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**COUNTRY  
SKILLS  
PROFILE  
REPORT**



**THE NETHERLANDS**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Country Skills Profile Report for the Netherlands provides a comprehensive analysis of the tourism skills landscape, examining current workforce characteristics, skills training delivery, and best practices in upskilling and reskilling within the Dutch tourism and hospitality sector.



*THE  
NETHERLANDS IS  
ACTIVELY  
ENGAGED IN  
SKILLS  
DEVELOPMENT*

### *Tourism context and employment*

The Netherlands maintains a significant tourism sector, with projections indicating 833,364 tourism-related jobs by 2033, representing 8.6% of total employment. The Dutch population demonstrates strong digital proficiency, with nearly 80% possessing basic or above-basic digital skills compared to the EU average of 54%. However, the sector faces considerable challenges: 56% of businesses are expected to experience talent shortages between 2025 and 2030, while broader European data reveals a 45% skills mismatch among workers and 76% skill shortage among firms.

### *Key challenges and strategic priorities*

The report identifies several critical challenges facing Dutch tourism:

*Geographic imbalances* in tourism distribution, with visitor activity concentrated in major urban centres, have prompted national strategies to redirect tourism toward lesser-known rural destinations. The NBTC's "Perspective 2030" vision emphasises sustainable growth, visitor flow management, and the shared interests of residents, visitors, and businesses.

*Insufficient development of transversal skills* in higher education represents a significant gap. While Dutch institutions excel at delivering sector-specific knowledge, systematic development of transferable competencies—critical thinking, adaptability, intercultural communication, and digital literacy—remains inconsistent across programmes.

*Digital transformation priorities* have been articulated around five policy areas: digital skills development, data collaboration and infrastructure, fostering innovation culture, digitalisation for sustainability, and strategic investment in digital infrastructure.

### *Skills Training Delivery*

The Netherlands offers a robust ecosystem for tourism skills development through Higher Education Institutions (universities of applied sciences), Vocational Education and Training (MBO) institutes, and private training providers. Key developments include:

- **Digital skills:** Programmes increasingly integrate digital marketing, data analytics, AI applications, and e-commerce competencies. Platforms such as Travel College (Reiswerk) provide accessible online training for industry professionals.
- **Green skills:** Sustainability is embedded across educational levels, with institutions like NHL Stenden receiving recognition for integrating sustainability into curricula. Certification programmes including Green Key and Green Destinations drive practical sustainability training across the sector.
- **Social and cultural skills:** Institutions emphasise intercultural competence development, particularly important given the Netherlands' diverse tourism workforce and international visitor base. Programmes address cultural sensitivity, communication across cultures, and community engagement.

### *Best practices in upskilling and reskilling*

The report presents ten exemplary cases demonstrating innovative approaches to workforce development:

*Human-centred employership* emerges as a consistent theme. Organisations such as Summio Parcs, Kennemerduinen Campings, and Da Peppino prioritise personal connection, accessible leadership, and employee wellbeing over purely efficiency-driven approaches. These practices result in lower turnover, higher engagement, and stronger service quality.

*Structured learning and development* is exemplified by Center Parcs Europe's comprehensive framework combining engagement surveys, leadership development programmes, and inclusive employment initiatives. The

DoubleTree by Hilton demonstrates how corporate frameworks can be combined with locally tailored practices addressing physical, mental, financial, and social wellbeing.

*Education-industry collaboration* is highlighted through the Texel Academy model, where hospitality businesses collectively support accelerated vocational training, addressing structural labour shortages while positioning hospitality as a respected profession.

*Innovation and adaptability* are central to Visit Zuid-Limburg's approach, using "proeftuinen" (innovation labs) for AI experimentation and encouraging cross-functional learning through internal internships.

### *Key findings*

The synthesis of research and best practices reveals that future-ready tourism organisations share common characteristics: they invest in transversal skills alongside technical competencies; they embrace digital tools while maintaining human connection as the core differentiator; they integrate sustainability into operations and training; and they create inclusive, supportive work environments that attract and retain talent in a competitive labour market.

As the tourism sector continues to evolve through digitalisation, sustainability imperatives, and changing workforce expectations, the development of adaptable, skilled professionals becomes increasingly critical. This report provides actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders working to strengthen the Dutch tourism workforce for 2030 and beyond.

# 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 best practice 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 THE NETHERLANDS

The primary aim of this chapter of this *Country Skills Profile report* is to elaborate on general country information, and provide a summary of the tourism and hospitality sector in the Netherlands. This is conducted by collecting and summarising data from existing sources. This analysis is built upon existing sources, studies, reports, research results, articles, and books.

## 1.1 TOURISM FACTS & FIGURES

### *Tourism globally*

The tourism industry is a vast and complex sector that encompasses many industries, including accommodation, transport, attractions, travel companies, and more. According to the international statistics portal Statista, the total contribution of travel and tourism to the global economy was \$ 10.9 trillion in 2024 (Statista, 2025, [1]), a 10.3% share of the total global gross domestic product (GDP), remaining 0.5% below pre-pandemic levels.

Prior to the pandemic, travel & tourism was one of the largest sectors in the world and accounted for 1 in 4 jobs. Future growth in terms of share of GDP is expected in 2035 to be 16.3 billion dollars.

Another source (Statista, 2025, [2]) reports that the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide exceeded 1.4 billion in 2024.

Global employment in the travel and tourism sector in 2019 was 337.7 million jobs (Statista, 2025, [3]). The number of travel and tourism jobs worldwide now is above pre-pandemic levels, totaling 356.6 million in 2024. As a forecast, this is expected to grow to 371 million in 2025 and to 461.6 million in 2035.

### 1.1.1 Contribution of travel & tourism to GDP in the Netherlands

The Netherlands, a country renowned for its picturesque landscapes, historic cities, beautiful nature and vibrant culture, has long been a sought-after destination for tourists worldwide. The significance of tourism and hospitality in the Netherlands cannot be overstated, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping the country's economy, cultural exchange, and overall societal well-being. At the heart of this flourishing industry lies the imperative of skills development. Skill development initiatives will not only enhance the sector but also contribute to the nation's broader economic growth and global standing.

In the Netherlands, in 2023 the total contribution of travel and tourism to the Netherlands' gross domestic product (GDP) was roughly 3.9% lower compared to 2019 (Statista, 2023, [4A]), the year prior to the onset of COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, the direct and indirect contribution of tourism to the Netherlands' GDP amounted to roughly € 111.15 billion in 2024 (CBS Statistics Netherlands, 2025, [4B]). See *Table 1* below for the development in the amounts, divided over domestic and incoming tourism.

Table 1: Contribution of tourism to GDP of the Netherlands (millions of euros), division between domestic and incoming tourism

Year	Total tourism	Incoming tourism	Domestic tourism	Other expenditures
2012	65,290	14,493	47,156	3,641
2013	66,337	15,961	46,770	3,606
2014	69,471	17,756	48,068	3,647
2015	73,179	20,140	49,308	3,731
2016	76,144	22,335	50,030	3,779
2017	81,075	25,254	51,920	3,901
2018	85,124	27,095	54,054	3,975
2019	89,186	29,196	55,872	4,118
2020	53,424	13,236	35,855	4,333
2021	59,379	15,220	39,610	4,549
2022	92,062	28,441	58,653	4,968
2023	104,934	34,482	65,169	5,284
2024	111,158	38,245	67,301	5,612

Source: CBS Statistics Netherlands (2025)

### 1.1.2 Size and relevance of the subsectors

In 2022, the Netherlands had more than 152,000 companies active in the broader hospitality sector (also including tourism and leisure) (LDA, 2023, [5]). See Table 2. This is approximately 3.6% of the total number of companies in the Netherlands.

Several hospitality subsectors are identified, as follows on the next page:

Table 2: Number of tourism, recreation and hospitality companies in the Netherlands in 2022 (note: the total number of companies does not add up to the mentioned total of 152,000, because companies can be part of more than one category).

<b>Hospitality Sector</b>	<b>152,000</b>
Events	144,000
Tourism	71,000
Food and Beverage	66,000
Water sport and recreation	19,000
Day attractions	8,000
Travel sector	6,000

Source: Dutch National Data Alliance (LDA), 2023.

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

In 2025, regarding the used mode of transportation for summer holidays abroad, a large portion of people went by plane: in 2025, 55% of vacations involved air travel. That was 4% higher than in 2024, when the share of air travel was 51% (RTL, 2025, [6]). The car as transportation mode for a summer holiday abroad in 2025: 34% was undertaken by car, compared to 38% in 2024. People also used the train for 3% of summer vacations abroad, compared to 5% in 2024.

