*

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SOCIAL BENEFITS

CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY

*Conclusion*

The example of Müritzhof Knust shows how integration can be successful and that this type of employment of people with disabilities creates social benefits and social responsibility and goes hand in hand with successful corporate management.

*The combination of immersive learning, sustainable practices, and innovative management makes Education Sprachreisen a standout in the travel industry.*



## 5.4 BEST PRACTICE: Edu Seasons

EduSeasons Sprachreisen is a German language tour operator established in 2012. The company specialises in immersive language trips and educational programs worldwide. The company emphasizes localised experiences by partnering with local language schools and families, promoting cultural understanding through language acquisition. The company prioritises sustainable tourism, collaborating with "Forum anders Reisen" and encouraging eco-friendly travel. EduSeasons Sprachreisen operates with a small team, including two student employees studying sustainable tourism. The company's unique remote work model allows employees to work from various locations, enhancing flexibility and promoting a forward-thinking approach to work. This combination of immersive learning, sustainable practices, and innovative management makes Education Sprachreisen a standout in the travel industry.

### 5.4.1 Background information

The organisation's approach to skills development aligns closely with the company's vision and values. The company focuses on providing opportunities for young individuals to gain practical experience while studying sustainable tourism. This strategy not only supports the growth of the company but also contributes to the personal and professional development of the employees.

Furthermore, the company's innovative digital work model, allowing employees to work remotely from different locations, reflects its forward-thinking approach. This digital flexibility not only enables the company to maintain operations but also empowers employees to develop skills in digital communication, remote collaboration, and adaptability. This approach ensures that Education Sprachreisen stays at the forefront of the changing work landscape, aligning with the company's values of sustainability and lifelong learning.

In terms of the broader skills development in the tourism industry, the organisation emphasises the importance of maintaining personal communication skills in the digital age. They believe that the younger generation might need to focus on honing their ability to engage in meaningful conversations and active listening, as these skills can contribute to positive customer interactions and human connection. Additionally, she highlights the need for effective use of social media for future success, especially platforms like Instagram and Facebook, which can help the company reach and engage with its target audience.

Overall, EduSeasons Sprachreisen's approach to skills development is tightly integrated with its mission of promoting sustainable tourism, continuous learning, and personalised customer interactions in the evolving digital landscape.

Partnerships form an important basis for a language tour operator like EduSeasons Sprachreisen in order to be able to work at all. The partners such as schools, language schools, host families and regional supervisors are selected very carefully to ensure that they fit the organisation's values. The involvement of partner organisations in the Best Practice is essential for several reasons:

1. Digital Collaboration: Partner organisations are engaged in digital collaboration efforts. Edu Seasons, for example, mentions having Zoom calls with representatives from partner language schools located in different parts of the world. This collaboration allows for real-time communication and information sharing despite geographical distances.

2. Enhanced Communication: The involvement of partner organisations in digital interactions, such as video conferencing and messaging, improves communication efficiency. This is evident in the example of having a Zoom call with a representative from a language school in New Zealand while residing in South America. The ability to freely choose the place of work and adapt it to one's individual needs and preferences supports the idea of a working life that is as self-determined as possible and thus also satisfaction and loyalty to the company (Jacobs et al., 2017).

3. Knowledge Sharing: Partner organisations bring unique insights and perspectives to the table. Sharing experiences, challenges, and best practices across different regions contributes to a collective knowledge pool that can benefit all involved parties. Cultural exchange programmes for employees are supported and enable the development to become a learning organisation.

4. Adapting to Digitalization: The engagement of partner organisations in digital communication methods, as highlighted in the context of Zoom calls and WhatsApp exchanges, shows an adaptation to digitalization. This adaptation is crucial for the successful implementation of the Best Practice in a digitally connected environment. Being part of "Forum Anders Reisen", germaniest largest Association for sustainable travel, once again strengthens the possibilities of networking and makes it easier to introduce digital tools to business partners in other parts of the world or to learn new tools from them. This greatly supports efficiency.

5. International Cooperation: Partner organisations play a role in international cooperation and cross-border collaboration. The example of a language school representative residing in South America while working for a school in New Zealand illustrates how individuals from different continents can work together seamlessly.

