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**COUNTRY
SKILLS
PROFILE
REPORT**



BULGARIA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bulgarian tourism industry is renowned primarily for its mass beach tourism, with significant potential in winter, cultural, and spa tourism. It contributes notably to Bulgaria's GDP and employment, showcasing resilience and adaptability. The country's rich cultural heritage and natural attractions, coupled with its status as a year-round destination, underline its tourism appeal.



The country is rich in cultural heritage and natural attractions.

In 2024 Bulgaria welcomed 13 249 456 foreign visitors, 43,72% (5793225) of them came for leisure and holiday (NSI, 2025d). According to the Statista (2025b) the direct contribution of the travel and tourism industry to Bulgaria's GDP was 10.25% of the country's GDP in 2025.

In 2024 Bulgaria welcomed 13 249 456 foreign visitors, 43,72% (5793225) of them came for leisure and holiday. According to Statista (2025) the direct contribution of the travel and tourism industry to Bulgaria's GDP was 10.25% of the country's GDP in 2025.

This research represents an update to the Country Skills Profile Report (CSP Report, 2024) for Bulgaria, conducted as part of the pilot implementation of the Sectoral Skills Intelligence and Monitoring System (SSIM), elaborated within the PANTOUR. The study builds on previous findings by examining the evolving skill requirements in the Bulgarian travel and hospitality industry, with a particular focus on digital, green, and socio-cultural skills.

Primary research was carried out through 11 expert interviews with tourism professionals, HR managers, and decision-makers across diverse subsectors. These interviews provided valuable insights into both current proficiencies and anticipated future needs, highlighting areas where skill gaps may hinder competitiveness.

The results reveal a dynamic transformation in Bulgaria's tourism industry, including processes of embracing digital technologies to strengthen competitiveness and innovation and enhancing green practices to align with sustainability goals and emerging market expectations.

The research findings confirm that digital, green, and social skills are fundamental to the Bulgarian travel and hospitality industry and will remain critical in shaping its future competitiveness.

Digital skills continue to be driven by the need to adapt to rapid technological change and maintain competitiveness. Their importance is reinforced at the national level through integration into vocational and higher education curricula. Respondents highlight a strong industry-wide willingness to embrace digital transformation, with even small and medium enterprises in Bulgaria overcoming resistance to change.

The sector is expected to increasingly rely on online client communication, service innovation, and technology-driven solutions to address both economic and environmental challenges.

Green skills are evolving from being primarily regulation-driven to becoming a source of competitive advantage. Respondents, however, expressed uncertainty about which specific skills are most urgently required, reflecting limited clarity around green solutions. Compared to the previous CSP Report (2024), there is heightened concern in the Bulgarian tourism sector for environmental care, cultural and historical preservation, and community engagement. Museums, rural attractions, and destination management organizations are particularly committed to enhancing authenticity and sustainability. A growing number of respondents emphasize responsible practices toward local communities, including organizing events, festivities, and educational activities

Social skills remain the cornerstone of tourism, consistently identified as the most essential across both research periods. Experts stress that beyond technical expertise, interpersonal communication, empathy, and understanding of human needs are indispensable for delivering quality experiences and ensuring customer satisfaction in Bulgaria's hospitality industry.

Together, these findings emphasize the need for resilience and adaptability in the sector, positioning Bulgaria's tourism industry to meet future challenges while sustaining its cultural and environmental heritage.

Overall, the Bulgarian travel and hospitality sector demonstrates readiness for transformation, balancing technological innovation with environmental responsibility and social engagement. The trajectory points toward a future characterized by predominant online communication, sustainable practices, and continuous social upskilling of frontline staff, ensuring resilience and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market.

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

The original publication from 2024 consists of an online survey and results within each country in the PANTOUR consortium, held among tourism professionals, HR managers and decision makers as well as an inventory of Best Practices The document can be found in the PANTOUR publications.

The publication at hand, consists of updated information as well as results from expert interviews held in late 2025 for tourism professionals offering an 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 towards 2030.

1. GENERAL TOURISM CHARACTERISTICS, FACTS & FIGURES OF BULGARIA

The primary aim of this chapter of this Country Skills Profile report of BULGARIA 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, the total contribution of travel and tourism to the global economy was \$ 10.9 trillion in 2024 (WTTC, 2025a). As forecast, the total contribution of the travel and tourism sector to the global GDP was expected to reach 11.7 trillion U.S. dollars in 2025 (WTTC, 2025a). The number of international tourist arrivals worldwide rose to 1.47 billion in 2024 (Statista, 2025a). This states tourism at the glance of the significant front position as shaper of world economy and human welfare.

Travel & Tourism sector in 2024 directly and indirectly generated 357 million jobs. This represents an increase of 5,6 % in global travel and tourism employment over 2019.

Accordingly, global employment in the travel and tourism sector rose from 338 million to 357 million jobs in 2024 over the pre pandemic year 2019 year. The increase marked a recovery level over the pandemic period and forecasts 462 million in year 2035. A recovery level of employment is reached in Europe as well, where in 2024 almost 40 million jobs are directly and indirectly allocated in the travel and tourism industry (WTTC, 2025b).

1.1.1 Contribution of travel & tourism to GDP in Bulgaria

In 2023, total tourism consumption in Bulgaria as stated by NSI (2025c), reached 9,506.16 million BGN with the market heavily weighted toward international visitors. Inbound expenditure from foreign tourists accounted for 78.6% (7,470 million BGN) of the total, while domestic travel by Bulgarian citizens contributed 21.4% (2,036.16 million BGN). Meanwhile, Bulgarian residents spent 3,197 million BGN on outbound travel (NSI, 2025d).

Regarding the financial condition of enterprises in hospitality and catering, the recovery of tourism and inflationary processes are among the main reasons why revenues from hotel and restaurant activities in 2023 (over BGN 9.5 billion) were 57% higher than the 2019 level, according to NSI data (2025c). At the same time, the expenses of enterprises in the subsector also increased due to inflation, reaching nearly BGN 8.4 billion in 2023, which is 44% more compared to 2019, according to NSI (2024).

According to Statista (2025b) the direct contribution of the travel and tourism industry to Bulgaria's GDP was 10.7% in 2019 and significantly dropped at 5% in 2021. The levels of development of the travel and tourism sector led to slow recovery of the pre-pandemic levels by reaching 8.9% in 2024 and almost catching up on the pre pandemic levels at year 2025 with a direct contribution of 10.25% (Statista, 2025b).

1.1.2 Size and relevance of the subsectors

In 2024 there were 4 049 accommodation establishments in Bulgaria, which is only with 18 establishments higher than 2022 (4031), but 10,5% above the benchmark year 2019 when this number was 3664, showing that the Bulgarian tourism industry has fully recovered after the pandemics (NSI, 2025a). The methodology of data collection by the Bulgarian National Statistics Institute considers only accommodation establishments with more than 10 beds.

There is a national Register of tour operators and travel agencies, but it is too dynamic and not possible to filter out the operational ones only (Ministry of Tourism, 2025b). The same is valid for the Register of F&B outlets.

Bulgaria boasts with very rich cultural and historical heritage, but many of the sites are under the management of Ministry of Culture and are not open for visitors. In the country there are 3587 registered cultural and historical tourist attractions, with 19 attractions more than 2023, and over 1890 festivals and cultural events (Ministry of Tourism, 2025a). The registered museums for 2024 are 188, and they welcomed 5 070 401 visitors in 2024 (NSI, 2025b). Currently, Bulgaria has 10 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List under UNESCO protection (UNESCO, 2025).

In addition, Bulgaria has opulent natural tourist resources, including mountains, caves, forests, interesting rocks, mineral springs, etc. Still, the largest and most popular tourist area is undoubtedly the Black Sea coast with its 378km total length, from which around 130km are sandy beaches. The mild moderate to sub-tropical climate on the coast, combined with a lot of entertainment activities is the basis for the rapid development of the Bulgarian mass tourism industry in 1960-2000. Nowadays, the country positions itself as a Four-seasons destination, offering numerous attractions during the entire year.

In 2024 Bulgaria welcomed 13 249 456 visitors to the country, and 6 697 390 of them were from the EU (NSI, 2025d). The majority of the incoming tourists were from the neighbouring countries with Romania as a leader, followed by, Greece, Germany and Poland. Another 6 552 066 visitors to Bulgaria came from other European countries, outside of the EU, e.g. Turkey, Ukraine, Serbia and North Macedonia (NSI, 2025d). This visitor structure could be attributed to the COVID-19 outcomes, i.e. people prefer to travel to closer, neighbouring destinations, and using their own vehicles.

The overall number of overnights for 2024 is 27 646 201, including 15 058 045 by foreign tourists (NSI, 2025a). In 2024 outgoing Bulgarian tourists were 8 796 793 and they travelled mostly to the EU (4 968 473), and in particular to Turkey, Greece, Romania, and Germany (NSI, 2025d).

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

Bulgaria has four international passenger airports – Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, and Burgas. The Black Sea coast airports (Varna and Burgas) serve mainly charter flights, coming to the main beach resorts Sunny beach, Golden Sands, Albena, Sts. Constantine and Helena. In the last 5 years several low-cost airlines established their bases in Bulgaria, which increased the number of whole year round flights and more evenly distributed tourist flows.

The majority of foreign tourists come to the country by air (mostly charter flights), and by car (especially tourists from the neighbouring countries like Romania, Greece, North Macedonia, Turkey).

Sofia air traffic statistic for 2024 states 65764 passenger flights to main destinations such as: London, Vienna, Frankfurt, Milan, Istanbul with a number of passengers almost 8 mill. (SOF Connect AD, 2025). According to Fraport (2025), Burgas airport welcomed 1,8 mill. passengers and Varna more than 1,5 mill. The significance of air transport for mass tourism on the Black Sea is justified with 25 184 flight with almost 30% of them chartered (7299), nevertheless the role of low cost carriers is increasing, contributing especially to larger destination choice (almost 200) (Fraport, 2025).

Bulgaria's water borders are along the Danube River and the Black Sea coast. The primary seaports offering marine transport in Bulgaria are Varna and Burgas ports. Along the Danube River there are also river ports serving tourists with Ruse being the major one, welcoming many cruise passengers as well.

The railway infrastructure of the country is well developed, but the condition of trains and wagons needs significant upgrade. The railway transportation is used mainly by the local population for commuting and for domestic trips. The road network in the country consists of limited access highways, first-, second- and third-class roads. Bus transport is well developed. There are express buses serving most of the large towns and cities in the country. There are international bus lines to most of the European capitals and to other European cities. The majority of the domestic tourists prefer their own automobiles for travelling around the country, and often for their trips abroad, especially to the neighbouring countries like Greece, Turkey and Romania.

1.1.4 Arrivals of international versus national tourists

In 2024, the number of trips of Bulgarian residents abroad were 8 796793 (NSI, 2025d). In comparison the arrivals in accommodation establishments in the country were 5 212 667 (NSI,2025a). This gives an image of the growing number of travellers abroad that breaks the previous trend of people travelling in their own countries, rather than abroad (Ivanova et al., 2021).