### 1.1.4 Arrivals of international versus national tourists

The number of guests staying overnight in Dutch accommodations in 2024 rose to roughly 59 million (CBRE, 2025, [7]). See Table 3 below for more detail:

Table 3: Overnight stays in the Netherlands (all numbers \* 1,000)

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Domestic tourists	22,433	17,450	20,835	26,238	26,546	27,895
Inbound tourists	28,138	10,093	8,556	24,673	31,086	32,127

Source: CBRE

The most important markets for inbound tourism to the Netherlands are the surrounding countries Germany, Belgium, and France.

## 1.2 TRAVEL AND TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment in the tourism sector in the Netherlands experienced a decline in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. The number of jobs in tourism in the Netherlands shows the development as displayed in Table 4 (CBS, 2025, [8]):

Table 4. Development in the number of jobs (\* 1,000) in tourism in the Netherlands

2012	642
2013	648
2014	673
2015	687
2016	705
2017	732
2018	751
2019	777
2020	654
2021	627
2022	723
2023	760
2024	771

Source: CBS Statistics Netherlands, 2025

## 1.3 DIRECT AND TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO GDP IN 10 YEARS TIME

Direct contribution of tourism accounted for 4.0% of the Dutch economy in 2024, measured as share of gross value added (Statistics Netherlands, 2025, [27]). This is up from 3.9% in 2023. It is expected to grow considerably.

Also, the contribution of tourism to Dutch *society* will transform, according to the report '*Perspective Destination Netherlands 2030*' (NBTC, 2023, [9]). This report authored by the Netherlands Bureau of Tourism and Conventions (NBTC) seeks to change the role of tourism and the sustainable development of the Netherlands as a destination. It aims to prioritize the common interests of visitors, businesses, and local residents, ensuring that tourism contributes to the prosperity and well-being of the whole Dutch population. The vision report outlines five priorities that play a key role in achieving this ambition:

- Benefits and burdens are in balance: Striving for more benefits from tourism than burdens.
- The whole of the Netherlands is attractive: Putting more cities and regions on the map as attractive destinations, instead of only a few places.
- Accessible and achievable: Ensuring easily accessible cities and regions.
- Sustainability is a must: Creating a living environment with less waste and pollution.
- A hospitable industry: Establishing the Netherlands as a welcoming destination.

The report acknowledges that achieving this vision requires broad cooperation with the tourism industry and government authorities.

In the report, the following trends emerge in 2035: it is expected to have 61 million overnight stay tourists. It is also expected to have 33 million Dutch tourists staying in their own country. Furthermore, the Spanish and Asian market show higher potential in the future (NBTC, 2025, [10]).

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

Based on a WTTC study (2023, [28]), tourism employment projections for 2033 show that for the Netherlands there will be 833,364 jobs (8.6% of total employment), forecasting a growth rate of 1.1% per year from 2023 to 2033.

A scan of recent vacancies in tourism in The Netherlands shows that the demand for (highly) digitally skilled employees in the tourism industry has increased rapidly since the pandemic. However, these people do not necessarily need to have a degree in tourism (other educational directions may also fit or may be even better).

According to *Statistics Netherlands*, the Netherlands ranks among the top European countries with the largest share of inhabitants who are proficient in using the internet, computers, and software (digital skills). In 2021, nearly 80% of the Dutch population aged 16 to 74 years had basic or above basic overall digital skills, compared to an average of 54% in the European Union. This is evident from the study “*ICT use by households and individuals*” by Statistics Netherlands and Eurostat (CBS, 2022, [11]). Furthermore, in 2024, 23% of Dutch population aged 12 years and above have created texts, videos or images using AI software such as ChatGPT (CBS, 2024, [12]).

## 1.5 MAIN ACTION POINTS FOR TOURISM IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands has no dedicated Ministry of Tourism; the tourism sector resorts under the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Tourism policy at a national governmental

level is limited and mainly outsourced to other organisations, often consisting of public-private partnerships.

NBTC (Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions) is the 'overall' Dutch DMO; it is not only responsible for branding and marketing the Netherlands nationally and internationally but also for tourism policy development. NBTC receives government funding from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and cooperates with public and private partners within and outside the hospitality sector.

The previously mentioned NBTC report acknowledges that achieving this vision requires broad cooperation with the tourism industry and government authorities.

In NBTC's vision, the *main action points for tourism* in the Netherlands are the following:

**Valuation for balance, nature and wellbeing:** Focus is placed on creating a living environment: one that is in balance with nature. Hence, respect for nature has become a top priority. A healthy and wholesome lifestyle is increasingly being chosen and this is done in combination with sustaining proper physical condition. Such a strategy supports a sustainable way of life for the Dutch population in general.

**Digitization:** Digitization ensures that online offers and services are available and accessible. This way, reservation and payment options have become widely proliferated. One of the main drivers for the rapid need for digitization has been the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to this global catastrophe, digitization has been embraced and the widespread application of various (online) platforms on which to conduct meetings, discussions, webinars, conferences, just to name a few, have become commonplace.

**Climate awareness:** Sustainability has become a vital concern especially when making travel choices. For example, the train has emerged as a gratifying mode of transport, especially for domestic travel.

**Choice for local:** A sincere appreciation has emerged for local/regional localities. For instance, city, district / regional or neighborhood destinations are preferred to

distant/international destinations. In addition to this, conscious choices are made for local products from local suppliers.

**Geopolitical developments:** Unsurprisingly, tensions in the world have significant influence on both national and international tourism. The current crises – e.g., the energy crisis, climate crisis, ongoing war in Ukraine – have prompted most industries (including tourism) to find alternative solutions and re-conceptualize existing business models. These solutions affect both business and personal travel.

**Visit with impact:** Special efforts are being made to attract valuable visitors (directly or through intermediaries). In order to promote activities on specified channels, distinct target groups are determined. A valuable visit is one that has a positive impact on the Netherlands and its population. In fact, such a visit should embrace the values of the Netherlands and simultaneously contribute to national, regional or local development. Hence, value is placed on quality rather than quantity.

The NBTC report ‘Perspective 2030’ is used by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy as a guideline for future policy development and policy objectives. Achieving the ambition of ‘Perspective 2030’ requires a switch from promoting destinations to developing destinations and making visitor flows more manageable while capitalizing on ambitions and opportunities. The vision centers on the shared interest of residents, visitors and businesses.

The NBTC, the Ministry and the provinces adopted a related action programme, used as a living document in which the strategic pillars are worked out. Despite the enormous effect of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, the three main policy goals remain:

- Sustainable growth of tourism;
- Increased cooperation between different layers of government;
- Support for the tourism sector, focusing on opportunities for sustainability, entrepreneurship, innovation and digitisation.

NBTC, together with stakeholders within the Taskforce Tourism, aims to align the Dutch tourism sector in accelerating climate action by developing a Roadmap for

Climate Neutral Tourism in the Netherlands. This roadmap, which will be based upon the main pillars of the Glasgow Declaration, will bring together knowledge on the state of the destination regarding climate action.

Tourism is an integral part of the Netherlands' enterprise policy, which focuses on stimulating innovation, entrepreneurship, digitalisation and sustainability, and access to financing and public services for business owners. In recent years the Netherlands has paid more attention to the sustainable development of tourism as the negative impacts of the country's popularity and growth in tourism have become clear.

The Ministry is also responsible for encouraging innovation, digitalisation and sustainability for entrepreneurs, specifically SMEs. To encourage nationwide co-operation, the Ministry, together with NBTC and the provinces, organised the National Tourism Summit. Three editions have taken place since 2018. This involved a broad group of representatives of the business community, tourist organisations and government bodies from all parts of the country. The objective was to work on a joint approach to enable cities, towns and regions to benefit from growing tourism and learn from each other.

Finally, a global report of World Economic Forum also addresses skills development with some trends for the Netherlands: the report addresses the trend in talent shortages: it is expected that 56% of businesses will experience talent shortages between 2025 and 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2025, [13]).

## 1.6 COUNTRY-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN TOURISM

### *Geographic distribution of tourism activities*

The uneven distribution of tourism across the Netherlands presents a significant challenge for the sector. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, visitor activity concentrated heavily in major urban centers (particularly Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht) leading to overtourism concerns, as documented in the European Parliament report "*Overtourism: Impact and Possible Policy Responses*" (Peeters et al., 2018, [14]), authored by experts from Breda University of Applied Sciences and other international experts.