6. Innovative Ideas: Partner organisations bring forth innovative ideas and solutions. There is the possibility of developing new language programs, such as "Travelling Classroom," (a programme which combines language travel and cultural exchange) as a result of experiencing and understanding different cultures and environments.

7. Networking and Relationships: Engaging with partner organisations fosters networking and relationship-building. These relationships can lead to collaborations on various fronts, including curriculum development, program design, and marketing strategies.

Overall, partner organisations are involved in the Best Practice as essential contributors to the digitalization and internationalisation of the organisation's operations. The collaboration allows for knowledge sharing, efficient communication, and the exploration of innovative approaches to education and language learning within the context of the tourism industry.

Another important partnership in regards for positioning the organisation on the market is its membership in Forum Anders Reisen, Germany's largest association for sustainable travel. Over 100 tour operators who are committed to sustainable tourism and who design their trips in an environmentally friendly and socially responsible manner have come together in the Anders Reisen forum. Throughout Germany, the name stands for special travel experiences that are oriented towards people and the environment.



The organisation itself allows employees to participate in newly developed ideas such as a family sabbatical or workation periods and thereby promotes skills and allows new ideas to be implemented directly by employees.

Employees have the opportunity to choose flexible working time models, for example to be able to study alongside work. A year abroad for families is also supported within the organisation. Thanks to good digital skills, this can be combined with her work and due to the need to work digitally, the entire company is developing further in terms of digital skills.

#### 5.4.2 Analysis and overview

##### *Key principles*

EduSeasons emphasizes the importance of maintaining personal communication skills in the digital age. According to them, the younger generation might need to focus on honing their ability to engage in meaningful conversations and active listening, as these skills can contribute to positive customer interactions and human connection. Additionally there is a need for effective use of social media for future success, especially platforms like Instagram and Facebook, which can help the company reach and engage with its target group.

Overall, EduSeasons Sprachreisen's approach to skills development is tightly integrated with its mission of promoting sustainable tourism, continuous learning, and personalised customer interactions in the evolving digital landscape. Since the above-mentioned values and beliefs regarding the development of the working world and in this context also regarding learning are integrated into the work, the employees are in a continuous development process

Several new skills will likely be necessary in the near future (by 2030) in the context of the tourism industry:

1. **Digital Literacy and Technology Adoption:** The Organization emphasises the increasing importance of digital tools and technologies. As the organisation embraces digitalization, individuals in the tourism sector will need to develop strong digital literacy skills to effectively use tools like video conferencing, messaging apps, and online platforms for communication and collaboration.

2. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** The discussion around remote work and digital nomadism highlights the need for individuals to cultivate adaptability and flexibility skills. Given the changing nature of work environments and the potential for remote collaborations, being able to adjust to new circumstances and remain productive will be essential.

3. **Problem Solving and Creativity:** New challenges can emerge when adopting digital practices and remote work setups. As individuals encounter novel situations, problem-solving and creative thinking skills will be valuable in finding effective solutions and optimising workflows.

4. **Sustainability Awareness and Advocacy:** The organisation's emphasis on sustainable practices in the tourism sector suggests that individuals will need to develop a deep understanding of sustainability principles. Additionally, advocating for and implementing sustainable behaviours, as exemplified by creating eco-friendly travel packing lists, will likely become a crucial skill to address the growing importance of sustainable tourism.

5. **Cross-Cultural Communication:** The global nature of the tourism industry, as highlighted by discussions about collaborations with individuals from different countries, indicates the significance of cross-cultural communication skills.

Proficiency in navigating cultural differences and effective communication with diverse partners and clients will be valuable for successful interactions.

6. Remote Collaboration and Teamwork: The organisation's focus on virtual meetings and remote teamwork underscores the importance of skills related to remote collaboration. Individuals will need to master effective ways of collaborating with colleagues and partners who might be located in different time zones and regions.

7. Time Management and Self-Discipline: The concept of digital nomadism and managing work across time zones suggests that time management and self-discipline skills will be vital. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and ensuring efficient use of time will be essential for productivity.