From the 13 249 456 foreign visitors to Bulgaria in 2024, 43,72% (5793225) came for leisure and holiday, while 10,56% came for business (1399179). The rest 45,72% (6057052) visited the country for any other reason (transiting, visiting friends and relatives, etc.) (NSI, 2025d).

In Bulgaria the majority of the tourist companies are small, micro and nano companies. For example, the National register of accommodation establishments shows over 22000 registered entities (Ministry of Tourism, 2025c), whereas according to the National Statistical Institute the hotels and properties with more than 10 beds are 4049 (NSI, 2025a). The same is applicable for the travel agencies and tour companies for miscellaneous services.

According to the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency Report for the year 2024 (BSMEPA, 2025) and NSI data on non-financial enterprises in 2024, SMEs in Bulgaria are 461 982, which is 99.83% of the total number of enterprises.

The most numerous are micro enterprises – 432 699, small – 24 800, and medium – 4 483. The share of micro enterprises of all SMEs is 94.36%, of small enterprises - 5.36%, and of medium enterprises - 0.97%. In a 3 years' period between 2021 and 2023 SMEs in Bulgaria raised with 49 790, which is 12,08%. In 2019, before the pandemic the number of SMEs where 418 922. In the Accommodation and food services sector number of SME for 2023 is 22 577, which is 4,89% of all SME in the country. (BSMEPA, 2025)

1.2 TRAVEL AND TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT

In 2024 travel and tourism jobs were 305 thousand constituting 10.4% of total number of jobs in the country, whereas in the benchmark pre-covid 2019 this contribution was 316.3 thousand jobs and 9.0% of the total jobs (Statista, 2025c).

For Bulgaria the number of employed persons in 2023 in hospitality and catering was 144,859 in 2023 (NSI, 2024), i.e. 6,6% of all employees in non-financial sectors. The pandemic led to a decline in interest, especially among young people, to work in tourism due to job insecurity.

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

According to the WTTC 2023 Economic Impact Research (EIR) forecasts 10% of the Bulgarian economy will come from Travel & Tourism by 2033 (WTTC, July 2023). A level of 10% contribution to the GDP is forecasted by Statista (2025b) in year 2028. Following the sourced data, we can define the contribution of travel and tourism to GDP of Bulgaria as significant and with a sustainable value of around 10% stated for year 2025 and forecasted within 8 years' period.

However, the instable political situation nearby (the war in Ukraine and the refugee flows to the country) are disturbing the optimistic views for now. Anyway, the tourism sector is considered as a major contributor to the GDP, that is why Bulgaria will continue developing it in the next decades.

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

According to a survey on Labour force needs, done by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Bulgaria (2025), demand for unskilled workers increased by 4,115, or +8.3%, compared to 2024. The distribution by sectors shows that the demand is increasing only in 3 of the observed sectors, one of them is accommodation and food service activities. Over the next 3-5 years, more than 9000 specialists in Tourism will be demanded, among others. The official forecasts from the Employment Agency (2025) clearly demonstrate that Tourism is not merely a seasonal industry, but a strategic sector with a high demand not only for highly qualified professionals, but for skilled professions in the culinary field, restaurant service, housekeeping and hotel administration.

1.5 MAIN FOCUS POINTS OF NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR TOURISM

Currently Bulgarian tourism is characterized with high seasonality. However, the natural resources and cultural heritage of the country have a high potential which is still underutilised. In the long term, the specialised forms of tourism should be developed and offered more intensively, in order to compensate the climatic changes that influence the sea and winter tourism season. Year 2026 is labelled by the Ministry of Tourism as the year of Cultural tourism with high intentions of raising awareness of the rich cultural and historical heritage.

The National strategy for sustainable tourism development 2014-2030 (Ministry of Tourism, 2017) emphasises a few ultimate goals in the future development of Bulgarian tourism:

- ✓ Transforming Bulgarian into a 4-seasons tourist destination, thus enabling optimal resource utilisation, economic growth and even distribution of the socio-cultural benefits, in accordance with the UNWTO's general vision on the tourism development.
- ✓ Adopting sustainable approach in the further development of the tourism industry, involving all the existing and newly opened business ventures.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Republic of Bulgaria, 2023) consists of 98 measures (47 reforms and 51 investments) addressing the economy's structural problems. The reforms target bottlenecks to lasting and sustainable growth, while investment aims to address common EU challenges by embracing the green and digital transitions, and strengthening both economic and social resilience and the cohesion of the single market. The NRRP consists of 12 components grouped in four policy pillars:

Pillar 1. Innovative Bulgaria – “Education and skills”; “Research and innovation”; 'Smart industry'

Pillar 2. Green Bulgaria - 'Low-carbon economy'; 'Biodiversity'; 'Sustainable agriculture';

Pillar 3. Connected Bulgaria - 'Digital connectivity'; 'Sustainable transport'; 'Local development'

Pillar 4. Fair Bulgaria - 'Business environment'; 'Social inclusion'; 'Healthcare'

The Plan puts an emphasis on the Digital Transition and efforts are focused on four main strands:

- (i) the deployment of broadband infrastructure;
- (ii) enhancing the digital skills of the population;
- (iii) accelerating the deployment of digital technologies in enterprises;
- (iv) the deployment of e-Government and e-services.

The particular measures within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Republic of Bulgaria, 2023) concerning digital skills include:

- ✓ Modernization of educational infrastructure;
- ✓ Establishment of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) centres and innovations in education;
- ✓ Provision of digital skills trainings and set-up of a platform for adult learning;

1.6 COUNTRY-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN TOURISM

According to the National strategy for sustainable tourism development 2014-2030 (Ministry of Tourism, 2017) the country is experiencing major challenges, regarding human resource management and development:

- Lack of certain business strategies for the human resource development
- Limited investment in the personnel development
- Limited trainings on company and regional level – e.g. language courses, introduction of new technologies and services, etc.
- Lack of cooperation among the companies for staff exchange and development
- Lack of specialised personnel for positions that are new and current, for middle management positions, for the so-called "rare" specialists (in golf tourism, some spa and wellness treatments, massages, etc.), etc.;
- Training conditions for occupational areas with special requirements to tourist activities have not been established yet; it has also not been established in which areas there is a need for new occupations (Ministry of Tourism, 2017).

The tourism sector currently lacks a centralized national strategy for human resource development, resulting in a persistent disconnect between educational curricula and industry requirements. A critical issue remains the absence of a comprehensive framework to accurately assess the specific technical competencies and soft skills demanded by tourism employers. There is a will demonstrated by the Ministry of tourism (2025d) out of their report on the activities from year 2024, to address the needs by fostering a dual education in higher education, as well as an update on The List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training (National Agency for Vocational Education and Training [NAVET], 2024). Suggested changes are related to daily and dual education practices that will take into consideration the seasonality of the sector, as well as businesses needs and working demand.

According to an analysis of the Ministry of Economy (2021) as part of a National Strategy for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Bulgaria for the period 2021 to 2027, SMEs prefer training only for core company-specific activities while foreign languages, ICT skills, marketing and sales, including exports, are considered as useful by less than a half of the SMEs. These attitudes may further explain the observed very low levels of vocational trainings, life-long learning and other SMEs training activities in Bulgaria compared to the EU average. The lack of adequate and objective assessment regarding the current and required level of specific skills and competences is a great barrier to increase SMEs awareness of the actual skills gap and to implement adequate human resource development strategies based on accurate information. One solution would be the availability of online tools for self-assessment, which would contribute to more objectivity in perceptions regarding the level of development of particular skills and competences in SMEs (Ministry of Economy, 2021).

2. CURRENT SKILLS

TRAINING DELIVERY IN

BULGARIA

This chapter provides an overview of the training delivery of digital, green and social skills sets in BULGARIA. This is conducted by collecting and analysing data from country sources and summarising these.

The tourism education in Bulgaria encompasses the secondary and higher education, and vocational training, i.e. level 3 EQF (EU Qualification Framework)/NQF (National Qualification Framework) and higher. There are vocational secondary schools, profiled in the tourism sector, where students study modules, typical for the tourism industry – they are called Vocational schools of Tourism (e.g. Sofia Vocational High School of Tourism, spgt.org). The diploma of such vocational schools (level 3 and 4 EQF/NQF) certifies abilities, skills and competences of jobs like waiter, cook, animator, tour guide, receptionist at a hotel, etc. The upper secondary education now is fully dedicated to such professional modules.

Sixth and higher EQF/NQF levels of education in tourism are provided by universities and colleges. Currently, in Bulgaria there are 19 higher education institutions offering 39 programmes in tourism and hospitality according to the official state register (National Center for Information and Documentation [NACID], 2025). While some of them have a broader scope (e.g. Tourism Management, International Tourism, Leisure Management, etc.), other programmes have a greater industry focus (e.g. Hotel Management, International Hospitality Management, Catering, Rural and eco-tourism, Adventures and cultural tourism, Hiking guides, Sports animation, etc.). Level 6 programmes (Bachelor) are 28 in number, studied in 15 out of the 19 HEI, and Level 7 programmes (Master) are 35 in number provided in 15 of the 19 HEIs. Only

Professional/Vocational colleges focus mostly on practical skills and knowledge for operational level jobs positions in tourism / hospitality companies. National Agency for Vocational Education and Training [NAVET] register states in December 2025, 254 VET centres offer vocational courses related to travel and tourism and 402 related to hospitality. The courses encompass numerous skills and competences, addressing the demand for adult learning and upgrading current education. Hospitality courses focus on hotel operations and guest interactions, alongside with culinary education and skills. Travel and tourism include transportation methods, tour operators and travel agents work alongside with guided services, marketing and management. However, the compliance with the EQF ECTS is still under preparation. VET centers as part of professional bachelor education require 180 to 240 ECTS, whereas qualification programs and courses include 90-120 ECTS (European Commission, European Education Area, 2025). The VET Centres usually correspond with level 5 of the NQF/EQF.

Despite the review of educational and training centers has identified numerous educational institutions capable of addressing the increasing demand for qualified tourism professionals, a fundamental issue is still the lack of interest among people to work in the industry (Ministry of Tourism, 2017). Additionally, the links between the education sector and industry remain weak and there is a dearth of information regarding the level of demand for employees with specific tourism knowledge and skills (Ministry of Tourism, 2018). In 2023, the Human Resources Development Programme (HRDP) 2021-2027, as a result of an agreement between Ministry of labour and social policy and Ministry of Tourism (2023), offered several procedures relevant to the tourism sector. Key opportunities focused on training, skill development, and employment, including "Qualifications, Skills, and Career Development for Employed Persons," "Youth Employment +," and "Active," aiming to boost workforce capacity in tourism. Targeted policy toward human resource management in the tourism sector is responsibility of the Interdepartmental Council of Human Resources in Tourism, established in 2016 as a consultative public-private body to the Minister of Tourism. It includes experts from educational and training

In the last meeting of the council on 11.04.2023. key points of discussion included: Current policy of the Ministry of labor and social policy in enhancing the employment in the Tourism industry; Dual education in Tourism; Challenges and opportunities in human resource management in Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2023b). Branch associations, administrative representatives and academics raise issues related to the missing productive communication between the Tourism sector, entrepreneur representatives and the policy makers, specifying on differences in statistical methods and numbers, giving suggestion in making a road map of staff shortages in Tourism, and last but not least providing with a solution in the opportunities of the dual education.