To address these imbalances, several initiatives have been developed:

NBTC published "Perspective 2030 - Destination Netherlands" in 2019: a core objective of this report includes reducing tourists' carbon footprint through strategic redistribution of visitor flows. The Dutch government's strategy aims to redirect tourism toward lesser-known rural destinations, particularly regions experiencing population decline. This approach serves dual purposes: diversifying tourism patterns while creating economic opportunities in depopulated areas. By developing tourism infrastructure and employment in these regions, the initiative seeks to reduce migration pressure that drive rural residents toward overcrowded urban centers in search of work.

To support this redistribution strategy, Reiswerk (the labour market fund for the travel sector; their objective is to ensure there are sufficient future-proof travel professionals) features an online training platform (Travel College), offering customized courses in social, digital, and green skills specifically tailored for the Netherlands travel and tourism sector. The platform demonstrates responsiveness to industry needs by updating course content annually to reflect the sector's dynamic requirements. Operating in close collaboration with NBTC and other tourism organizations, Reiswerk/Travel College provides formal

certification upon course completion, ensuring standardized skill development across diverse geographic locations.

### *Insufficient development of transversal skills in higher education*

While Dutch higher education institutions excel at delivering sector-specific knowledge in tourism and hospitality programs, there remains a significant gap in the systematic development of transversal skills that are increasingly critical for career success and adaptability in the rapidly evolving tourism sector. This gap is particularly evident as the industry undergoes profound transformation driven by digitalization, sustainability imperatives, and changing workforce expectations.

*Transversal skills* encompass competencies that are transferable across different jobs, sectors, and contexts rather than being specific to one specific job, occupation or industry. They are sometimes also called "soft skills," "transferable skills," or "21st-century skills". Core categories include:

- Cognitive and learning skills: critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, learning to learn, adaptability.
- Social and interpersonal skills: communication, teamwork, collaboration, cultural awareness, empathy, conflict resolution.
- Self-management skills: self-regulation, resilience, time management, initiative, entrepreneurial mindset.
- Digital and information literacy: not just technical skills, but the ability to navigate, evaluate, and use digital information effectively.
- Systems thinking: understanding complexity, seeing interconnections, anticipating consequences.

International research (e.g., OECD, 2018, [26]) reveals significant concerns about how effectively higher education institutions develop these transversal competencies in students in the Netherlands. The following challenges are identified:

## **1. Curriculum structure constraints**

Dutch tourism and hospitality programs at HBO (universities of applied sciences) level traditionally emphasize operational management skills, sector-specific knowledge (e.g., food & beverage management, front office operations, event management) and practical internships and work placements.

While these elements remain valuable, the rigid structure of many programs leaves limited space for developing deeper transversal competencies. Courses on digital transformation, sustainability, or entrepreneurship are often offered as electives rather than being systematically integrated throughout the curriculum.

## **2. Industry-education mismatch**

Dutch tourism employers increasingly prioritize transversal skills when hiring yet graduates often lack sufficient depth in this area.

## **3. Teaching methodology limitations**

Traditional lecture-based approaches that still dominate parts of Dutch higher education are not well-suited for developing transversal skills, which require experiential learning opportunities, real-world project-based assignments, interdisciplinary collaboration and reflection. While Dutch institutions have made progress incorporating these methodologies, implementation remains inconsistent across programs and often depends on individual lecturer initiative rather than systematic curriculum design.

## **4. Assessment challenges**

Transversal skills are notoriously difficult to assess using traditional examination methods. Dutch higher education institutions often struggle to develop valid and reliable assessment tools for competencies like creativity, adaptability, or intercultural sensitivity and/or provide meaningful feedback that supports skill development. This assessment gap means students may develop these skills informally but have no formal recognition, while programs lack clear mechanisms to ensure all students achieve minimum competency levels.

### *Growing importance in the modern labor market*

The significance of transversal skills, particularly critical thinking abilities, has intensified due to several converging factors: rapid technological advancement, widespread digitization, and increased labor market mobility. Notably, an earlier Cedefop study (2018, [29]) showed that – in general - there is a 45% skills mismatch for EU workers, and a 76% skill shortage for EU firms (i.e., not specifically for tourism). Thus, a considerable part of Europe's workforce currently occupies positions for which they lack specific training, highlighting the substantial skills mismatch.

### *Implications for education*

These findings underscore the urgent need for higher education institutions to strengthen their focus on developing transversal skills. Equipping students with these competencies has become essential for ensuring their readiness and adaptability in an evolving labor market.

### *Enhancing social and cultural competences*

Social and cultural skills enable individuals to learn, work, and live effectively alongside people from diverse ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds. These competencies are fundamental to functioning in pluralistic societies, as social origin and cultural background significantly shape how individuals think, construct meaning, make decisions, and interact with others in an evolving societal context. Recognizing and accommodating differences in social and cultural perspectives is essential for harmonious coexistence.

These skills comprise seven interconnected dimensions:

- *Self-awareness and reflection*: The ability to identify and critically examine one's own emotions, perspectives, and biases, while recognizing both individual and collective responsibilities within society.
- *Cultural knowledge and sensitivity*: Possessing knowledge about different cultures and the capacity to reflect on cultural differences and their implications for interaction.

- *Interpersonal engagement*: Demonstrating empathy and genuine interest in understanding others' experiences and viewpoints.
- *Behavioral adaptability*: Recognizing and appropriately applying codes of behavior across various social contexts and situations.
- *Cross-cultural communication*: Communicating constructively and effectively in diverse social and cultural environments.
- *Respect and openness*: Maintaining respect for and understanding of alternative perspectives, expressions, and behaviors, even when they differ from one's own.

### *Critical thinking and information literacy*

The proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and "fake news" across digital platforms has fundamentally altered the information landscape. In this context, organizations increasingly require employees capable of making well-informed decisions grounded in analytical approaches.

There is growing demand for professionals who possess strong media literacy and the ability to objectively evaluate information from multiple sources. This competency extends beyond simply consuming information to include assessing credibility, identifying bias, and verifying claims from diverse and potentially conflicting sources.

As the volume and complexity of available information continues to expand, the capacity for critical thinking becomes a strategic asset for organizations seeking to navigate uncertainty, mitigate risks, and maintain competitive advantage in their decision-making processes.

### *Flexibility and adaptability*

The COVID-19 lockdown period demonstrated how fast working conditions and daily routines can be disrupted. As organizational structures and work practices continue to evolve, employees who can swiftly adapt to changing circumstances represent a critical asset to employers.

Flexibility encompasses more than responding to short-term workplace changes. It fundamentally involves a commitment to continuous learning and skills

development throughout one's career. This includes both acquiring new competencies aligned with emerging market demands and refreshing or updating existing skills to prevent obsolescence.

In an environment characterized by ongoing technological advancement and shifting organizational needs, the ability to continuously develop one's skill set has become essential for sustained employability and career progression. Workers who embrace lifelong learning position themselves to remain competitive and valuable in an evolving labor market.

### *Life skills for personal and professional success*

Life skills encompass the fundamental competencies required to effectively navigate daily challenges and address the problems that arise in both personal and professional contexts. While the term is largely self-explanatory, the breadth of skills encompasses warrants closer examination.

Life skills span a comprehensive range of capabilities, including empathy, critical thinking, self-awareness, and collaborative teamwork. These competencies are not isolated abilities but rather interconnected skills that collectively enable individuals to function effectively across different domains of life.

The significance of life skills extends across both professional and social spheres. In workplace settings, these competencies facilitate effective collaboration, problem-solving, and interpersonal relations. In social contexts, they enable individuals to build meaningful relationships, navigate complex situations, and contribute positively to their communities. This dual applicability makes life skills foundational to overall personal development and societal participation.

### *Priorities for digital transformation in tourism*

The Netherlands has identified digital transformation as a strategic priority for the tourism sector. According to NBTC (2024), five key policy areas need to be established to guide this transition:

1. *Digital skills development*: Addressing the urgent need to cultivate both foundational and advanced digital competencies among tourism sector

employees. Priority areas include digital marketing, data analytics, and cybersecurity capabilities.

2. *Data collaboration and infrastructure*: Enhancing the sector's capacity to leverage data for strategic decision-making through strengthened partnerships and improved data-sharing mechanisms. The establishment of a centralized data hub would facilitate knowledge exchange and enable sector-wide benefits from collective insights.
3. *Fostering a culture of innovation*: Cultivating an environment related to experimentation and learning through design and innovation hubs. These platforms enable businesses to explore emerging technologies, share best practices, and draw inspiration from cross-sectoral innovations.
4. *Digitalization for sustainability*: Using digital technologies to advance environmental objectives, including optimized resource management, reduced environmental footprint, and the development of virtual tourism experiences that minimize environmental impact.
5. *Strategic investment in digital infrastructure*: Facilitating necessary investments in digital technologies by improving awareness of available funding mechanisms, including subsidies and alternative financial support instruments, to enable innovation capacity across the sector.