8. Continuous Learning and Adaptation: The mention of staying updated and continually seeking new information reflects the expectation that the future workforce will need to be committed to continuous learning. Adapting to new technologies, industry trends, and evolving practices will be crucial to remain relevant and competitive.

Overall, the Organisation's insights highlight the anticipation of skills related to digitalization, sustainability, adaptability, and effective communication being increasingly important in the near future of the tourism industry (by 2030). Digital progress in particular plays a major role as it will have an impact on the other areas. If you consider that the German tourism industry in the digital area is still in its infancy compared to other business areas, a great need for action becomes clear. "...the tourism industry is faced with major challenges due to digitalisation, which cannot be overcome without changes. A rethink is therefore necessary, because technological competence alone will not be enough to remain competitive in the future" (Gardini & Sommer,, 2023)

### *Examples and Case Studies*

To improve work-life balance, more flexible working hours and remote working were introduced. However, it turned out that this is precisely why there is a risk of overloading employees, especially if the employees strongly identify with the company and show a high degree of loyalty as it is the case for EduSeasons Sprachreisen. Major learning from that was that as a social skill, it is crucial to ensure that employees maintain healthy boundaries between work and private time, so instead of work-life balance, the focus is on work-life integration as an appropriate term.

### *Potential Pitfalls and Challenges*

1. **Infrastructure and Technology:** Implementing a digital nomadic working model requires robust technological infrastructure. Ensuring consistent access to reliable internet connectivity and digital tools is essential for seamless communication and work execution.
2. **Navigating Legal and Tax Frameworks:** Engaging in a nomadic working lifestyle raises complex legal and tax considerations, as individuals may be subject to different regulations in various countries. It is important to navigate these intricacies to ensure compliance and avoid potential legal issues.
3. **Time Zone Management:** Operating across different time zones presents challenges in terms of scheduling meetings, communication, and coordinating activities. Proactive time zone management is necessary to avoid misunderstandings and inefficiencies.
4. **Work-Life Integration:** While the initiative aims to enhance work-life balance, there's a risk of overworking due to the flexible nature of remote work. Ensuring that employees maintain healthy boundaries between work and personal time is crucial.
5. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Engaging with diverse cultures requires a high degree of cultural sensitivity and understanding. Organisations must provide training and resources to employees to ensure respectful interactions with partners and clients from various cultural backgrounds.

## *Benefits and Outcomes*

Lessons learned from the challenges resulted in the following benefits and outcomes:

1. **Embrace Digitalization:** The Best Practice showcases the importance of embracing digitalization for enhanced communication, collaboration, and efficiency. We can learn to leverage digital tools and platforms to streamline operations and stay connected with global partners.
2. **Foster Flexibility:** The initiative highlights the value of flexibility in work arrangements. Organisations can learn to offer flexible working options that cater to employees' preferences, promoting job satisfaction and productivity.
3. **Prioritise Employee Well-Being:** The Organization emphasises the significance of employee well-being. It is important to learn to prioritise employee happiness and job satisfaction, recognizing that contented employees are more likely to provide exceptional customer service.
4. **Encourage Innovation:** The concept of the "Travelling Classroom" exemplifies how diverse experiences can inspire innovative program development. An important skill is to encourage employees to draw inspiration from their surroundings to create unique offerings that resonate with clients.
5. **Global Networking:** Organisations can learn the value of global networking and collaboration. Establishing strong relationships with partner organisations worldwide can lead to knowledge sharing, business opportunities, and a broader industry perspective.
6. **Address Workload and Boundaries:** Learning from the challenges of overwork and time zone differences, guidelines and policies can be developed to help employees manage their workload effectively and maintain healthy work-life boundaries.
7. **Stay Agile:** The Best Practice reflects an organisation's ability to adapt to changing trends and circumstances. Learning to remain agile and open to new approaches, ensuring its continued relevance in the evolving tourism landscape seems to be one more important skill.

### *Measuring Success*

The success of the way people are managed is reflected in long-standing employment relationships and great loyalty to the organisation. Theoretically in employee interviews, employee satisfaction can be measured using questionnaire-based communication. Since Edu Seasons is a small company, short distances are seen as a practical solution and employee satisfaction is recorded mostly in personal discussions. However, this requires trusting and respectful cooperation as well as flat hierarchies.