2.1 DIGITAL SKILLS

Digital skills development is a priority of several state strategies like: National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030 (Ministry of Finance, 2025), National employment strategy of Bulgaria 2021-2030 (NAVET, 2025), strategy “Digital transformation of Bulgaria for the period 2020-2030 (Ministry of Transport and Communication, 2020). By 2026 under the Education Programme 2021–2027 in connection with the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), procedure “Improving the Quality of General Education through the Effective Implementation of a Competence-Based Model” – 38,962 teachers are expected to be trained (Executive Agency “Programme Education”, 2024a).

Under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, it is envisioned that by mid-2026, 500,000 unemployed and employed persons will acquire basic and intermediate levels of digital skills, in accordance with the European Digital Competence Framework DigComp 2.1 (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2023).

Digital technologies tracing the sustainable path of Bulgaria

Other programme aiming to enhance the digital skills and competencies of the population is “Training for DI-GI skills and competencies” (National Employment Agency, 2025). The actions taken are expected to increase competences especially in the unemployed human force and to contribute, to cover the staff shortage in travel and tourism sector.

The “Education” Programme 2021–2027 (e.g. projects “Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training”, “Digital Transformation of School Education, including VET”, “Strengthening the competence-based approach in professional fields important to the regional economy and the labour market, in partnership with business, and expanding digital competences and digital educational content in higher education”, etc.) prioritises large-scale digital upskilling, aiming to train nearly 9,000 teachers, lecturers, and experts, alongside over 18,000 students and 159,000 parents and mediators, to strengthen digital competences and modernise educational practices (Executive Agency “Programme Education”, 2024b). These initiatives focus on enhancing educators’ digital skills while embedding contemporary, competence-based approaches across vocational, school, and higher education. Under the Human Resources Development Programme – 142,400 employed, unemployed, and inactive persons are expected to acquire digital skills by 2029 (European Commission, n.d.).

In 2026 Bulgaria’s Draft Digital Transformation aims to build a connected, secure, and inclusive digital state aligned with EU “Digital Decade” goals, yet digital skills remain limited (Ministry of Electronic Governance, 2025), with only 36% of citizens showing basic competence compared to the EU average of 56% (Eurostat, 2025). Additionally, the Roadmap’s “Digital skills” direction outlines 15 measures on education, industry collaboration, and infrastructure, supported by the Digital National Coalition (Ministry of Electronic Governance, 2024; DNA, 2025).

Considering the vital role of tourism and hospitality in Bulgaria’s economy, with 372,000 jobs projected by 2034 (Statista, 2025c), these programmes will integrate higher education and focus on upskilling potential hospitality employees to address staff shortages.

Universities

Higher Education Institutions are starting to implement in their tourism programs digital knowledge and skills. The University of Veliko Turnovo “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” has currently a Bachelor degree “Tourism and digitalization” with focus on tourism software programs and digital services and Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” have Master’s in Digital Management of Tourism. The master’s programme focused on digital management and the use of digital technologies in tourism, digital marketing tools, and information systems relevant to tourism management.

Burgas Free University (BFU) offers a Bachelor degree “System Engineering in Industry and Tourism”. A bachelor’s degree that combines tourism with system engineering and includes elements of hardware/software systems that can be applied within tourism and related ICT contexts.

Most of the universities providing tourism and hospitality programmes have special modules, dedicated to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), where the content is focused on basic computer literacy and work with the main common software and operational systems (Windows, MS Office). Six out of 19 Universities offering Tourism and hospitality programmes have specialised modules related to the digital skills in tourism, e.g. Varna University of Management has a module on Technologies in Tourism and Hospitality, including specialised training in PMS/hotel management software, and F&B software; College of Tourism to UE-Varna has a module on Digital technologies in hotels and restaurants; International Business School has a module on Digital transformation of business; while New Bulgarian University offers Internet communications in tourism; Varna Free University has Information and reservation systems in tourism in their 2nd semester.

VET centres and Secondary vocational schools

Currently, there are about 850 active Vocational Educational Centres (VET) in Bulgaria, and approximately half of them offer courses related to tourism, hospitality and travel industries. 254 VET centres offer vocational courses

related to travel and tourism and 402 related to hospitality (NAVET, 2025). Most of them offer courses for traditional jobs like “hotel manager”, “restaurant manager”, “chef”, “waiter”, “tour operator”, „guided services” etc. Analysis of the curriculum of such courses shows that digital skills are covered mostly in terms of general digital literacy (skills for business communication, online correspondence, etc.), and in the specific hotel software (PMS, Revenue management software) (see Appendix 1).

The secondary vocational education takes place at specialised vocational schools in tourism and hospitality. They offer education in hospitality (code 1013 Hotel management, F&B/cooks, chefs and catering services) and in travel, tourism and leisure (code 1015 Tourist guides, travel agents, , animation, mountain guides, event management). The study curriculum is centrally determined by the Ministry of Education and Science, and is updated on annual basis (Ministry of Education and Science, 2025b). It is compulsory for all secondary vocational schools in the country.

The analysis of the curriculum shows that digital skills are incorporated in modules for basic computer literacy, and some modules regarding special equipment and technologies in cooking and culinary arts.

Generally, in all Bulgarian secondary schools there are modules on online communication skills (email, web-based communication, basic office applications). However, Ministry of Education and Science is currently demonstrating strong will and action toward new and contemporary approach in the education system Project BG05SFPR001-3.001 “Modernization of Vocational Education and Training” (2023–2029) aims to reform Bulgaria’s vocational education system by aligning curricula, standards, and qualifications with the requirements of the digital and green economy (Ministry of Education and Science, 2025a). It introduces flexible learning pathways, competency-based teacher profiles, and innovative blended learning approaches. A strong focus is placed on developing digital content and systematically upskilling educators and external instructors through modular and mentoring-based training. The project also promotes specialised training in emerging technologies and transversal competences, while expanding work-based learning opportunities.

By 2025, notable progress is seen in dual education, with an increase in both modules and student participation. Food and beverage specialties are being integrated into dual education to better meet employer and business needs (Ministry of Education and Science, 2025a).

Other training providers

Besides, there are numerous private organisations and training centres that provide courses, developing digital skills. In the recent years, various platforms, training campaigns, and other initiatives to encourage digital skills training and education were established, e.g. Telerik Academy, Software University, Ucha.se, etc.

A good sign that digital skills have become more appreciated is that some organisations already offer courses for digital skills trainers and lecturers. In order to teach students in digital skills, first it is necessary to have competent teachers, who have those digital skills, and are able to transfer them to the potential students. A popular platform for teachers and lecturers <https://prepodavame.bg/> is a good example of those “train the trainer” courses, e.g. digital literacy for teachers (Ivanov, 2022).

Some companies (e.g. PIM-SZ Ltd. and Raaabe Bulgaria) as independent training providers deliver free adult training programs through vouchers, in accordance with the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp 2.1), covering the five areas of digital competence and 21 digital skills/competences (Bulgarian Industrial Association [BIA], 2025a). In a similar line Bulgarian Industrial Association is coordinator of the project and Foundation for Modern Education (Bulgaria) partner to enhance the potential of work-based learning to bridge the skills gap by implementing an integrated approach to introducing AI into the mentoring framework. The partnership will develop an AI in Mentoring training programme and training materials for mentors and mentor trainers (BIA, 2025b).

Bulgaria’s innovation ecosystem is rapidly expanding through hubs such as Sofia Tech Park, DigIhub Burgas, and the AI Cluster, which collaborate with universities, municipalities, and industry associations to drive cross-sector

technologies, while also supporting entrepreneurship through events like Pitch2Pitch (AI Cluster Bulgaria, 2025). The Innovation Accelerator (2025) prioritises transformative sectors including education, transport, food, and eco-innovation, offering structured support to high-potential start-ups. These initiatives create opportunities for hospitality and tourism by encouraging digitalisation, food industry innovation, and cross-industry collaboration, helping the sector modernise and attract talent through advanced technologies.

Digital skills training in Bulgaria is at its acceleration stage. The need of digital skills is already largely recognised from all sectors of the economy. Therefore, numerous national programmes and projects started with delivery of those skills. Still, at level 4 (secondary school) and level 5 (vocational education) in tourism education digital skills are quite sparsely covered – only basic computer literacy and some specialised hotel software/PMS are included in the curricula. While an array of generic digital skills courses exists, specialized training that integrates artificial intelligence specifically for tourism professionals remains scarce. Existing curricula often fail to account for the unique operational complexities of the hospitality industry, leading to a significant gap in sector-specific technological proficiency.

Recommendations:

- Include more modules, related to digital skills both in secondary vocational schools and VET centres for tourism
- Interdisciplinary approach in digital skill improvement, whereas technological and communicational knowledge is required in several programs of the curriculum in secondary vocational schools and VET centres for tourism
- Elaboration of courses on general digital skills and AI implication, but with application in particular context, e.g. in tourism and hospitality
- Include more diverse digital skills in the curricula of Tourism programmes in the universities, or at least to raise certain awareness about them, e.g. robots, artificial intelligence, AR, VR, etc. in the context of tourism and hospitality.
- Strengthen the approach of “learning by doing” with involvement of students in projects and events of interest, requiring application of digital skills and knowledge outside of their compulsory programme.

2.1 GREEN SKILLS

Universities

In terms of green skills most of the universities offering tourism and hospitality programmes emphasise on the sustainability, resource efficiency and environmental management. Twenty out of the 40 Tourism programmes (NACID, 2025), offered by the universities are related to cultural, alternative, eco and agricultural tourism. Even in the South-West University there is a separate tourism major – Sustainable tourism where “Ecology and nature protection in tourism” and “Biodiversity conservation” are compulsory modules included in the curriculum. At the University of National and World Economy, Sofia there is a module Ecology and sustainable development in the Bachelor in Tourism programme as well (see Appendix 2).

A very distinctive fact is that universities that specialise in fields like nutrition, food technology, food science and engineering, or agricultural technologies, (e.g. the University of Food Technology, Plovdiv and University of Forestry, Sofia) have a greater tendency to include modules, related to sustainability and green skills.

Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” has been implementing the Strategic Research and Innovation Programme for Development “Digital Sustainable Ecosystems – Technological Solutions and Social Models for Ecosystem Sustainability (DUEcoS)” since early 2023. The programme is funded under the Bulgarian National Recovery and Resilience Plan, within the “Innovative Bulgaria” component, aimed at accelerating economic recovery and transformation through science and innovation and at establishing a network of research-oriented higher education institutions. The programme is interdisciplinary and focuses on the green economy, environmental solutions and ecosystem services. Its objective is to develop integrated approaches for ecosystem assessment and sustainability by combining the sustainable use of natural resources with the analysis of interactions between human communities and nature, supported by advanced technological and social models.

VET centres and Secondary vocational schools

VET centers offer several courses related to particular jobs in tourism and hospitality. There are certain skills included in the curriculum, connected mostly with hygiene standards, HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) system (which is compulsory for all F&B outlet in Bulgaria), safety and security regulations, especially when working with food and beverages, resource efficiency and environmental management. We observe an effort to cover green skills.