# 2. CURRENT SKILLS TRAINING DELIVERY IN THE NETHERLANDS

In this chapter, you will find an overview of the training delivery of digital, green and social skills sets in The Netherlands. This is conducted by collecting and analysing data from country-specific sources and summarising these.

Tourism plays a significant role in the Netherlands, attracting millions of visitors each year to explore its rich cultural heritage, beautiful cities and nature. To ensure the industry's continued growth and success, a robust system of tourism training provision is in place. This introduction will provide an overview of the characteristics of tourism training in the Netherlands, encompassing key institutions, programs, accreditation systems, professional development opportunities, government initiatives, and potential future developments.

## *Major institutions and organisations*

Tourism training in the Netherlands is facilitated by various institutions and organisations, each contributing to the development of skilled professionals in the sector. These include:

1. Higher Education Institutions (HEI's): Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs related to tourism, leisure and hospitality management. These programs are designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the industry, covering topics such as tourism marketing, context of the

tourism industry, destination management, sustainable tourism, e-tourism, and cultural heritage management.

2. Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutes: VET institutions offer practical training programs tailored to the needs of the tourism sector. These programs equip students with hands-on skills required for various roles, including hotel management, travel agency operations, and event management.
3. Private training providers: Numerous private training providers and specialized companies offer short-term courses, workshops, and certifications in specific areas of tourism, such as culinary tourism, adventure tourism, and digital marketing for tourism businesses.

### *Types of training programs*

The Netherlands offers a diverse range of training programs for individuals interested in pursuing a career in tourism or enhancing their skills within the industry:

1. Undergraduate and postgraduate degrees: Universities of applied sciences offer bachelor's and master's degrees in tourism management, hotel management, leisure & events, and related fields. These programs provide a strong theoretical foundation and often include practical internships.
2. Diplomas and certificates: VET institutes provide diploma and certificate programs in areas like travel and tourism, culinary arts, and event management. These programs focus on practical skills and are highly valued by employers because of their practical nature.
3. Specialised courses: Private training providers offer short courses and workshops in niche areas, catering to professionals seeking to gain expertise in specific aspects of tourism, such as sustainable tourism development, digital marketing, and destination management.

### *Accreditation systems and industry associations*

There are three national/public organisations that have the authority to influence decisions about which skills and competencies are delivered in Higher education qualifications in tourism and hospitality programmes between levels 4-8. First, Dutch universities have awarding powers which enable them to develop their own curricula that adheres to the guidelines of the *Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders* (NVAO). This is a quality assurance agency, which assures the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium). They do this independently, promoting the quality culture practised within the higher educational institutes. Within the educational institutions, the employee participation bodies, including students, and the supervisory board usually also play the role of monitoring quality.

Secondly, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is a governmental member of the *European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education* (EQAR). EQAR is a register of agencies that review the quality of higher education institutions according to European standards (EQAR, 2024, [16]).

Thirdly, the *International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (INQAAHE), is a world-wide association of organisations that is active in the theory and practice of quality assurance (QA) in higher education in the Netherlands.

Having said that, higher education institutions still commission external quality assurance agencies, such as *Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities* (ENQA), to conduct the preparations for the assessment of education and research programmes in all scientific disciplines at Dutch Universities and other higher education institutions. The quality of education is generally monitored by the government by means of the NVAO accreditation system.

The Government believes it is important that the quality of Higher Education is not only guaranteed, but that it is continuously updated on a regular basis. This is

the responsibility of individual educational institutions. However, the government provides instruments for external quality assurance in the form of an accreditation system.

### *Continuing professional development*

For individuals already working in the tourism industry, there are ample opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). These opportunities range from short courses and workshops to online certifications, enabling professionals to stay updated with industry trends and best practices. For instance, the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions (NBTC) often collaborates with industry partners to offer CPD programs.

### *Government initiatives and policies*

The Dutch government recognizes the importance of tourism as an economic driver and has introduced several initiatives and policies to promote and improve tourism training provision. These include:

1. **Investment in education:** The government allocates funding to support higher education institutions and VET providers in developing relevant and up-to-date curricula. This ensures that students receive training that aligns with the evolving needs of the tourism sector.
2. **Sustainability initiatives:** Given the growing importance of sustainable tourism, the government encourages training programs and research initiatives that focus on sustainability, responsible tourism practices, and cultural preservation.
3. **Workforce development:** The government collaborates with industry associations to identify skills gaps and develop targeted training programs to address these gaps. This helps ensure that the workforce is well-prepared to meet the industry's demands.

### *Future developments and strategies*

To enhance the quality, accessibility, and relevance of tourism training in the Netherlands, several strategies and future developments are considered and implemented by the government as well as by the sector itself:

- **Digitalization:** Embracing digital technologies and online learning platforms can make training more accessible and flexible for learners, especially in the light of global challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **International collaboration:** Collaborating with international partners and institutions can facilitate knowledge exchange, leading to the incorporation of global best practices in Dutch tourism training.
- **Industry partnerships:** Strengthening partnerships with industry stakeholders can help align training programs with the evolving needs of tourism businesses, ensuring graduates are job-ready.
- **Sustainability focus:** Expanding sustainability-focused training programs can position the Netherlands as a leader in responsible tourism and attract environmentally conscious tourists.

## **2.1 DIGITAL SKILLS**

### *Current situation*

The Netherlands, like many other countries, has recognized the growing importance of digital skills in the tourism sector. Digitalization has become a key driver of innovation, customer engagement, and operational efficiency. Various types of education and training providers are actively involved in delivering digital skills training in the tourism industry:

- **Higher Education Institutions:** Universities and higher education institutions offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs in tourism management and related fields. These programs increasingly include

modules or courses focused on digital skills. Students are exposed to concepts like digital marketing, data analytics, and e-commerce to prepare them for the digital demands of the industry.

- Vocational Education and Training (VET) Institutes: VET institutions in the Netherlands play a crucial role in preparing students for practical careers in tourism. They offer programs that often incorporate digital skills training, including reservation systems, online customer service, and using digital tools for travel planning.
- Private and commercial training providers: Numerous private training providers and consulting firms offer specialized digital skills training for tourism professionals and businesses. These programs cater to specific needs such as social media marketing, search engine optimization, and using booking platforms effectively.

### *Key challenges*

- Rapid technological advancements: Keeping up with the fast-paced evolution of technology can be challenging for both educators and learners. Digital skills training programs must constantly adapt to new platforms and tools.
- Digital divide: Ensuring that digital skills training is accessible to all, including individuals in remote areas or those with limited access to technology, is a significant challenge. Addressing this digital divide is crucial for equitable skills development.
- Changing consumer behaviour: Tourism businesses need to adapt to changing consumer preferences, which have shifted towards online booking platforms, personalised experiences, and digital interactions. This requires ongoing training and upskilling.

- Data privacy and security: With the increased use of digital tools and data collection in the tourism industry, there is a growing need for professionals who understand data privacy laws and can ensure compliance.

Implications for digital skills development:

- Tourism businesses that invest in digital skills development can gain a competitive edge by offering more personalised services, efficient booking processes, and targeted marketing campaigns.
- Digital skills enable tourism professionals to create seamless and personalised experiences for tourists, leading to higher customer satisfaction and repeat business.
- Proficiency in digital skills allows tourism organisations to gather and analyse data effectively, helping them make informed decisions regarding pricing, marketing strategies, and resource allocation.
- Digitalization can contribute to sustainability efforts in the tourism industry by optimising resource use and reducing waste through data-driven insights and efficient operations.
- Tourism businesses with strong digital skills are better prepared to adapt to unforeseen challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, by quickly shifting to online sales and marketing strategies.

The delivery of digital skills training in the tourism sector in the Netherlands involves a variety of education and training providers, from higher education institutions to private training firms. These efforts are crucial to equip professionals with the skills needed to thrive in the digital age of tourism. However, challenges such as the rapid pace of technological change and the digital divide must be addressed to ensure inclusive and sustainable skills development. The implications of digital skills development are broad, ranging from improved competitiveness and customer experiences to more data-driven and sustainable tourism practices. To understand the most current developments

and strategies in this area, it is recommended to consult the latest reports and updates from relevant authorities and industry experts.

Finally, NBTC has crafted a national vision for digital transformation in the hospitality domain where also digital skills in the Dutch sector need to be advanced (NBTC, 2024, [17]).