Feedback from customer is collected and evaluated through customers feedback. This provides information about the satisfaction of customers (mainly children and their parents), which is strongly linked to the customer relationship and therefore particularly to the implementation of social skills.

### *Responsibilities and Accountability*

Since EduSeasons is a small company, no special monitoring process is necessary. Challenges and strategies are discussed and evaluated together in regular team meetings.

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## *Conclusion*

A quintessence of all the above-mentioned lessons that EduSeasons has learned from the challenges and that as well counts for the other Best Practice examples shows that permanent learning, agility and further development can ensure contemporary corporate development and thus corporate success. A negative counterexample can show us how fatal it can be for a company not to recognize progress and thereby not take advantage of opportunities. This counterexample is a company that has not taken digitalization seriously enough, namely KODAK. Even if this is not a tourism case study, the lesson that comes from it is universal - and therefore also usable for the tourism industry.

KODAK, a former manufacturer of photographic equipment and films, stands as a prime example of missed digitalization. The company was founded in 1892 as the Eastman Kodak Company and was one of the most successful large companies for many years. The company kept up with the times for a long time and developed new, adapted and innovative products at a very rapid pace.

But as long as the films and cameras sold well, they saw no reason to change anything. Existing cameras were constantly being refined and improved, but the need to develop digital cameras to adapt to digitalization was initially ignored and then came too late. That ultimately meant the end for the company.

This case study clearly shows us the importance to move with the times, see changes as a challenge and/or opportunity and to be agile as a company. This can be transferred to all areas, including the development of digital, green and social skills.



PERMANENT  
LEARNING

AGILITY

CONTEMPORARY  
DEVELOPMENT

*Conclusion*

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## 5.5 BEST PRACTICE: Project Bay

[Project Bay](#) was founded in 2020. The company is a workation provider and offers its customers accommodation in conjunction with coworking spaces. The company's target group is not only the regional population, but also travellers from all over the world. The company currently has 3 of its own locations and several additional locations in cooperation with various hotels. As part of the cooperation with hotels, Project Bay implements a store-in-store concept for its workation offers, in which the typical hotel services such as overnight stays and the breakfast buffet are part of the offer, but operationally continue to be carried out via the hotel. These cooperation partnerships are constantly being expanded and several such concepts are being planned. In the coming year, the company is expected to offer over 130 locations in various locations, nationally and internationally.

The company's vision is to make rural living spaces more attractive because work-life balance allows people to live where they want, regardless of where the work is. The very digital and innovative nature of the organisation creates skills needs for employees in the digital area, but also in the social area. In the digital sector, it is important to stand behind your own offerings, to understand them and to be able to help people deal with digital innovations. However, it is important to the company that customers feel in good hands and cared for despite all the digitalization.

Social skills are particularly necessary to develop a feeling for when a customer wants interaction, how to deal with the relatively new clientele and which offers need to be developed in order to be able to offer customer-oriented services. The organisation's goal is to involve the employees in it's development and create a learning environment in order to improve.

### 5.5.1 Background information

With a focus on workation offerings, Project Bay serves a relatively new field in tourism. In particular, the very severe economic downturn caused by the COVID19 pandemic in the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which is heavily influenced by tourism, gave rise to this innovative idea from the founder. So far it has been a huge success. Founded in 2020, the company is constantly developing, taking on challenges, constantly reflecting on itself and is in a rapid growth process. It was only presented to the state's tourism scene as a best practice example in November 2023 as part of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Tourism Days. Several studies show that digital transformation enables a high degree of flexibility in work and thus opens up new workplace concepts that are particularly relevant for the development of rural regions. The concept of coworking is becoming increasingly important as it offers great potential for the sustainable revitalization of structurally weak rural regions (Werther, 2021).

The coworking living space "Project Bay" describes itself as the new lighthouse of digitalization in northern Germany. Establishing itself as an important technology hub should not only attract well-known companies and corporations from the areas of travel tech, mobility and related industries, but also create an environment in which new and innovative start-ups can establish and settle. Through collective collaboration and constant exchange (in the co-working-living sector) between established industry leaders and unconventional, as well as innovative-thinking start-ups, Project Bay will become a centre for new, creative and innovative ideas and projects in the future.