The secondary vocational education takes place at specialised secondary vocational schools in tourism and hospitality. They offer education in hospitality (code 1013 Hotel management, F&B/cooks, chefs and catering services) and in travel, tourism and leisure (code 1015 Tourist guides, travel agents). The study curriculum is centrally determined by the Ministry of Education and science, and is updated on annual basis (Ministry of Education and Science, 2025b). It is compulsory for all secondary vocational schools in the country.

In terms of green skills, the curriculum includes several modules, connected to Microbiology, Safety and first aid, Hygiene, Main skills in coping with fire, emergency situations, disasters and accidents.

In the curriculum of the students for year 2025/2026 there are modules such as „Chemistry and environmental protection”; “Culinary production process”; “Safety and first aid in Tourism” and others focusing on the tourism production operations. Still, there are certain topics, related to the sustainable operations, avoiding food waste and environmental protection. However, there is not yet a separate module, dedicated solely to acquiring green skills and competences. Usually those topics are included in the modules about hygiene, safety and security.

Additionally, there are topics about standards and quality control, principles of HACCP system (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point), sanitary and hygienic requirements of technological equipment, food storage, technological processes, potential allergens, packaging and transportation of food products, etc.

In the recent years several initiatives directed the focus to the need of green skills and special education about sustainability and environmental protection. As part of the Programme “Research, Innovation and Digitalisation for Smart Transformation” 2021–2027, 4 centers of excellence and 10 centers for competence will continue their sustainable development (Ministry of Innovation and Growth, 2022). Some of the centers are „Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology”; “Center for pure technologies and sustainable environment – water, waste, circle economy”; “Competence center for intelligent mechatronics – eco and energy saving systems and technologies”; “Center of competence hit mobile – technologies and systems for pure energy”; “Sustainable usage of bio resources” etc.

Green initiatives leading to informal training and education are mainly a result of the work of non-governmental organisations and public-private partnerships. One recent example of such initiative is Youth for Development and Sustainable Goals (YDSG) (<https://ydsg.org/>) - a dynamic non-profit organization based in Varna, Bulgaria. Established in 2023, their mission is to empower young people and promote sustainable development through non-formal education and community engagement. Their work includes trainings, workshops, international projects and awareness campaigns. Another good example is the platform - Move.bg - actively engaged in tracking the development of green start-ups, civil society organisations and scientific projects focused on sustainability and environmental innovation (Move.bg, 2025). It is the organisation that conducts the only national annual survey on green initiatives in Bulgaria and the results are shared at the “Re:Think Green — Green Solutions from Bulgaria” conference, bringing together business, government and science stakeholders ([Move.bg](https://move.bg/), 2024). Another business network dedicated to sustainable development of Bulgaria by training and project management services provided to start ups and SME is Cleantech Bulgaria (<https://cleantech.bg/>). The network is catalyst for green business and innovation in the fields of: climate, energy, circular economy and cities of the future.

CloudEARTH*i* (<https://cloudearthi.com>) is an initiative that includes a series of projects that aim to build innovation capacity of using big data in Environmental Sciences, Sustainability and Circular Economy. One of its final outcomes is to elaborate a digital platform with courses dedicated to digital innovation, artificial intelligence, but also to Earth and Environmental sciences (AccessEARTH, <https://cloudearthi.com/accessearth>).

The modified National Recovery and Resilience Plan, including the REPowerEU chapter, continues to focus on the green transition, devoting 57.5% of the available funds to measures that support climate objectives, including accelerated decarbonisation of the energy sector, uptake of renewable energy sources and storage capacities, and ensuring a secure and future-proof electricity system (European Commission, 2024).

Implications:

Green skills training is on emerging stage in Bulgaria. Many projects and initiatives are trying to raise awareness in the business, private and public institutions about the concepts of sustainability, green development and circular economy. High importance is adopted through the European community engagement. In this regard it is expected in the next few years to increase the demand for relevant education and training in green skills.

Recommendations:

- To include dedicated modules on environmental protection, biodiversity and sustainability within the curricula of secondary schools and higher education institutions.
- To introduce practical, hands-on learning modules that demonstrate the importance of green skills from an early age, including in schools and kindergartens.
- To deliver targeted educational campaigns for tourism professionals highlighting the value and impact of sustainable practices.
- To engage students and school children through organizations in green initiatives.

- To strengthen awareness within the tourism sector of sustainability principles and circular economy concepts.

2.3 SOCIAL SKILLS

Universities

Social skills in university programmes in tourism and hospitality are focused mostly in elective modules, e.g. Sofia University has modules on Psychology, Philosophy, History of arts, Cultural geography in Europe, Customer care, Business communication, Customer psychology. UE-Varna offers modules Social Psychology in tourism, Customer care, Culture and civilisations, Bulgarian folklore and ethnography, Service management in tourism. South-West University has modules Cultural tourism, World Cultural Heritage, Negotiation skills in Tourism, Business communications. University of National and World Economy offers modules Social Psychology and tourist behaviour; Cultural Tourism. Almost all universities include in their curriculum at least the Business communication module, which encompasses most of the soft and social skills (see Appendix 3).

VET centres and Secondary vocational schools

Social skills modules are represented very weakly at this level of education. There are topics, related to preparation, organisation, implementation and management of special tourist events, identification of certain trends in the industry, marketing skills for promotion and popularisation of special events, customer service and customer care, standards of operations and behavior in food and beverages operations.

Also, in specialised modules for human resource management could be found topics regarding social psychology, service standards, communication, development of personality and career growth, social activities during special events, elaboration of social programme, corporate culture and corporate social responsibility. However, most of the above social skills are continuing to be only integrated as topics within the modules, not as separate modules. Therefore, very often social skills are neglected in the process of education at the expense of development of technical skills and knowledge.

Other training providers of social and cultural skills

The ESSENCE project (Enhance Soft Skills to Nurture Competitiveness and Employability, <https://projectessence.eu>) which intended to improve employability opportunities for higher education students by stimulating soft skills development is over. The project aimed at maximising the engagement in the labour market through professional development paths that go beyond formal higher education trainings. In Bulgaria University of Economics – Varna participated actively in the project. On the project website learning resources are accessible freely.

In addition, MyCompetence (n.d.) offers a wide range of assessment tools for soft skills, including managerial and social competencies, emotional intelligence, team effectiveness, motivation and job satisfaction, decision-making and problem-solving skills, business negotiation skills, workplace stress management, as well as abilities related to concentration and attention to detail.

CIT4VET – Open Online Catalogue of Intercultural Tools for Vocational Education and Training (202) – addresses this need for intercultural competences in VET education. The project of a consortium of partners from Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands and Poland, helps to improve and enhance the ability of VET Trainers to provide intercultural training by offering an online catalogue of accessible intercultural tools to be used in training culturally diverse groups intercultural training material for self-study or to be used in trainings user’s guide to the catalogue with glossary of terms.

In Bulgaria private sector initiatives for development soft skills include activities like: Arthur Adams Business Training Centre in Bulgaria which offers a portfolio of certification programmes for soft skills and personal effectiveness.

Implications

A rare occasion in educational institutions is finding dedicated solely to social skills trainings and modules. Universities have more contents, related to intercultural and communication skills than the secondary schools and VET

centres. The latter focus more on the particular technical skills required for the job, so the social skills are not such a priority. One of the reasons is because of the comparatively limited options for apprenticeships and practical exercises during the education. Generally, the theoretical background of the social skills and their role is covered, but practice is missing, so students who graduate secondary schools and VET courses have very incomplete social skills. Erasmus + and other EU funded projects are providing HEI and VET centres with intercommunication and social interaction platform for development. Additionally, there are a lot of commercial providers that offer the whole portfolio of social skills training, mostly as corporate incentive, or to what the companies exactly demand.

Recommendations:

- To include special modules, dedicated to social and soft skills in secondary schools' curricula.
- To emphasise on the practical application of social skills, so the students are able to really acquire certain social competences.
- To change state standards for VET education and include more social and soft skills.
- To support extra curriculum activities providing social platform for students and children to interact and build communities projects of their interest.
- To stimulate (tourist) companies conduct at least annual training in social skills

3. EXPERT INTERVIEW RESULTS

This chapter is an update to the Country Skills Profile Report 2024-Bulgaria, based on the Sector Skills Intelligence Monitoring System (SSIM) elaborated within the PANTOUR project. In the process of piloting the SSIM only one of the methods for primary data collection is used, i.e. interviews. The results of the semi-structured interviews conducted with experts in tourism in BULGARIA reveal 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, 11 interviews have been held face-to face during the period May-September 2025, featuring respondents from the five tourism subsectors: travel agents/tour operators, destination management organisations, visitor attractions, accommodation providers and food & beverage providers (Table 1). Two respondents per tourism subsector were reached with 1 additional respondent in travel agents/tour operators. From each subsector there is 1 new respondent and 1 from the previous research period (CSP Report, 2024). Interviewees were senior managers; company owners; entrepreneurs; heads of department. The enterprises range from micro/family-owned ones and SMEs to larger hotel chains with more than 150 employees.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Distribution of respondents by subsector	Frequency	Percentage
Accommodation provider	2	18.18
Visitor attraction	2	18.18
TO/travel agency	3	27.28
F&B	2	18.18
DMO	2	18.18
TOTAL	11	100,00

3.1 THE FUTURE OF TOURISM AND TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The future of tourism is influenced by European and Worldwide factors such as political and economic instability, safety and security concerns, demographic changes toward eldering population, digital generations, nature and sustainability concerns. 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, political tension 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.

The tourism and hospitality sector exhibits distinct employment patterns, including weekend and holiday work, multiple shifts, and seasonal fluctuations, alongside a range of contracts such as temporary, part-time, and agency arrangements. To remain competitive, the sector must anticipate these changes by transforming employer expectations into clearly defined, attractive roles with strong career progression and robust training, ensuring flexible, fair work arrangements that protect workers while meeting industry needs.

This section revises the results of a new study, following 2 years after the previous one resulted in the CSP Report 2024. Aim of the study is 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 five years' time (2025-2030).

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?

3.1.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The respondents align around the opinion that tourism in Bulgaria will continue to face significant challenges following from political and economic uncertainties. However, the role and importance of the sector will remain high, positioning it as a driver of local and national development.

The successful company of the future

Changes in the sector

The respondents are starting to affirm the changes in the sectors F&B, Visitor Attractions, DMO's, Travel agents and Tour operators, Accommodation establishments. Some of the experts representing the Travel agents and Tour operators, Accommodation establishments that have been asked on the matter were envisioning the transformation in the field at the earlier stage of the research 2020-2025. As a logical follow up the rest of the experts (from visitor attractions and F&B establishments) as well consider adjustments impacted by factors such as the demographic crisis, environmental issues, economical changes etc. Political instability and economic uncertainties are business representatives' main considerations. The findings outline several main aspects that will continue to be of key importance for the success of tourism companies.

New technologies

The most pronounced trend evident from the research is the need of digital and technological introduction into the business. The sustainable companies of the future are described as "*the one most adaptive to change and willing to welcome technological improvements for higher efficiency and success*" (hotel manager, local hotel chain).