### *Examples of digital skills training in the Netherlands*

#### **Higher Education Institutions (HEI)**

Several Dutch universities of applied sciences offer programmes that incorporate digital skills training for the tourism sector:

**Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUas)** offers a [BSc in Tourism](#) that integrates digital competencies within its curriculum. The university also provides a dedicated Applied Data Science & Artificial Intelligence programme, where third-year students collaborate with domain experts in Tourism, Leisure & Events on data-driven projects. BUas hosts the Hospitality, Tourism, Innovation & Technology (HTIT) knowledge platform to enhance academia-industry collaboration in areas such as digital experience design, online communication, and AI & data science in tourism.

**NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences** offers [Tourism Management and Hospitality Management](#) programmes that incorporate modules on digitalisation, cyber safety, and guest experience technology. The university uses Design-Based Education methodology, giving students hands-on experience with digital innovations and emerging technologies in the hospitality sector.

## Vocational Education and Training (VET) - MBO Institutes

Regional Training Centres (ROCs) across the Netherlands provide “MBO”-level tourism and hospitality programmes that incorporate digital skills:

**ROC van Amsterdam – MBO College Airport** offers [Airport Tourism Studies](#) and the bilingual International Travel & Hospitality Management programme (level 4), which includes training on reservation systems, digital customer service, and online travel planning tools. Located near Schiphol Airport, students gain practical experience with industry-standard digital platforms.

**ROC Mondriaan – International Hotel and Management School (IHMS)** in The Hague provides the [Hospitality Manager/Entrepreneur programme](#) (MBO-4 plus level) in Dutch, English, and bilingual variants. The curriculum includes digital skills for hotel operations, online booking systems, and digital marketing.

**ROC Midden Nederland – Hospitality and Tourism College** offers [MBO programmes](#) focused on the hospitality industry, including training on digital tools for customer service and reservation management. The institution also provides adult education courses covering computer skills relevant to the tourism sector.

### Private and commercial training providers

Several private organisations offer specialised digital skills training for tourism professionals:

**Reiswerk/Travel College** is a free [online learning platform](#) developed by Reiswerk (the Training and Development Fund for the travel sector) in partnership with SkillsTown. Travel College provides e-learning courses, webinars, and micro-learning modules covering both soft skills and hard skills, including digital marketing, e-commerce, and ChatGPT applications for tourism professionals. The platform is available to all employees in the Dutch travel industry free of charge.

Horeca Stichting Nederland (HSN) / HSN Academy offers [online video training programmes](#) for hospitality professionals. While primarily focused on regulatory certifications (Social Hygiene, HACCP, Allergens), their platform demonstrates effective digital delivery of sector-specific training with flexible, self-paced learning options.

NobleProg Netherlands provides instructor-led [digital marketing training courses](#) both online and on-site at multiple Dutch locations including Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Leiden. Their programmes cover digital marketing fundamentals, Google Analytics, Google Ads, social media marketing, SEO, and web analytics – all applicable to tourism businesses. Training can be customised for hospitality and tourism sectors.

## 2.2 GREEN SKILLS

Green and sustainable practices have become increasingly important in the tourism industry worldwide, and the Netherlands is no exception. Various education and training providers are actively involved in delivering green and sustainable skills training to meet the growing demand for environmentally responsible tourism.

As indicated in the section above about Digital Skills, the major suppliers of Green skills education are Higher Education Institutions, Vocational Education and Training (VET) Institutes, and Private / Commercial Training Providers. This is conducted on various levels: undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates from VET institutes and from private training providers.

### *Key challenges in green skills development*

Despite the growing emphasis on sustainability in tourism, there is still a need to raise awareness among industry professionals about the importance of green practices and to educate them on the benefits and implementation of sustainable initiatives.

Secondly, there are financial constraints: implementing green and sustainable practices often require investments in technology, infrastructure, and training. In

particular, smaller businesses may face (financial and capacity) constraints when trying to adopt sustainable measures.

Thirdly, achieving widespread adoption of green practices within the tourism industry can be challenging, as it often requires changes in behaviour and operations. Convincing businesses and stakeholders to commit to sustainability can be an obstacle. Balancing sustainability with traditional tourism practices can be complex. Ensuring that green initiatives do not compromise the quality of the tourist experience or profitability can be a challenge.

#### *Implications for Green/Sustainable skills development*

Tourism professionals and businesses equipped with green and sustainable skills gain a competitive advantage in the market. Tourists increasingly prefer environmentally responsible options, and having trained staff can attract eco-conscious tourists.

Developing green skills among tourism professionals contributes to reducing the environmental impact of the industry. Sustainable practices, such as energy-efficient operations and waste reduction, help conserve resources and minimise pollution.

Sustainable tourism practices often involve engagement with local communities and cultural preservation. Green skills training fosters responsible interactions with local populations and supports the social aspects of sustainability.

#### *Government initiatives and policies*

The Dutch government has recognized the significance of sustainability in tourism and has taken steps to promote green skills development. The Netherlands has implemented sustainable tourism policies that encourage environmentally responsible practices. Government initiatives promote the use of renewable energy, waste reduction, and sustainable transportation within the tourism sector. Moreover, there is funding and support: financial support is provided to businesses and training institutions that focus on sustainable tourism initiatives. Grants and incentives are available to help businesses implement green practices.

In sum, green and sustainable skills training in the Netherlands is gaining momentum in response to the growing demand for environmentally responsible tourism. Education and training providers, government policies, and industry initiatives are working together to equip tourism professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to reduce the industry's environmental footprint and meet the expectations of eco-conscious tourists. Challenges such as awareness, financial constraints, and industry buy-in need to be addressed to ensure the successful integration of green practices within the tourism sector.

Finally, NBTC wants to achieve *Climate Neutral Tourism* as a national strategy for the Netherlands (NBTC, 2022, [18]).

### *Examples of green skills training in the Netherlands*

#### **Higher Education Institutions (HEI)**

Several Dutch universities of applied sciences and research universities offer programmes with a strong focus on sustainability in tourism:

- **Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAs) and Wageningen University & Research** jointly offer the BSc Tourism, the only [academic bachelor's programme](#) in the field of tourism in the Netherlands. This interdisciplinary programme combines economic, social and environmental sciences with a core focus on sustainable tourism development. Students explore the interrelationships between tourism, economy, society and the environment, with second-year students deepening their knowledge of sustainable tourism development through an international field research project. Graduates are equipped for careers as Sustainable Tourism Consultants, Strategic Policy Advisors, or roles at organisations like the European Commission or the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.
- **NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences** offers [Tourism Management and Leisure & Events Management](#) programmes that are leading in their focus on sustainable tourism. The programmes received the Sustainable Higher Education (SHE) qualification from Hobéon for the integration of sustainability into the curriculum. Students learn to balance the "triple

bottom line" of people, planet and profit, and develop skills in transition management, risk management and strategies for a sustainable future. The university's European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI) supports research collaboration with students on sustainable tourism development. Minors include "Destinations in Transition" (Aruba), focusing on regenerative tourism development, and "Outdoor Leadership and Adventure" (Leeuwarden/Bali), covering sustainable product development.

- **HZ University of Applied Sciences** offers a [Tourism Management programme](#) in Zeeland with emphasis on improving the liveability of destinations and sustainable tourism development. The programme addresses how tourism impacts local environments and communities.

### **Vocational Education and Training (VET) / MBO institutes**

Dutch ROCs (Regional Training Centres) and specialised agricultural colleges (AOCs) are increasingly integrating sustainability into their tourism and hospitality programmes:

- **Yuverta** is the largest provider of green-blue vocational education in Europe, with 53 locations across the Netherlands. [Yuverta](#) offers MBO programmes (levels 1-4) focused on sustainable development, climate, energy, water, food, and nature. Their educational philosophy is explicitly linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and they rank highest in sustainable business operations among Dutch VET institutions. Yuverta participates in international sustainability projects through networks like Europea International and GroenPact. While primarily focused on agriculture and horticulture, Yuverta connects to hospitality and tourism through sustainable food production and recreation/nature management courses.
- **ROC Mondriaan – International Hotel and Management School (IHMS)** in The Hague integrates [sustainability principles](#) into their hospitality programmes, preparing students for a sector that increasingly demands environmental responsibility.
- **Curio** (West-Brabant region, including Breda) offers VET education including [programmes in hospitality and tourism](#) that increasingly

incorporate sustainability competencies as part of their broader commitment to preparing students for 21st-century challenges.