One of the overarching company goals is to show how a supposedly structurally weak region can become a technology hotspot through the change in digitalization and thus shed its image as a purely agricultural and tourism region. By integrating and disseminating new technologies and media, PÜroject Bay wants to show how the island of Rügen - and thus also Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania - can emerge as a winner of digitalization and that it has more to offer than just its beautiful and unique nature on the Baltic Sea coast.

## 5.5.2 Analysis and overview

### *Key principles*

The desire for many people to go out into nature and enjoy open spaces, which has increased due to the Covid 19 pandemic, combined with the possibility of working remotely, which has also been greatly improved by the pandemic, has given an important impulse to realise the idea to develop workation offers and to offer working spaces on a very professional level in a rural and rather structurally weak region, which has suffered greatly from the pandemic-related restrictions due to its strong dependence on tourism.

These circumstances were seen by the Project Bay founders as an opportunity and a challenge. An important goal was to create seasonal capacity utilisation and thus economic profitability as well as securing jobs. Sustainable design to protect what customers are looking for, namely nature, always played a role.

Project Bay's vision for the future lies in strengthening the structure through a strong focus on digitalization. According to the company, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania must understand that digitalization is their opportunity. All regions and federal states are currently starting at the same point and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which has so far been structurally weak, has the chance to be at the forefront. To do this, however, the population must be engaged through transparent processes and empowered through innovative approaches. Project Bay also believes it is very important to focus on the strengths of the region, to build new networks internationally and locally and to open them up to everyone. Digitalization can also make a structurally weak region the winner of the new era through an open, colourful, innovative culture, because - according to the company - Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania will then not only be beautiful but will also be economically and socially interesting.

**1. Digital Transformation in Tourism:** The organisation emphasises the increasing importance of digital tools and technologies and the associated opportunities and growth potential for the region. As the organisation turns to digitalization and is in a strong growth process, employees and partners in the tourism / workation sector need to develop strong digital skills in order to provide effective support with questions on tools such as video conferencing, messaging apps and online platforms for communication and collaboration.

**3. Problem solving and creativity:** When introducing new business models, new challenges can always arise. Constant self-reflection of the company, honest and goal-oriented collaboration and the skills for problem solving and creative thinking are of great benefit in finding effective solutions and optimising work processes.

The example of Project Bay also shows how new ideas can help solve problems. The business model ensures continuous utilisation of the hotel industry, which is otherwise heavily characterised by seasonal operations. This not only benefits the company itself and the hoteliers, but also ensures long-term employment and an improved ecological balance, which also increases acceptance among the population.

**4. Continuous learning and adaptation:** The mention of self-reflection, the willingness to learn from mistakes and the desire to move things forward help to stay in the spirit of the times and constantly look for new information and opportunities. The realisation that others are better at running accommodation businesses allowed the idea of a store-in-store principle to mature, which led to numerous successful collaborations with hotels.

However, there can also be an expectation that the future workforce will commit to continuous learning in order to be able to survive successfully in a dynamic working environment. Adapting to new technologies, industry trends and evolving practices will be crucial to staying relevant and competitive. Overall, the organisation's findings underline the expectation that skills related to digitalization, sustainability, adaptability and effective communication will become increasingly important in the near future of the tourism industry (by 2030).

#### *Examples and case studies*

When developing the organisation, the focus was initially on free buildings that the company could use as a co-working space and workation location.

The idea and implementation were successful, but the founders still realised that there are other people who are better at running a hotel/accommodation business and based on this insight they developed the store in store concept, in which Project Bay works together with hotels. Basic hotel offerings remain integrated into the structure of the hotel and Project Bay takes care of the workation area by creating the conditions for a good working environment and coworking spaces and now also offering leisure activities and further training opportunities for their customers. There are now collaborations with hotels from the Radisson Group and the Accor Group, among others.

### *Possible pitfalls and challenges*

The challenge in a young and fast-growing company is always to manage rapid growth in such a way that all employees support the ideas and that there is still a high level of transparency. It is also important not to rest on one's laurels, but rather to grasp the spirit of the times and set trends instead of chasing them.