New technologies are perceived as a solution to heavy issues concerning the majority of the businesses suffering from staff deficiency. Surprisingly, only both destination management companies outline the importance in the technological development for customer engagement, enriching the

attractiveness and evolving the customer experience through technological improvements. The rest of the experts from the subsectors F&B, TA and TO and hotels narrow down their concerns to staff deficiency and operational optimization through technologies.

The respondents gather around the opinion that the post COVID period has come to an end, however the sector is still suffering from post-pandemic factors such as the uncertainties in partnerships and long term planning inability. Physical travel is something that is irreplaceable and the priority of people to travel is even higher after post COVID.

Higher concern for the respondents is the political instability, military conflicts and the increase in cost of living. This makes technological advancement of operations and processes an essential part of the business management. Because of the younger generation confidence and preference in the online environment, experts predict rapid increase in the digitalisation of operations and activities in the travel and hospitality sector. Essential change is this faced by Tour operators and travel agents, where all *“processes are digital and require minimum of face-to-face interaction with the client”* (travel agent owner).

At the same time, representatives of the visitor's attractions sector believe that personal contact will continue to be of paramount importance in tourism and are quite sceptical about the application of robotics and automation in tourism. All of the respondents explicitly point out the considerable importance of the human factor in hospitality and tourism, especially in the direct interactions with the clients.

Digital marketing

Companies with a strong online presence are viewed as contemporary and successful. This trend will continue to grow, with digital marketing and the optimization of online sales channels becoming increasingly crucial in the future. Online reviews and rating platforms will continue to be a decisive factor

in shaping customer decisions and the ability to handle large databases will be increasingly in demand. In this regard designing and developing attractive content is outlined from the respondents as crucial for the positioning of the company in an online environment. Creativity and up to date approach to present businesses products and services in the online platforms is considered by the majority of the respondents (10 out of the 11 respondents) crucial for the success.

Corporate social responsibility

Environmental protection, a key aspect of corporate social responsibility (Dahlsrud, 2008), is of high priority for the EU and this focus is expected to strengthen further. Especially valid is this for businesses part of a larger international chain, which follow their standards and leads toward more sustainable future. According to one of the respondents' (international chain, hotel manager) sustainability values once integrated in the international chain strategy, that the hotel is part of, should be applied in the planning and operations of each hotel all over the world, including the one in Bulgaria. This provides high competitive advantage in front of corporate clients and better positioning on the market.

“For us sustainability is not only a core principle, but rather than that an instrument to position among the sustainable venues on an international level and to target clients with high expectations and requirements following from their corporate social responsibility values.” ((hotel manager of an international chain hotel).

Destination management organisations as part of the public sector are strongly committed to the well-being of the local community, mainly through involving in social causes and projects. Social initiatives for the local community are stated of high value for other 2 of the respondents, representatives of the visitor attractions subsector, which organise in the museums events and celebrations to strengthen social pride in traditions and history. In one of the attractions as stated by the director:

„...summer children practices in the museum for high school students, are organised to help us understand the younger generation point of view, and to support their education and development”.

Finally, corporate social responsibility is tied to how organizations engage with stakeholders, such as employees and partners (Dahlsrud, 2008). The majority of respondents emphasized that the well-being of their employees is considered one of their highest priorities. For the manager of a large F&B company in a mass tourism resort *“what matters most is to ensure a positive and stress-free environment in which employees feel supported.”*

Tourism employment: challenges and prospects

The rapid advancement of technology, the growing digitalization, and the challenging political, social, and economic situation are also affecting the tourism workforce. The following paragraphs summarize respondents' perspectives on the skills that will be crucial over the next five years

Digital skills

Technologies are considered one of the most important components of the employee profile alongside with the social. As one of the respondents points out, *“building an experiential tourism product is requiring high technological and digital skilled staff”* (DMO representative). An opinion envisioning the importance of digital skills is:

In the hotel sector, the improvement of technical skills is expected, as working with hotel software programs significantly facilitates employees' work. The more advanced a program is, the better the quality of analyses and management processes. Alongside technological competencies, communication skills hold particular importance and cannot be replaced. Additional key aspects include teamwork, adherence to professional ethics, the development of digital skills at both basic and advanced levels, language training, as well as the demonstration of loyalty and tolerance.

(hotel manager, attraction)

For destination management organizations *“certainly, new skills are required, primarily related to delivering messages in the online space and maintaining digital communication with the tourist. In addition, an emotional, intelligent, and responsible approach is essential for sustaining partnership relationships.”*

Presentational and curator skills

In the case of museums, pedagogical and curator skills are even mentioned, one of the reasons being that the museum also has an educational function and they mainly work with young student groups. In this regard, a trend towards multidisciplinary development of employees and increasingly pronounced competition with popular media channels – television, internet, etc. is indicated, so that the younger audience can be attracted and retained. The respondents from the attractions and accommodation subsectors identify the demand for more innovative and personalised experiences.

Foreign languages

Foreign language competence has always been of primary importance in tourism, and in the respondents' opinion, this will continue to be so in the future. The accent in the future is focusing on improving language skills, especially in smaller towns and villages and in attractions. Challenges are faced in seasonal businesses as well where German, Polish, French, Romanian languages are required to service the diverse incoming travellers.

Specialized competencies and personalized guest interaction remain the cornerstones of high-value hospitality services. And this could not be achieved without a certain level of language knowledge.

(hotel manager)

Willingness to learn and improve

Majority of the respondents emphasize on the passive attitude of the workforce and believe that tourism is driven by the willingness to learn about, places, people, by curiosity. Some of the respondents believes that the challenges faced by the shortage of staff can be overcome by the ability of the employees to *“multifunction and combine the responsibilities of several positions”*.

A change in staff number

Micro enterprises believe that the pandemic already reduced the number of staff and „*major changes in the numbers are not foreseen* “(owner of a travel agency). On the other hand, respondents from the F&B subsector collect around the opinion:

The rapid digitalisation and integration of service robotics are leading to a structural shift in hospitality employment, with the potential to automate up to 50% of routine tasks. Service automation tools and AI-driven solutions are increasingly being implemented to mitigate labour shortage and optimize operational efficiency.

(food and beverages establishment manager).

However, attractions and destination management companies believe that in tourism this reduction will not be drastic, since, due to the specifics of the sector, the importance of personal contact will continue to be high.

Merging existing positions vs. outsourcing

A trend that was largely discussed among the participants of the study is the merge of existing positions, thank to automation and digitalisation. The opinion is defended mainly by respondents from accommodation providers and food and beverages businesses. However, travel agents and tour operators stand by the opinion that “*employees in the travel companies need to focus on professional knowledge and skills and leave secondary tasks, that have high time consumption profile to outside companies*” (tour operator owners).

Staff recruitment

The other main concern shared by a large proportion of respondents is the recruitment of staff. Larger companies (above 100 employees), especially the ones with seasonal demand recruit staff from abroad. In this regard, most of them face challenges in documentation, visas, accommodation etc. Opportunities are seen in digitalisation and automation of standardised operations. Small and medium sized enterprises on the contrary, are mainly run by family members and relatives, and therefore are far from such issues. The

solution to Bulgaria's recruitment crisis lies in robotic automation of routine tasks and strategical support by a modernized educational framework to foster local community engagement and employment.

Current and prospective customers

Diversity of target groups

Considering the diversity of companies that the respondents represent, the profile of their customers is also quite different. Museum institutions are mainly aimed at young audiences, as part of their education process and families on the domestic market, but with intentions to expand their audience into groups and international travellers. One of the travel agencies works predominantly with elderly people, as they have more difficulty in organizing their trips on their own, main clients are "families, and over 30 of age". This respondent does not foresee big changes, beside the stronger buyer behaviour linked to predominantly "online booking", "*no people in the office are expected, except of retirees*".

On the other hand, another tour operator targets domestic clients with higher financial options, and a desire to explore long-distance destinations. According to the respondent, the key factor for these customers is not the price, but rather the knowledge, professional expertise of the team, and the personalized service provided.

Our clients are rather quality seeking than price sensitive, they trust our long professional experience and expertise, know what to expect and believe in our personal approach in every tour we organize and accompany. Not everyone is answering the phone in 3:00h in the morning and ready to solve a problem on the other part of the world, but I am and this is what my clients cherish.

(tour operator owner)

A notable insight from the research, which aligns with the significant scale of the Bulgarian diaspora, suggests that "nostalgic travelers" may become a dominant market segment in the coming years. According to a manager of a larger- scale food and beverage establishment, this demographic – driven by a desire to reconnect with their roots and gather with larger family – represents

a stable and growing consumer base that is increasingly influential in mass tourism resorts.

Digitally-savvy, but seeking personal communication

The respondents unite around the opinion that travel consumers are getting more used to the digital integration, opening their curiosity and interest in using the advanced technological solutions. The year marks a movement toward higher interest in technological solutions in operations not only striving for improvement, but as well adaptability toward the customers. Travellers “*tend to be more and more used to technologies and do not resist the digitalisation*” (TO owner) as we were witnessing last couple of years, especially on the domestic market. Another approach toward the communication with the guests is stated by the participants from the hotel subsector, where personal approach and interaction is required. This aims to enhance the experience of the customer and enrich the value of the product offered by the accommodation providers.

Impact of the crises

For most companies, the post pandemic factors, the war in Ukraine, the political instability in the country and inflation - had a negative effect. The impact on the workforce was the most pronounced one in accommodation and food and beverages providers– some companies had to lay off part of the staff and it was difficult to get them back afterwards. As stated by one of the respondents from the hospitality subsector “*valuable seasonal workers from Bulgaria shift to other industries, and this resulted in foreign workers replacing these employees* “. Nevertheless, according to the businesses the number of employees now are building up a full team, with the help of new members that were introduced.

Others, mainly representatives of the tourism intermediaries, witness a change in customer profile and attitude, by demonstrating unpredictable buyer behaviour, such as last minute bookings, cancelations etc. The war in Ukraine affected the occupancy of some hotels, with an outflow observed. The respondents who reported that the crises had no impact on them were mostly destination management organisations and public owned attractions, whose budgets are funded by the government or local authorities.

The post-pandemic period trends, characterised with options of work from home and hybrid working, are losing followers in the travel and hospitality industry. The majority of the respondents confess that some of their employees still apply hybrid working when necessary and when applicable, but occasionally in off peak periods of demand.

With the continuing crises situations of war, economic and political instability and population shrinkage, experts are insecure in the future development of the tourism and hospitality sector. Nevertheless, respondents state willingness to adapt and readiness to answer new markets needs and operational challenges.

3.2 DIGITAL SKILLS

3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Technological innovations are reshaping the tourism industry, influencing business models, job roles, and tourist experiences. This section highlights the digital skills needed for the future. These skills of highest importance are working with computers, software, digital devices, the internet, and online safety. They include not only proficiency in Microsoft Office and the ability to implement online safety protocols but also skills for managing digital equipment like Wi-Fi, sound systems, and video tools. Additionally, this category covers desktop publishing, computer programming, website development, social media management, monitoring online reviews, data analytics, business intelligence, big data competencies, AI and robotics skills (such as ChatGPT and DALL-E), as well as expertise in utilizing digital hardware technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (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?