Dutch MBO institutions in general are integrating topics such as circular economy practices, renewable energy, and sustainable operations into their programmes to meet growing industry demand for these competencies.

### Private and commercial training providers

- **Green Destinations** is headquartered in the Netherlands and offers destination assessment, certification, and training programmes based on the GSTC-recognised [Green Destinations Standard](#). They provide online training modules, coaching for sustainable destination management, and Climate Action Planning support. Several Dutch destinations (including Schouwen-Duiveland and Berg en Dal) have achieved GSTC-Accredited Certification through Green Destinations.
- **Green Key Netherlands** (managed by Stichting Keurmerk Milieu, Veiligheid en Kwaliteit - KMKV) operates the [Green Key certification](#) programme for hotels, conference centres, restaurants, campsites and attractions. The Netherlands has the highest number of Green Key certificate holders in the world (nearly 700 organisations). While primarily a certification scheme, Green Key criteria require staff training on sustainability practices as part of the certification process, driving green skills development across the hospitality sector.
- **Reiswerk / Travel College** ([www.travelcollege.nl](http://www.travelcollege.nl)) offers custom-built [courses on green skills](#) alongside digital and social skills for travel industry professionals in the Netherlands. The platform provides free e-learning modules on sustainability practices for all employees in the Dutch travel sector.
- **Travelife** offers [certification and training](#) for tour operators and accommodation providers, with audits conducted in the Netherlands by organisations such as Green Label Service. The programme focuses on social, environmental and economic sustainability, requiring participating businesses to implement sustainability training for staff.

## 2.3 SOCIAL/CULTURAL SKILLS

Social/cultural skills training in tourism is crucial for enhancing the quality of interactions between tourists and local communities. The Netherlands, known for its rich cultural heritage and vibrant cities, places a significant emphasis on this aspect of tourism education and training.

### *Key challenges*

- The tourism industry in the Netherlands, as well as throughout Europe, often involves interactions with people from various cultural backgrounds. Ensuring that tourism professionals are culturally sensitive and respectful can be challenging.
- Effective communication is crucial for social-cultural interactions. Language barriers can hinder effective communication between tourists and local communities, requiring training in overcoming these obstacles.
- Popular tourist destinations in the Netherlands (e.g., Amsterdam, Kinderdijk, Giethoorn) face issues related to overtourism, which can strain social-cultural interactions. Balancing the needs of tourists and local communities is an ongoing challenge.

### *Implications for Social-Cultural Skills Development*

- Social-cultural skills training equips tourism professionals to provide tourists with more meaningful and culturally enriched experiences, leading to higher satisfaction and repeat visits.
- Tourism can be a source of economic growth for local communities. Social-cultural skills training promotes responsible tourism practices that benefit both tourists and the communities they visit.
- Training in social-cultural skills helps tourism professionals manage potential conflicts that may arise from cultural misunderstandings, contributing to smoother interactions.

- Understanding and respecting local cultures and traditions is integral to sustainable tourism. Social-cultural skills training plays a role in promoting sustainable practices within the industry.

In conclusion, social-cultural skills training in tourism is a crucial component of the sector in the Netherlands, given its rich cultural heritage and diverse communities. Education and training providers, along with government initiatives, play a significant role in promoting cultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, and community engagement among tourism professionals. Challenges such as cultural sensitivity, language barriers, and overtourism need to be addressed through training and collaboration to ensure that tourism benefits both tourists and local communities.

Finally, it is good to mention that according to WTTC (*World Travel and Tourism Council*), skill shortages are a hurdle for the tourism sector to handle. They suggest to improve the provision of travel and tourism qualifications, strengthen collaboration and alignment between businesses and education providers, and provide upskilling and lifelong learning across the sector (WTTC, 2025, [19]).

### *Examples of social-cultural skills training in the Netherlands*

A range of education and training providers in the Netherlands offer programmes that develop social-cultural skills for tourism professionals. These can be categorised into Higher Education Institutions (HEI), Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers, and commercial training organisations.

#### **Higher Education Institutions (HEI)**

- **Hotelschool The Hague**, consistently ranked among the top hospitality schools worldwide, places strong emphasis on developing [intercultural skills](#). The European Consortium for Accreditation describes its bachelor's programme as having an inherently international character that promotes intercultural learning. Students from over 60 nationalities learn to socially and cross-culturally interact through the unique Skotel residence concept,

where first-year students live together in the school's training hotel. The curriculum aims to develop students' EQ (emotional quotient) alongside IQ and AQ, specifically including highly developed personal and intercultural skills).

- **Hotel Management School Maastricht** provides [HBO programmes](#) focused on hospitality management in an international environment, preparing students for careers requiring cross-cultural competencies in the global hotel industry

### Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers

The Dutch MBO (= Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs; VET) sector trains over 25,000 students in hospitality, tourism, recreation, and facility services programmes. Regional Training Centres (ROCs) offer relevant courses in close cooperation with the industry.

- **ROC van Amsterdam** offers the bilingual [International Hotelschool Amsterdam / Manager International Hospitality](#) programme, a three-year MBO-4 course taught in English and Dutch. Students develop international and intercultural skills from day one, meeting guests and co-workers from around the world. The curriculum includes projects addressing real-life issues such as tourist distribution in the Amsterdam metropolitan area. Students can undertake internships abroad in countries including Spain, Bali, Malta, Suriname, and the USA.
- **MBO Utrecht** houses a [Hospitality & Leisure Academy](#) offering courses in tourism and hospitality. The institution emphasises internationalisation, facilitating international internships and job-shadowing experiences through partnerships with schools in England, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, and Sweden under the "Talent Development Europe" network.
- **ROC Midden Nederland** operates a specialised [Hospitality and Tourism College](#) offering an extensive range of MBO programmes from entry-level

to level 4, focused on hospitality industry skills including customer interaction and service delivery.

- **MBO Amersfoort** focuses on developing [international competencies](#), particularly in study programmes preparing students for careers in the tourism and service industry. The institution offers internationally focused study paths and "Internationalization at Home" initiatives to help students acquire abilities to work in multicultural communities/

### Commercial training providers

Several commercial organisations provide specialised intercultural and social-cultural skills training for tourism and hospitality professionals.

- **Between2Cultures** offers [intercultural training programmes](#) for companies with multicultural workforces. The trainings focus on helping professionals navigate Dutch work and business culture, with programmes specifically designed for Indian-Dutch cultural competence building. The organisation has worked with clients including SAP Netherlands, Wintershall dea, and LT Foods.
- **Intercultural Business Improvement (IBI)** provides the "[Understanding the Dutch](#)" training, a one-day interactive group programme available for open registration or as two half-day online sessions. The course includes the Intercultural Readiness Check self-assessment and focuses on developing competencies needed to succeed in Dutch business culture and social interactions
- **Flowently** provides [intercultural awareness workshops](#) designed to help professionals understand their own cultural preferences and how these compare to Dutch culture. The workshops cover Dutch history and geography, dealing with culture shock, and do's and don'ts when living in the Netherlands. Flowently prefers mixed teams of Dutch and international employees, positioning the workshops as team-building experiences.

# 4. BEST PRACTICES

## UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING

In the updated Country Skills Report we interviewed and analysed **10 best practices** for primary data collection in upskilling, reskilling, attracting/retaining staff in the five tourism sub sectors. This research method is based on the SSIM instrument that is developed in PANTOUR. The goal of the analysis is to have an elaborated inventory of innovative initiatives, projects, programs, philosophies, tools, methods, ideas, solutions, and concepts in relation to upskilling, reskilling, attracting, and retaining staff in order to improve the knowledge on digital, social, and green skills development in tourism. In short, a best practice in upskilling, reskilling, attracting staff has all or many of these characteristics:

1

It has a clear goal.

2

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

3

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

4

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

5

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

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

## 4.1 BEST PRACTICE: CAMPSITE AMSTERDAM

Campsite in Amsterdam, is owned by the Dutch government and run by Erik Van der Linden is an urban campsite in the city of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

### 4.1.1 Background information

The best practice organisation operates in a tourism context that is increasingly shaped by digital transformation, environmental accountability, and changing visitor profiles. As a small campsite embedded in a sensitive natural environment, its operational model is influenced by both regulatory frameworks and evolving societal expectations regarding sustainability and inclusion. At the same time, the organisation faces growing pressure to modernise its systems and service delivery in line with broader developments in the hospitality sector.

Looking toward 2030, the organisation anticipates a shift in required competencies, with greater emphasis on digital fluency, sustainability awareness, and social responsibility. Automation and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, are viewed as inevitable developments that will reshape internal processes and guest communication. These changes occur against the backdrop of a younger workforce that is generally environmentally conscious but operates within a wider tourism market where guest awareness and responsible behaviour cannot be taken for granted.