### *Benefits and Outcomes*

**Focus on digitalization:** The focus on a digital working world was the company's driving force from the start, even if success was not yet certain in the founding phase. This includes that all booking and check-in steps are possible digitally and that the company is targeting a technology-savvy target group that is at least ready for digital transformation, if they have not already implemented it. In addition, the pandemic gave some employees the opportunity to work remotely and therefore gave them the freedom to choose their own place of work. However, this also required a willingness to embrace increasing digitalization, which in some cases also made technical support necessary. Needs analysis can be derived from such situations and training offers can be created, which in turn can be offered in the workation facilities.

**Promote flexibility:** The high demand for the offerings underlines the value of flexibility in work design. It enables companies to offer flexible work options that take employee preferences into account, thereby promoting job satisfaction and productivity.

**Promote innovation:** The concept of workation and work-life spaces illustrates how digitalization can influence the world of work and create new opportunities to determine work locations yourself and also make a contribution to society

- to promote the economy in certain regions.
- to ensure greater acceptance of hotels among locals, since seasonal jobs can be converted into continuous jobs.
- to reduce the ecological footprint of the buildings due to permanent utilisation.
- to strengthen other companies such as restaurants, bakeries and cultural organisers through long-term capacity utilisation and thus a regional upswing can be promoted and the labour market-related outflow of young people can be reduced

#### *Measuring Success, Responsibilities and Accountability*

Since Project Bay is a very young company, we cannot yet look back on a longer period of time. However, the success of the company idea can already be demonstrated by various factors.

- Occupancy/booking numbers and booking requests can be recorded easily
- The willingness to cooperate or the high level of interest in cooperation on the part of the tourism industry (especially hotel companies) expresses the success of the company idea.
- Customer feedback can also be easily recorded and presented statistically.
- In addition to the mood that arises from customer feedback, new needs can be identified through feedback and taken into account in the further development of the services.

Sustainability is valued so that sustainability is viewed as a high value throughout the company. The ecological footprint should be kept as low as possible, employees are regularly informed about the topic of sustainability and cars are exclusively based on e-mobility. The company has its sustainability balance checked by external partners

Regarding employee management, it is difficult to make a valid statement in a company that is still in a start-up structure, as a longer recording period would be helpful. But the company's approach is this. Involving employees and conducting transparent communication at eye level. The goals are to create family-friendly, barrier-free and multinational jobs. In this young phase of the company, we constantly look at the current status in order to be able to measure the path towards achieving the goals. An open feedback culture also contributes to measuring the quality of employee management.

Overall, one can notice a longing among city dwellers for life in the country, authenticity and open space. The possibility of living in the country on a trial basis or for a limited period of time through workation and getting to know the rural regions not only on a tourist level is a trend, which is clear from the high demand for such offers. This creates new jobs for the population in rural regions. (Hoffmann;Töppner, 2023) Project Bay, for example, is located in structurally weak regions that are very dependent on tourism.

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WORKATION  
MODEL

SAFE  
CONTINUOUS  
WORK

WAY OF LIFE

*Conclusion*

The workation model now enables greater independence from seasonal business and thus promotes safer, continuous work. In addition, the clientele who use workation generally have a greater interest in the local conditions and way of life and in protecting the living space that they have chosen for their workation location. All of this promotes acceptance of this idea among the local population.



# SKILLS SYNTHESIS

**a skilled workforce is essential for the sustainable growth competitiveness of the tourism sector**



The findings presented in this report serve as a roadmap for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders to collaborate effectively in shaping the future of tourism workforce development.

In essence, the PANTOUR Country Skills Profile Reports serve as a call to action, urging stakeholders to prioritize skill enhancement initiatives and embrace innovative practices to ensure the continued success and resilience of the tourism industry in the years to come.