3.2.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

All respondents are confident about the increasing importance of digital skills at sector level, though there are uncertainties regarding the extent of this impact on individual companies, including small and micro enterprises. Private companies such as hotels, travel agents and food and beverage enterprises are convinced in the primary need of digital skills in their business, win comparison to public institutions, such as tourism attractions, which believe that digital skills should be left for the professionals. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus that in five years, digital skills will be essential, and defined as trend toward automation and technological advancement.

Skills related to new and emerging technologies will become a crucial factor in the recruitment of new employees. In the tourism sector, digitization is vital as it enhances customer relationships and provides easier access to product information and purchasing options. Additionally, it somewhat improves communication between different departments within a company and even provides an optimization and enhancement of the customer experience. Most respondents emphasize the importance of familiarity with and adaptability to new professional software programs and products over general advanced technological skills. A special place is taken by the AI technology and the accessibility through digital solutions. Respondents are looking into employees with the will to learn and adapt. *“Artificial intelligence solutions and hotel-specialized software products”* are one of the main desired skills searched among the young talents.

However, some of the respondents do not forget to remind of the importance of the communicational skills:

„We expect an improvement in technical skills; working with hotel software greatly eases the workload of hotel staff. The better a software program is, the better the analysis and management it provides. Last but not least, communication skills remain irreplaceable. “

(Cultural manager, visitor attraction)

Important digital skills

Digital marketing, social media management and website maintenance

Social media and digital marketing remain the most frequently mentioned skills by respondents. The employees are expected to have skills to maintain the close contact with customers in an online environment. The digital communication is needed and valued in the talent hunt. It is widely believed that these skills will become increasingly important in the future, and the trend is already evident. An essential part of the digital skills related to social networks and website maintenance is content creation - both in text and graphic/video form.

“Certainly, new skills are needed, primarily related to understanding how to deliver messages in the online space and how to communicate digitally with the tourist.”

(DMO, expert)

An extensive number of respondents, pointed the high value of content creative skills in employees.

„We have purchased a video editing program; however, video production is outsourced to an external company, as video editing requires strong creative skills. Content writing is likewise a creative discipline, and producing audio and video remains a highly creative process. Our core team is made up of creatives who can be trained in digital skills to some extent, but their creative drive is the key asset. “

(Manager, visitor attraction)

AI and robotization

The second most frequently mentioned skill with regard to new technologies is the ability to work with artificial intelligence and automatisisation. Food and Beverages providers are looking for solutions to overcome the challenges related to shortage of staff and are open minded about robots in service and

kitchen. Additionally, all kind of technological improvements such as digital devices for taking orders, payments etc. are welcomed: *“I have come across robots that clear tables, and in restaurants, service robots for table clearing are applicable. We are open to all kinds of technologies.”* (F&B Manager)

There are also respondents who completely reject the idea of robotization: *Museums are conservative institutions. I don't imagine robots in our company, there are many positives, but we are not supporters as managers. The museum needs to be after all authentic and provide real life personal experience and human interaction.*

(Manager, visitor attraction)

Managing artificial intelligence applications and hotel management software is essential in the hospitality according to hotel managers, which claim to search for applicants that have “specialized software skills, the ability to work effectively with AI, and proficiency in data management. “

Virtual and augmented reality

Cultural heritage institutions and tourist attractions were the first to adopt virtual and augmented reality, but a number of respondents from other sectors (hospitality, DMO) predicted a recent entry of these technologies into their field as well. The high value of such technologies is in the opportunity to preserve heritage and present objects and events – hard to be imagined nowadays.

At present, there are artisan workshops in museums. However certain crafts are disappearing or at risk, and when artisans are no longer available, VR and AR technologies will serve to preserve and present them. (Cultural manager, visitor attraction)

Data analytics

Data analysis knowledge and understanding is of highest importance in making informed and effective decisions, according to respondents from the hospitality and travel agency subsector. Lack of such skills is often related to

the inability to monitor consumer behaviour or website performance. Travel agents and Tour operators emphasise the ability to manage and analyze big data, alongside with securing as a very important skill.

Sector-specific software

The respondents of the interviews mentioned the need to handle several types of software that are widely used in the tourism industry. Essential skills in hospitality in the future according to hotel managers are: *“Specialized software skills and the ability to work effectively with AI and data management.”* Proficiency in using online booking platforms, reservation and revenue management systems is vital for hotels, airlines, tour operators, and other tourism-related businesses. For hotel companies, the use of Property Management Systems still greatly facilitates ongoing operations and day-to-day management. In addition, the international hotel chain manager respondent “is looking to find professionals with skills to operate with the Building management system”, a special software that enables expertise in meeting the correct sustainable solutions for the hotel (use of renewable energy sources, water saving solutions, waste management etc.). Being able to manage and optimize these systems ensures smooth customer experiences in the operations.

Proficiency in Customer Relationship Management systems enables businesses to manage customer interactions, track preferences, and offer personalized services, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. One of the respondents from the hospitality subsector comments an application applied in the hotel to improve the access to information from the customer and to be able to contact a larger number of guests at once.

In 2025 we have introduced our own hotel application, which is accessible only for our guests with reservation number and makes the work for the guest relations manager more effective. It gives opportunity to make reservations for our a-la-card restaurants, to make requests, contact the guest relation, and easier to find information about our hotel.

(hotel manager)

Digital security and cyber security

Implementing online safety procedures are also among the digital skills mentioned by some respondents. They are especially necessary for travel companies, which operate primarily in online environment. However, the respondents prefer to outsource the task to an expert in the field company. Hotel managers emphasize that a responsible attitude toward guest privacy and robust data protection skills are essential competencies for front-of-house staff.

Computer programming

A small number of respondents also indicate a need for a specialist in computer programming. The perception is web and video programming and editing related than software programming that keeps being outsourced in the majority of the cases. The representatives of the tour operators and attractions believe that “special technological skills should be left to professionals, instead of employees investing time and effort in upskilling and dealing with additional tasks.”

Trainings for digital skills

All interviewed companies provide digital skills training at some stage. Most offer external training, while a significant number—primarily small enterprises—depend on self-directed training for certain needs. External training is mainly delivered by software providers whose products have been purchased by the respective hotel, restaurant, or travel agency. There are different preferences regarding the most effective learning methods. The majority of respondents prefer on-site, face-to-face training conducted during working hours. Others emphasise the effectiveness of self-learning. Two respondents (attractions and hotel subsector representatives) consider a blended approach most suitable, combining online training for basic knowledge and preparation with on-site, practice-oriented workshops.

An interesting approach is mentioned by respondents representing the DMO's, that they believe “trainings and skills improvement in their staff shall not only be a responsibility of the administrative body, but rather a collaborative effort with the local higher education institution”.

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL/GREEN SKILLS

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The secondary data section of this report demonstrated that green skills extend beyond those aimed solely at reducing tourism's environmental impact—such as minimising resource use, maximising energy and water efficiency, managing waste and sewage, promoting recycling and composting, conserving biodiversity, and understanding climate change. Green skills also encompass the development and promotion of sustainable transport and tourism models, particularly in rural areas, as a means of diversifying local economies, fostering economic growth, and creating decent employment opportunities for local communities, including women and young people, while safeguarding natural and cultural heritage.

The findings presented in this section provide an overview of the environmental management skills that interview participants consider most important to develop over the next five years.

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?

3.3.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The respondents showed respect and concern about the actions toward the environmental changes and the role of the enterprises to overcome the challenges. According to the majority of interviewees, green skills are of importance now and will continue to increase value, and in 5 years' environmental protection measures will be even supported with standards and certificate requirements from the authorities. For some respondents, protecting the environment is of utmost importance, as they believe that „*sustainability is at the core value of protecting the nature and culture*” (visitor attraction manager). Other identify the need to adapt to the rising interest of sustainable practices from major international corporate clients and partners (hotel manager of an international hotel chain). On the other side the representatives of the F&B sector believe that green practices should be monitored and standardised by the government and business practices are not required at this point.

Overall, perspectives changed from an emphasis on individual responsibility and ad hoc approaches toward a focus on market positioning and regulatory requirements. The importance of employee attitudes was strongly highlighted, as maintaining standards would not be possible without their active involvement. In this context, a key skill identified is the ability to educate and engage staff in the systematic implementation of green practices. Experts outline the importance of explaining and engaging the employees in small steps in the process, not only to present them the general strategical picture, but the day to day activities and the importance they have on building more mindful future (hotel managers).

Food and beverage enterprise representatives „*are obliged to follow national and European guidelines*” (restaurant manager). On the other side public attractions perceive their role more important especially in raising awareness:

Reusing materials is actively practiced, including the donation of old furniture, yarns, and fabrics. Children are educated through workshops where they create exhibits from recycled materials. Museums are,

educational – the topic of environmental protection through art needs to be presented. By telling, by showing. A project on how to encourage citizens to change their attitudes towards the issue of climate change through play – a climate fresco for demonstration.

(Manager visitor attraction)

Important green skills

Waste management

This is the most frequently mentioned aspect of environmental practices in accommodation establishments, food and beverage businesses and in visitor attractions. Separate collection of waste was often stated a common environmental action among respondents. Hotel and food and beverage companies cite to practice “*waste separation for years, yet independent energy sources are lacking.*” In general, staff have no problems acquiring these skills, however some find difficulties understanding the purpose. In addition, travel agents working with clients of older generations (55+) cite the “*uncertainty of customers if not having a printed contract*”. Alongside with such prejudices, travellers in destinations according to tour operators representatives “tend to oversee the need to make an effort when seeing the disregard of waste separation rules.”

Resource efficiency

Companies state to be highly engaged in finding solution toward minimising resource consumption. The interviewees from the hospitality sector claim to be dedicated to building a “green“ hotel by implementing aerated showers and low-flow faucets, LED lighting, filtered water solutions, solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations, alongside with organic cosmetics. Initiatives undertaken by tour operators and travel agents include limited printed material, home office time, water dispensers. However, most of the respondents describe the practices that their companies employ rather than the skills required by staff. Respondents representing the hospitality subsector outline the importance of sustainable certificates and standards for their competitive advantage in tourism intermediaries’ negotiations and attracting business clients. And here the skills

required are more linked to the management staff members, needed to meet informed decisions and to implement sustainable practices. According to one of the respondents from the hospitality subsector “...*the employees need to understand the need of change and the operational improvement that the solutions provide*”.

Biodegradable products usage

This is a practice applicable for accommodation companies with high level of mindfulness toward the environment. The implementation of bio and organic cosmetic and cleaning products is stated as priority: “*Spa centers and guest rooms offer high-quality cosmetics as well as ecological and organic products, with the aim of promoting environmental responsibility and gaining a marketing advantage*” (hotel manager).

Sustainable transport

Destination management organisation are committed to follow European guidelines on a local governmental level and introduce more and more transport solutions with low environmental impact in the coming future. As public organisations part of the local government they are restricted to regulations and laws, nevertheless electrical busses, electrical cars stations, scooters are one of the main practices introduced. On managerial level respondents state understanding and willingness to make efforts toward a sustainable future of the destination

Cultural and historical heritage preservation

All of the respondents' state mindfulness and intention to support the cultural and historical preservation. Hotel managers outline the importance of introducing craftsmanship products, local cuisine, traditions and customs into guests' experiences. Destination management organisation and public attraction find themselves a key player in this process, not only by setting plans and strategies, but as well support authenticity in cultural and historical tourist products. Skills required are present on a management level according to the respondents.