### 4.1.2 Analysis and overview

The best practice demonstrates a strategic attempt to balance efficiency-driven innovation with the preservation of human-centered hospitality. Technological tools are primarily positioned as enablers rather than replacements, supporting operational effectiveness while allowing employees to focus on meaningful guest interactions. This approach reflects an understanding that future competitiveness in tourism will depend not only on digital capability but also on the ability to deliver authentic and high-quality experiences.

A notable analytical insight is the shift in educational focus from employees to visitors. While staff competencies are important, the organisation recognises that achieving sustainability goals increasingly requires influencing guest behaviour. This positions employees not only as service providers but also as mediators between the organisation and its natural environment.

Overall, the best practice reflects a forward-looking model that integrates technology, sustainability, and social skills into a cohesive operational framework.

#### *Key principles*

The campsite operates according to the principle of maintaining a small-scale, authentic camping experience. Visitors are not primarily seeking entertainment or organised activities; rather, they choose the campsite for the simplicity and authenticity of camping itself. This positioning differentiates the campsite from larger, resort-style alternatives and forms the foundation of its operational philosophy.

A critical success factor lies in the “soft” side of the organisation, particularly employee responsibility and engagement. The overall guest experience is largely shaped by staff behaviour, attitudes, and interactions. Employees are therefore expected to take ownership of the quality of service delivered, as their personal involvement directly influences customer satisfaction.

### *Examples and case studies*

In response to these changes, staff training practices have been adapted. Multilingual abilities are considered essential, reflecting the international nature of the guest base. Above all, hospitality skills are prioritized, with employees encouraged to go beyond basic service delivery and proactively engage with guests. While only standard computer skills are required at entry level, the campsite places strong emphasis on hospitality as a core competence. Technical and operational skills can be developed through internal training, whereas a service-oriented mindset is viewed as fundamental and non-negotiable.

Partner organisations play a supporting role in the implementation of best practices. Specifically, housekeeping and landscaping (greening) services are outsourced to external providers. This allows the organisation to focus on its core hospitality activities while ensuring professional standards in operational and environmental maintenance.

### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

One of the main lessons identified is that sustainability education should extend beyond staff to include tourists themselves. To address this, the manager has arranged staff training focused on educating guests about their surroundings, particularly raising awareness that the campsite is located within a city forest and requires responsible behaviour.

Social and cultural competencies are also highlighted as essential. Multilingual abilities and strong interpersonal skills are expected to be in place prior to employment. While technological advancements may reduce reliance on spoken languages by 2030, non-verbal communication and body language are considered irreplaceable and central to authentic hospitality experiences.

The increasing focus on individualism among younger generations is seen as a potential risk if taken to extremes, underscoring the need to reinforce social responsibility, empathy, and community-oriented values within both staff and guest interactions.

### *Benefits and outcomes*

Several tangible benefits have resulted from the implementation of the identified best practices. One key improvement is enhanced accessibility and flexibility for guests, for example through licence plate recognition systems that simplify access and movement within the campsite.

From a training perspective, the organisation has developed structured internal documentation outlining procedures for handling telephone calls, email communication, and guest interactions. Team leaders are responsible for onboarding and guiding new employees, ensuring consistency in service quality. Environmental competence is further supported through ongoing green skills training, notably via participation in the C4RT environmental course throughout the year. Although the organisation is small and outsources greening services, environmental compliance remains a priority, particularly in relation to government regulations.

To actively pursue its sustainability agenda, the organisation has implemented several concrete measures, including:

- sourcing from suppliers located within a 40-kilometre radius,
- the use of electric vehicles,
- tree replantation initiatives, and
- selecting environmentally friendly options for online purchases.

Interestingly, the manager notes that most employees are between 20 and 30 years old and already demonstrate strong environmental awareness. As a result, sustainability training is perceived as more necessary at the managerial level than among frontline staff.

### *Responsibilities and Accountability*

According to the best practice organisation, inclusion and sustainability will become increasingly critical competencies in the lead-up to 2030. These skills are

viewed not only as ethical imperatives but also as essential operational capabilities in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Digital skills will continue to play a central role, particularly in relation to booking system automation. Automated systems are seen as a key efficiency tool, as they reduce the administrative workload of employees and free up time for guest-facing activities. In addition, digital tools enable communication with guests prior to arrival, helping them feel prepared and informed before reaching the campsite.

Looking ahead, the organisation identifies the further integration of artificial intelligence (AI) as a necessary development. AI is expected to support employees by simplifying routine tasks and improving operational efficiency. However, the organisation also acknowledges the challenges associated with AI adoption. As free time becomes increasingly scarce, guests demand higher quality experiences, personal recognition, and meaningful interactions. In this context, authenticity is expected to remain a core value that cannot be replaced by technology.

#### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.amsterdam.nl/vliegenbos/>

## 4.2 BEST PRACTICE: SUMMIO PARCS

The company wants to position itself as a human-centered employer, this human touch to the employees makes them representative for the accommodation sector. Instead of focusing on digital or sustainable approaches which are also present, the company values this human approach as a driving force in the organisation.

### 4.2.1 Background information

The brand Summio emerged following the acquisition of several holiday parks that Roompot was required to divest due to concerns related to market dominance. These parks were subsequently taken over by Dormio; however, a distinct brand identity was developed for a portion of the portfolio, resulting in the creation of Summio Parcs. The brand is positioned as the epitome of high-quality three-star accommodation, targeting guests seeking comfort, accessibility, and a human-centered holiday experience rather than luxury.

Within this strategic framework, Summio Parcs places strong emphasis on socio-cultural competencies. The organisation actively promotes social interaction within accommodations and prioritises humane, respectful treatment of both employees and guests. To embed these values consistently across operations, the company collaborates with external training partners, using targeted training programmes to strengthen social skills, interpersonal communication, and inclusive service practices.

### 4.2.2 Analysis and overview

#### *Key principles*

The organisation's human-centered approach is closely embedded in its organisational structure and operational philosophy. Direct, personal communication is deliberately prioritised over fully automated or impersonal systems. While digital tools are used to support efficiency, the organisation

maintains the principle that guests and employees should be able to interact with people rather than relying solely on robots, QR codes, or automated processes.

This approach places clear responsibility on leadership at multiple levels. Senior management, office staff, and park managers are expected to actively facilitate and support employees, ensuring they have the necessary conditions, resources, and guidance to perform their roles effectively. By structuring the organisation around accessibility, human interaction, and supportive leadership, the company reinforces a work environment in which both employees and guests feel acknowledged and valued. This human-centered design is a defining element of the organisation's best practice and contributes directly to service quality and employee well-being.

Social and interpersonal skills are expected to become increasingly important as a key differentiator in service quality. The organisation recognises that while technological tools continue to expand, it is human interaction that enables meaningful guest experiences. Strong social skills allow employees to respond empathetically, communicate effectively, and add personal value beyond what automated systems can provide.

At the same time, the organisation observes a generational shift in communication habits. Younger employees tend to be less confident in direct interpersonal communication, particularly in situations such as telephone contact. This development reinforces the need to consciously develop social competencies within the workforce. As a result, socio-cultural skills are not viewed as supplementary, but as essential future capabilities that will distinguish high-quality, human-centered hospitality from more impersonal, technology-driven service models.

### *Examples and Case studies*

To support continuous skills development, the organisation makes use of a range of digital learning tools. Online training platforms are integrated into employee development processes, enabling flexible and accessible learning opportunities. In addition, the organisation collaborates with external partners such as Mobietrain, which provides targeted, mobile-based training solutions.

These tools support the consistent development of both technical and soft skills, allowing employees to learn at their own pace while ensuring alignment with organisational standards. The combination of digital training platforms and external expertise strengthens the organisation's capacity to respond to evolving skill requirements in an efficient and scalable manner.

### *Potential Pitfalls and Challenges*

Technology is expected to play an increasingly important role in the organisation's future development. In response, the organisation recognises the need not only to adapt its operations but also to attract employees with strong technological affinity and digital curiosity. This includes recruiting individuals with specialised technical interests who can contribute to innovation and digital optimisation, particularly within emerging units such as the so-called "Bits and Bites" department. The ability to integrate technological competence into hospitality operations is therefore seen as a key element of future readiness.

Sustainability represents another central pillar of the organisation's best practice approach. The company acknowledges its responsibility to transition towards environmentally friendly energy sources as part of broader energy transition goals. By investing in renewable energy solutions, such as on-site solar energy generation, the organisation aims to reduce dependence on public energy networks while improving long-term operational resilience. This strategy aligns environmental responsibility with economic efficiency.