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# Appendix 1. Examples of Digital training providers

|   |
|---|
| <b>Training provider name:</b><br>Kompetenzzentrum Tourismus des Bundes   |
| <b>Website:</b><br><a href="https://kompetenzzentrum-tourismus.de">https://kompetenzzentrum-tourismus.de</a>  |
| <b>Type of provider:</b><br>NGOs financed by Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz / Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection  |
| <b>Covered skills types:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Habitats and Tourism Acceptance</li><li>• Climate protection and sustainability</li><li>• human factor</li><li>• digitization and change</li></ul> |
| <b>Methods of delivery:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online courses</li><li>• F2f seminars/workshops</li><li>• Moduls with certification</li><li>• Partner platform for workshops</li></ul>              |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Training provider name:</b><br>Kompetenzzentrum 4.0  |
| <b>Website:</b><br><a href="https://www.kompetenzzentrum-rostock.digital/">https://www.kompetenzzentrum-rostock.digital/</a>  |
| <b>Type of provider:</b><br>Universitätsmedizin Rostock, legal entity, university   |
| <b>Covered skills types:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human health / human health tourism / health management</li><li>• tourism</li><li>• medical technology</li><li>• digital craft</li><li>• manufacturing</li></ul> |
| The Mittelstand 4.0 competence center in Rostock is part of Mittelstand-Digital. Mittelstand-Digital informs small and medium-sized companies about   |

the opportunities and challenges of digitization. Regional competence centers help the small retailer as well as the larger production company with expert knowledge, demonstration centers, networks for the exchange of experience and practical examples. The Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection enables the free use of all offers from Mittelstand-Digital. You can find more information at [www.mittelstand-digital.de/](http://www.mittelstand-digital.de/)

**Methods of delivery:**

- Online: (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification)

**Training provider name:**

Mittelstand Digital

**Website:**

<https://www.mittelstand-digital.de/MD/Navigation/DE/Home/home.html/>

**Type of provider:**

Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz/Federal institution for Economic Affairs and Climate Action

**Covered skills types:**

- Digital skills

**Methods of delivery:**

- Online: (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification)

# Appendix 2. Examples of 'Green' training providers

|  |
|--|
| <b>Training provider name:</b><br>Hochschule für Nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde  |
| <b>Website:</b><br><a href="https://www.hnee.de/de/Startseite/HNEEberswalde-Startseite-E9875.htm/">https://www.hnee.de/de/Startseite/HNEEberswalde-Startseite-E9875.htm/</a> |
| <b>Type of provider:</b><br>University of applied Science  |
| <b>Covered skills types:</b><br>Academic education<br>Green skills<br>Socio cultural skills<br>Economic skills for a sustainable development                                 |
| <b>Methods of delivery:</b><br>Presence learning and blended learning  |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Training provider name:</b><br>Greensign Academy   |
| <b>Website:</b><br><a href="https://www.greensign.de/academy/">https://www.greensign.de/academy/</a>  |
| <b>Type of provider:</b><br>Private provider of further training for sustainability in tourism  |
| <b>Covered skills types:</b><br>Green skills such as sustainable gastronomy concepts and diversity management<br>Socio cultural skills<br>Economic skills for a sustainable development |
| <b>Methods of delivery:</b><br>Workshops, seminars and outdoor trainings  |

# Appendix 3. Examples of Social/Cultural training providers

|  |
|--|
| <b>Training provider name:</b><br>Haufe Akademie   |
| <b>Website:</b><br><a href="https://www.haufe-akademie.de/hierarchy/persoenliche+und+soziale+kompetenz/">https://www.haufe-akademie.de/hierarchy/persoenliche+und+soziale+kompetenz/</a> |
| <b>Type of provider:</b><br>Private provider of professional training and seminars. Further vocational training can be funded by the state under certain conditions.                     |
| <b>Covered skills types:</b><br>Social skills<br>Communication skills<br>Socio-psychological skills  |
| <b>Methods of delivery:</b><br>Presence, live-online and digital training  |
| <b>Training provider name:</b><br>International Motivation Training Deutschland  |
| <b>Website:</b><br><a href="https://internationalmotivation.com/">https://internationalmotivation.com/</a>   |
| <b>Type of provider:</b><br>Private provider for training, coaching and seminars   |
| <b>Covered skills types:</b><br>Social skills<br>Resilience<br>Intercultural communication   |
| <b>Methods of delivery:</b><br>Online training in combination with presence training<br>Online training in combination with practical training and internships                           |