Protecting the cultural heritage of Bulgaria and the region lies at the heart of the museum's values. (visitor attraction manager)

Supporting local communities

Sadly, the effort toward local community support of companies is low among the businesses, only one respondent shows dedication in providing the employees and their families with special attention and respect by organising a Christmas party for employees and their families (hotel manager). Museums and destination management organisations are enrolled in education and care for local community and organise events for this purpose. One respondent states: *“very close partnership with local social enterprise for people with disabilities, which supplies various materials that we use in our events and initiatives, something we are very proud of”* (DMO coordinator).

Training in green skills

Most respondents provide internal training to ensure compliance with company environmental standards, delivered through various formats such as online modules, periodic newsletters, reminder posters in office spaces, and regular instructional guidance. Travel company owners prefer *“dedication to self-learning, since small team and good leadership requires evolving and self-improvement.”*

External trainings are extremely rare, with only one respondent reporting any, and these were provided free of charge by non-governmental organizations.

Regarding the preferred form for external trainings, face-to-face, after-hours trainings are mentioned. In terms of content, exposure to best practices is considered particularly useful.

3.4. SOCIAL-CULTURAL SKILLS

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Social and cultural skills encompass three main areas: personal capabilities, communication and intercultural skills, and diversity-related competencies. These skills underpin behavioural effectiveness in teamwork, interpersonal communication, cross-cultural awareness, and customer-focused service delivery. Within the tourism sector, they are particularly relevant to managing interpersonal relationships, understanding customer needs and emotions, collaborating effectively with colleagues, maintaining a positive and respectful attitude, and demonstrating appropriate communication behaviours such as active listening and meaningful engagement. In addition, social and cultural skills support broader social progress by promoting inclusivity, including accessible tourism for people with disabilities, gender equality, and cultural and ethnic tolerance. As the tourism industry continues to evolve in a highly digitalised environment, these competencies are increasingly critical to balancing technological advancement with the humanity essential to delivering high-quality, personalised tourism experiences.

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 five 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

- 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?

3.4.2 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Social skills are still considered of highest importance and this will not change in the future. The majority of the interviewees believe that social skills are the essence of working in tourism and hospitality industry. Further on the opinion of the respondents is build up on the statement that “*tourists look for personal engagement and responses that cater to their individual needs*” (DMO, marketing expert).

A summary of all the social skills, attitude and mind set needed to evolve professionally in tourism is outlined by one of the respondents in the survey:

Knowledge of destinations, reading, training; respect for the culture itself. Managing emotions, understanding the other side and their culture. Adaptability depending on the situation. Mastery of emotions – emotional intelligence. Mutual support, providing safety and trust, and resolving crisis situations.

(tour operator owner)

Important social skills

Understanding the needs of other people

Understanding customer needs is the most discussed socio-cultural skill. It is considered key to achieving a high degree of satisfaction by providing the features that meet individual requirements. Being aware of cultural differences is strongly related with this competence:

Communication skills, understanding the needs and feelings of others, teamwork, a positive attitude and respect towards others, active listening. In addition, social skills involve recognizing clients’ needs and providing opportunities for people.

(tour operator, expert)

Interpersonal (communication) skills

The ability to effectively communicate with both customers and team members is the second most frequently mentioned social skill. It is associated with active listening, observation, competences for working with different types of consumers and colleagues. A gap in this essential knowledge among the employees is identified from the majority of the respondents.

In my opinion, a large percentage of the next generations show a very noticeable deficit in social skills (due to family, environment, personal aspirations and ambitions, and role models).

(visitor attraction, expert)

Responding to online reviews is another aspect of interpersonal communication, which unites digital and social skills. A skill that is highly appreciated by all respondents, especially the one depending on online communication the most – tour operators and travel agents.

Inclusivity, diversity, and equality

All respondents indicate that skills such as respect toward other cultures, religions and believes, as well as tolerance of differences (gender, lifestyle, interests) and people with special needs is of great importance in tourism. This nowadays refers not only to host-guest interaction, but as well in the multicultural teams. According to the respondents from hotel establishments the growing number of employees from abroad, due to demographic, economic and political reasons requires attention and understanding among the team members and the department managers.

Team work

Working in a team requires large variety of interpersonal communication skills including emotional intelligence, cooperation, patience and understanding toward humans. All of the respondents engaged in managing larger teams (hotel and F&B establishments managers) confirm this, indicating the great importance of the team work skill for the successful operation of their company.

Positive attitude, kind and attentive behaviour

Being helpful, kind and polite are some of the behaviour skills declared as essential for the success of the tourism and hospitality industry. Shortage of some of these skills is identified from visitor attraction representatives and hotel managers. These respondents state high efforts in dealing with employee uncertainty, shyness, and lack of outgoing behaviour. Managers are investing time and endeavour into building outgoing, kind and mindful employees.

Handling stressful/critical situations

Tourism industry specifics include dynamic and high of uncertainties environment. Respondents from the hospitality sector declare low level of employees' adaptability in stressful situations. This is justified by statements from the interviews that requests "*students to have classes to enhance their problem-solving skills, crisis management, empathy and emotional intelligence*" (food and beverages establishment and hotel managers).

Emotional intelligence

Separately rated as an important skill is not only the understanding of the needs of the different customers, but even more the ability to demonstrate willingness to help (respondents from the hospitality, DMO, attractions and tourism intermediaries). The intentions in tourism and hospitality industry experts to provide personal experience to the customer results in the need of high emotionally intelligent front of operations staff.

Self-actualization

Self-actualization, or in other words, being able to learn and to self-train is also discussed as one of the skills, of the future. Three out of ten respondents confirm the importance of educating oneself, searching and striving for knowledge. Especially important is the skill for management level and owners, that strive to meet up to date decisions and demonstrate impactful leadership.

Missing social skills

Alongside with the lack of some digital and creative skills the social skills group was indicated by the respondents as “room for improvement”. Social and communicational skills shortage is identified among employees in the age of 18-29 by hotel managers, and visitor attractions. As one respondent stated:

Almost nowhere are staff trained in empathy or openness towards guests and cultures. Often students show a need for training in how to react in problematic, crisis, and stressful situations, as well as in empathy and practical skills.

(hotel manager)

Some interviewees demonstrate satisfaction in their employees' communicational skills (food and beverages establishment manager), however as they confess it is the result of patience, time and effort from the management in the guidance and training period.

Training in social and cultural skills

According to the respondents' opinion employers are counting on internal training and strong leadership rather than on external knowledge providers and training courses. According to the study respondents usually are conducted in the form of on boarding and periodic training, mentoring, team building. Trainings provided from external companies, higher education units and institutions are provided in the public sector by the local administration. Destination management organisations and attractions where expressing preferences toward external training providers, directed to hands-on, face-to-face, off-the-job training with demonstration of good practice. The opinions on training methods from the respondents are pointing out the leader and mentor role, and a longer dedicated to training and guiding period.

3.5 SUMMARY OF THE SKILLS PROFILE

The interview findings indicate that all three skill categories—digital, green, and social—are essential in the tourism sector and are expected to remain so in the future. While the demand for digital skills continues to be largely driven by the need to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving environment, green skills appear to be shifting from being primarily shaped by institutional, national, and European regulations toward becoming a source of competitive advantage as well. This area also generated the greatest uncertainty among respondents regarding which specific skills are lacking or required, likely reflecting limited clarity and confidence among experts and managers in relation to green solutions. Social skills, on the other hand, are inherently central to tourism, which explains why all respondents identified them as the most important skills in the sector. Moreover, different sectors exhibit distinct characteristics in terms of the skills employees must possess to ensure competitiveness and fully meet customer needs.

Table 2. Skills, considered important by interviewees

<i>Skills considered important by interviewees</i>		
Digital skills	Green skills	Social and cultural skills
Digital and social media marketing and website maintenance	Waste management	Understanding the needs of others
AI and robotics	Resource-efficiency	Interpersonal (communication) skills
Virtual and augmented reality	Biodegradable products usage	Inclusivity, diversity, accessibility
Data analytics, including big data	Sustainable transport	Team working
Sector-specific software (CMS, PMS, online booking software)	Cultural and historical heritage preservation	Positive attitude, kind and attentive behaviour
Digital security and cyber security	Supporting local communities	Handling stressful/critical situations
Computer programming		Emotional intelligence
		Self-actualisation

Table 2 summarizes the skills identified through the interviews, highlighting variations based on company size and the sector in which the organization operates. Following the primary research results and comparing them to the previous report (CSP Report, 2024) we might identify a higher concern in developing green skills with a focus on environmental care and solutions on one side and cultural and historical preservation and care on the other side. Especially dedicated are museums and local attractions located in rural areas, alongside with destination management organisations aiming to enhance authenticity and care in cultural tourism. Responsible attitude toward local communities are further stated by larger number of respondents comparing to previous period, by suggesting discussion, organisation of events and festivities for the community and last but not least educational activities from the attractions. and festivities for the community and last but not least educational activities from the attractions.

Digital skills development is considered a priority on national level and the results are evident in implementation of subjects in secondary vocational schools and modules in higher education institutions. The process of improving the digital skills is confirmed as a tendency because of the continuity from previous report period, where majority of respondents state a high importance of digital skills in employees. However, not surprisingly, all experts in the industry define social skills as essential for the tourism sector in both research periods. Some differences derive from the results where experts do not emphasize on missing digital skills, but rather on basic human needs such as understanding and interpersonal communicational skills. This research presents the technological and digital willingness to change in the industry, influencing operational and managerial decisions toward online environment market, innovation implementation and technological improvement of economic and environmental issues. Even small and medium enterprises seem to adapt and overcome the resistance of change. The sector is predicted to change toward predominant online communication with clients prior arrival in the destination, technical innovation in service operations, conversely care and responsibility toward the environment and the effort in social upskilling of front line staff.

SKILLS SYNTHESIS

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

The PANTOUR consortium builds on previous knowledge and tools produced by the Blueprint for Sectoral Skills project/NTG Alliance and will develop new tools and methodology to address strategic and sustainable approaches and cooperation between vocational education, training, higher education, enterprises of the tourism sector, looking to boost innovation in Europe.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Examples of digital skills training providers in Bulgaria

Training provider name: Varna University of Management, Bulgaria
Website: https://vum.bg/bachelor-degrees/hm/
Type of provider (see list above): University
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Module <i>Technologies in Tourism and Hospitality</i> as part of the Professional Bachelor in Hotel Management programme. Digital skills: computer literacy, online marketing and communication, basic knowledge about all technologies applied in the tourism and hospitality industries, including hotel and restaurant software, websites, social media, in-room technologies, AR/VR, robots/
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): Delivered face-to-face at the university premises

Training provider name: College of Tourism at the University of Economics-Varna, Bulgaria
Website: https://ue-varna.bg/en/subject/449
Type of provider (see list above): University/College
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i> of this document): Module <i>Computer Systems in Restaurants and Hotels</i> as part of the Professional Bachelor in Hotel and Restaurant Management Programme Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication and some technologies in the tourism and hospitality
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): Delivered face-to-face at the university premises; distance and part-time studying

Training provider name: International Business School, Botevgrad
Website: https://ibsedu.bg/bg/speciality/30-Tourism-and-entrepreneurship
Type of provider (see list above): University
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication and some technologies in the tourism and hospitality Module <i>Digital transformation in business</i>
Methods of delivery of this provider (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): Class on <i>Digital Transformation of Business</i> as part of the Tourism and Entrepreneurship Bachelor programme

Training provider name: VET centre "Zenytt"
Website: https://zenyt.com/obuchenia/%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d1%84%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%b8%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%bd%d0%be-%d0%be%d0%b1%d1%83%d1%87%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%b5-%d0%bf%d0%be-%d1%87%d0%b0%d1%81%d1%82-%d0%be%d1%82-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be/
Type of provider (see list above): Vocational Educational Centre
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication Courses for jobs in Hotel industry, Housekeeper, Waiter, Bartender
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In class or distance learning through a digital platform for education After completion of the course a certificate is issued, officially recognised by the Ministry of Education and Science

Training provider name: VET centre Davitoz
Website: https://www.davitoz.org/vocational-training/
Type of provider (see list above): VET centre
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Courses for Restaurant manager, Barman, Cook, Waiter, Pastry chef, Baker, Pizza chef, Hotel manager, Receptionist, Chamber maid/Housekeeper, Porter/Bellboy, Tourist animator, Tour guide, Fitness instructor. Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class and online

Training provider name: VET Consult DM Ltd.
Website: https://cpodm.eu/predlagani-profesii-i-specialnosti
Type of provider (see list above): VET Centre
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication Courses for Hotel manager, Receptionist, Housekeeper, Restaurant manager, Cook, Waiter, Bartender
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class, distance learning and online training

Training provider name: VET Centre of Grand Hotel Plovdiv
Website: https://cpograndhotel-plovdiv.com/index.php

Type of provider (see list above): VET centre
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication Courses for: Restaurant manager, Hotel manager, Cook, Chef, Baker, Waiter, Bartender, Receptionist, Travel agent, Tour guide, Animator, Housekeeper, Picolo/Bellboy
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class delivery

Training provider name: Vocational High school in tourism “Dr. Vassil Beron”, Veliko Tarnovo
Website: https://www.vtpgt.com/?p=projects
Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication, web & app development, digital design, etc. Special projects implemented to include trainings in digital skills in competences both for the lecturer and the students
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only.

Training provider name: Vocational High school in trade and restaurant management, Vratza
Website: https://pgtr-vratza.com/
Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication, web & app development, digital design, etc. Special projects implemented to include trainings in digital skills in competences both for the lecturer and the students
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only.

Training provider name: Vocational High school in tourism and clothing, Pernik
Website: http://pgotpernik.com/%D0%BA%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B1-%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/
Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills: computer literacy, basic knowledge on online marketing and communication, web & app development, digital design, etc.

Special club “Digital competences” to train digital skills and literacy
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only.

Training provider name: StartUp Factory, Ruse
Website: https://startupfactory.bg/obuchenia/
Type of provider (see list above): Incubational center; ICT Training provider; NGO
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital and entrepreneurship skills, e.g. programming, web & app development, digital content and design, social media use, web-based communications, etc.
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class, video classes

Training provider name: Telerik Academy
Website: https://www.telerikacademy.com/school/about
Type of provider (see list above): Commercial trainer – corporate training, upskilling, courses for secondary school level and kids
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital skills and social skills The company has numerous partners around the country (Innovator hubs, professional centres, secondary schools, etc.). A special focus on the developing of kids’ digital skills at a very early age (10-12 years old). Courses are mostly on digital skills – web development, digital science, competitive programming, game development. Besides, for the corporate training and upskilling the company includes at least 20% of the materials and time for soft and social skills development.
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class and distance learning

Training provider name: Software University/SoftUni
Website: https://softuni.org/about/
Type of provider (see list above): Commercial trainer
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): A full portfolio of different courses related to all digital skills and programming. the biggest non-formal tech education provider in South-Eastern Europe. Their teaching experience encompasses corporate trainings, bootcamps, and custom courses designed to elevate internal teams’ technical skills in new or niche technologies.
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class, distance learning and online classes

Training provider name: New Horizons
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Website: https://bg.newhorizons.bg/
Type of provider (see list above): Commercial trainer
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Digital and social skills Application courses, Technical skills courses, Business skills courses
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class, distance learning, online live, online remote

Appendix 2. Examples of green skills training providers in Bulgaria

Training provider name: University of Food Technology, Plovdiv
Website: https://uft-plovdiv.bg/stopански-факултет-бакалавърски-пр/
Type of provider (see list above): University
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management Module <i>Ecology, sustainable development and safety</i> as part of the Bachelor programmes “Tourism”, “Catering” and “Hotel and restaurant management”. Module <i>Food Service Facilities Hygiene</i> as part of the Bachelor programmes “Nutrition and Tourism” and “Catering”.
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class delivery

Training provider name: South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Website: https://www.swu.bg/bg/prospectivestbg/admse/96-bprogrammescat/tourismcat/148-susttourismbgart
Type of provider (see list above): University
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management, sustainable development Bachelor programme Sustainable Tourism, with an explicit focus on the sustainable practices, green development, environmental protection, etc. Some of the modules delivered include <i>Ecology and responsible tourism, Sustainable tourism and sustainable mobility, Corporate social responsibility, Sustainable tourism certification, Management of ecological events, etc.</i>
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class delivery

Training provider name: University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria (UNWE)
Website: http://departments.unwe.bg/tourism/bg/pages/17699/%d0%be%d0%ba%d1%81-%d0%b1%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b2%d1%8a%d1%80.html
Type of provider (see list above): University
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: sustainability communication Module <i>Ecology and sustainable development</i> as part of the Bachelor programme “Tourism”
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class delivery

Training provider name: VET Estetika 2009 Ltd.
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Website: https://profesionalni-kursove.com/gotvach/
Type of provider (see list above): Vocational and Educational Centre
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management Courses for the jobs Chef cook, Hotel manager, Restaurant manager, Waiter/Bartender
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In class or distance learning courses through a digital platform for online education

Training provider name: VET EuroAcademy for Training and Development, Sofia
Website: https://euroacademybg.com/gotvarski-sladkarski-korporativni-kursove/
Type of provider (see list above): Vocational Education and Training centre; Corporate trainings
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management Courses for jobs, specialized in F&B and culinary arts, e.g. Chef cooks, Pastry chef, Cook
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In class courses, with included apprenticeship in prominent restaurants

Training provider name: Vocational High School in tourism "Aleko Konstantinov", Pleven
Website: https://pgt-pleven.com/
Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only

Training provider name: Sofia Vocational High school in tourism
Website: http://spgt.org/
Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only

Training provider name: Vocational High school in tourism "Ivan Pavlov", Ruse
Website: https://pgtourism.info/
Type of provider (see list above):

Secondary VET school
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only

Training provider name: Greener Project
Website: https://greener-project.eu/training-resouces/
Type of provider (see list above): Commercial training provider
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Green skills: resource efficiency and environmental management
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class, distance studying

Appendix 3. Examples of social skills training providers in Bulgaria

Training provider name: Sofia University, Bulgaria
Website: https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/bul/universitet_t/fakulteti/geologo_geografski_fakultet/specialnosti/bakalav_rski_programi/geologo_geografski_fakultet/turiz_m
Type of provider (see list above): University
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity • interpersonal and intrapersonal skills; • competences that promote social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone; Several modules like <i>Psychology, Philosophy, History of arts, Cultural geography in Europe, Customer care, Business communication, Customer psychology</i> in the Bachelor programme “Tourism”
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class delivery, distance and part-time delivery

Training provider name: University of Economics, Varna
Website: https://ue-varna.bg/en/subject/380
Type of provider (see list above): University
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpersonal and intrapersonal skills; • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity; • cross-cultural understanding, supporting diversity, gender and racial equality; Several modules like <i>Social Psychology in tourism, Customer care, Culture and civilisations, Bulgarian folklore and ethnography, Service management in tourism</i> from the Bachelor programme “Tourism”
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class and distance learning

Training provider name: VET Center EGO
Website: https://cpo.centre-ego.info/%d0%b0%d0%b4%d0%bc%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%81%d1%82%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%be%d1%80-%d0%b2-%d1%85%d0%be%d1%82%d0%b5%d0%bb%d0%b8%d0%b5%d1%80%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b2%d0%be%d1%82%d0%be/
Type of provider (see list above):

VET centre
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity Courses: Receptionist, Housekeeper, Waiter, Bartender
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class delivery

Training provider name: VET centre to the IntelCOOP Hotel Ltd.
Website: https://www.intelcoop.bg/bg/profesionalno_obuchenie/
Type of provider (see list above): VET Centre; Corporate training
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity Courses: Hotel manager, Receptionist, Housekeeper, Chef, Cook, Waiter, Bartender, Tour guide, Travel agent
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class delivery

Training provider name: VET Bogoya, Varna
Website: https://bogoia.net/avada_portfolio/%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%bc%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%be%d1%80-%d0%b2-%d1%82%d1%83%d1%80%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%bc%d0%b0/?portfolioCats=45
Type of provider (see list above): VET centre
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity Courses: Animator, Waiter, Bartender, Chef, cook, Restaurant manager, Housekeeper, Receptionist
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class and online through Moodle-based platform

Training provider name: Vocational high school in Tourism "Prof. Assen Zlatarov", Varna
Website: https://www.pgtvarna.com/
Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>):

<p>Social skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity • interpersonal and intrapersonal skills;
<p>Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only</p>

<p>Training provider name: Vocational High school in tourism “Alexander Paskalev”, Haskovo</p>
<p>Website: https://pgthas.com/</p>
<p>Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school</p>
<p>Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity • interpersonal and intrapersonal skills;
<p>Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only</p>

<p>Training provider name: Vocational high school in tourism, Pleven</p>
<p>Website: https://pgt-pleven.com/</p>
<p>Type of provider (see list above): Secondary VET school</p>
<p>Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competences for managing personal relationships, demonstrating empathy, and cooperating with others; • showing a positive attitude, respect, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity • interpersonal and intrapersonal skills;
<p>Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class only</p>

<p>Training provider name: Arthur Adams Business training centre</p>
<p>Website: https://arthuradams.bg/</p>
<p>Type of provider (see list above): Commercial provider of diverse corporate training</p>
<p>Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Emotional intelligence, Manager efficiency, Leadership, Successful sales, Soft skills, Coaching</p>
<p>Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class and online training</p>

<p>Training provider name:</p>

New Horizons
Website: https://bg.newhorizons.bg/
Type of provider (see list above): Commercial trainer
Covered skills types (see list in <i>General Introduction</i>): Social skills Application courses, Technical skills courses, Business skills courses
Methods of delivery (i.e., online/class; modules/courses/trainings, certification): In-class, distance learning, online live, online remote