Spatial development is identified as a significant structural constraint. In regions such as the province of Zeeland, energy capacity limitations restrict further park development or expansion. The organisation is already operating at the maximum permitted energy capacity, which limits opportunities for physical growth. As a result, strategic focus shifts toward optimising existing assets and improving sustainability and efficiency within current spatial boundaries rather than pursuing expansion.

From a socio-cultural perspective, employee well-being is addressed through practical and targeted measures. The organisation supports physical health by offering discounted fitness subscriptions and organises dedicated vitality weeks

focused on both physical and mental well-being. Attention is also given to maintaining a healthy work–life balance, particularly for employees working early mornings or late hours. Management actively monitors employee well-being through direct communication, reinforcing a culture of care, openness, and human-centered leadership.

### *Benefits and Outcomes*

One of the key outcomes of the best practice is the development of an accessible and transparent organisational culture. The company benefits from a flat governance structure in which ownership and management are closely connected to daily operations. Unlike larger organisations dominated by distant shareholders or private equity ownership, the presence of a small number of shareholders who are actively involved and physically present within the organisation fosters direct communication and approachability.

This accessibility has a positive impact on both employees and organisational performance. Employees experience a stronger sense of trust, inclusion, and psychological safety, as decision-makers are visible and readily available for dialogue when needed. As a result, internal communication is more efficient, employee engagement is strengthened, and the organisational culture is perceived as open and human-centered. These factors contribute to higher satisfaction levels and support the long-term sustainability of the organisation's people-oriented best practice approach.

### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.summio.nl/>

## 4.3 BEST PRACTICE: Visit Zuid-Limburg

Visit Zuid-Limburg presents a best practice example of how a destination organisation can combine innovation, human-centered leadership, and continuous learning to remain future-proof in a rapidly changing tourism and labour market context. By integrating digital innovation, employee development, and multi-generational workforce management into its organisational strategy, the organisation demonstrates a holistic approach to good employership and sectoral leadership.

### 4.3.1 Background information

Visit Zuid-Limburg operates as a destination management organisation (DMO) responsible for the promotion, development, and management of tourism and recreation in the South Limburg region, excluding Maastricht. The organisation employs approximately 32 staff members and works closely with freelancers, guides, and a small group of volunteers. Its activities range from destination marketing and route management to experience locations and knowledge-sharing with municipalities and tourism entrepreneurs.

The organisation is partially publicly funded, receiving approximately 40% of its budget through municipal subsidies, while the remaining 60% is generated through its own commercial activities. This funding model requires Visit Zuid-Limburg to operate entrepreneurially, maintain close alignment with market developments, and continuously demonstrate its added value to both public and private stakeholders.

In recent years, the organisation has been transitioning from a traditional destination marketing organisation towards a broader destination experience organisation (DXO), placing increased emphasis on storytelling, experience design, innovation, and collaboration across the regional tourism ecosystem.

### 4.3.2 Analysis and overview

#### *Key principles*

A central principle underlying the organisation's approach is the belief that strong destinations are built by empowered people. Good employership is viewed as a dynamic process that requires continuous attention to employee development, well-being, and engagement. Human capital is considered the primary driver of organisational success.

Another key principle is shared ownership of innovation. Rather than centralising innovation in a single department, Visit Zuid-Limburg actively involves employees across disciplines in experimentation and learning. Innovation is not narrowly defined as technological advancement but is understood as any meaningful improvement within one's own work context.

Finally, the organisation operates from the conviction that future skills development must balance hard skills, such as digital innovation and data literacy, with soft skills, including communication, listening, adaptability, and collaboration. These competencies are embedded within the HR cycle and aligned with both organisational goals and individual employee development needs.

#### *Examples and case studies*

A prominent example of this approach is the use of "proeftuinen" (innovation labs), most notably in the area of artificial intelligence. Following the development of internal AI policy, a multidisciplinary core team was formed, consisting of employees already engaged in digital innovation, supported by an external specialist. Employees were given access to AI tools, participated in hands-on workshops, and were encouraged to experiment within their own work contexts. Knowledge-sharing was facilitated through internal communication channels, enabling peer learning and rapid dissemination of insights.

In addition, Visit Zuid-Limburg actively promotes internal mobility and cross-functional learning. Employees are encouraged to undertake short internal internships across departments, allowing them to gain insight into other roles,

strengthen collaboration, and build informal networks. This practice not only enhances operational understanding but also strengthens social cohesion within the organisation.

Employee vitality and well-being are addressed through a structured vitality programme, including flexible working arrangements, hybrid working options, sports subscriptions, bicycle leasing schemes, and access to well-being-related courses such as mindfulness or yoga. These initiatives are embedded in formal policy and communicated transparently as part of the organisation's employer value proposition.

#### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

Despite its strengths, the organisation acknowledges several ongoing challenges. Managing a multi-generational workforce requires continuous balancing, as different generations bring divergent values, expectations, and working preferences. Uniform solutions are neither feasible nor desirable, requiring adaptive leadership and ongoing dialogue.

Another challenge lies in keeping pace with rapid technological developments. While AI and digital innovation offer significant opportunities, they also demand continuous awareness-building, skill development, and cultural acceptance. Resistance or uncertainty among employees must be addressed through inclusion, clear communication, and hands-on involvement rather than top-down implementation.

Finally, as a partially subsidised organisation, Visit Zuid-Limburg must constantly balance public accountability with entrepreneurial agility, ensuring financial sustainability without compromising its public mission.

#### *Benefits and outcomes*

The organisation's approach has resulted in a resilient, learning-oriented organisational culture characterised by high employee engagement and strong internal collaboration. By granting employees ownership over innovation and

development processes, Visit Zuid-Limburg has created internal ambassadors who actively support change and motivate others.

The structured integration of skill development, vitality, and innovation into the HR cycle contributes to employee satisfaction, retention, and long-term employability. At the same time, the organisation strengthens its role as a knowledge partner for the regional tourism sector, enabling entrepreneurs and stakeholders to benefit from shared expertise and collective innovation.

Overall, Visit Zuid-Limburg demonstrates how good employership, continuous learning, and inclusive innovation can reinforce both organisational performance and destination-level impact, making it a strong example of best practice within the hospitality and tourism sector.

#### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.visitzuidlimburg.com/>

## 4.4 BEST PRACTICE: Kennemerduinen

### Campings

Kennemerduinen Campings demonstrates how a seasonal leisure organisation can build long-term employership, workforce stability, and strong organisational culture by placing human connection, learning, and inclusivity at the centre of its operations. Rather than compensating for seasonality through short-term staffing solutions, the organisation invests structurally in people, skills, and relationships, both internally and within the surrounding community.

#### 4.4.1 Background information

Kennemerduinen Campings operates three nature-based campings in the coastal dune area of North Holland: Camping Bakkum, De Lakens (Bloemendaal), and Leversduin (Beverwijk/Castricum). Each camping has its own hospitality outlets and operational teams. While the campings themselves are seasonal—closing during the winter months—the organisation maintains a substantial year-round workforce.

Approximately 100 employees are employed on a permanent basis, with staffing levels increasing to around 300 during peak season, including students, trainees, and seasonal workers. The organisation operates on land owned by PWN, the provincial water authority, which also acts as the parent organisation. Profits are fully reinvested into employee development, facilities, and the surrounding natural environment, rather than distributed to shareholders.

Human Resources is deliberately positioned as “Human Being Management”, reflecting a core belief that employees are not resources but people. The HR team supports all campings centrally and works closely with operational managers to embed people-centred practices across the organisation.

## 4.4.2 Analysis and overview

### *Key principles*

At the heart of Kennemerduinen's approach is the conviction that good work cultures are built through relationships, not systems. Human connection, mutual responsibility, and psychological safety are prioritised over rigid hierarchies or purely efficiency-driven processes.

Another key principle is internal growth before external recruitment. Vacancies are always published internally first, reinforcing trust, visibility of opportunities, and employee ownership over career development. Learning is not treated as an isolated HR activity but as an ongoing organisational process integrated into daily work.

The organisation also strongly believes in polyvalence: employees are encouraged and trained to be broadly deployable across functions. This principle supports continuity in a seasonal business model while increasing employee resilience, collaboration, and understanding of the wider organisation.

Kennemerduinen embraces inclusive employership, actively creating opportunities for people with a distance to the labour market, including asylum seekers and individuals requiring additional support to enter employment.

### *Examples and case studies*

A central pillar of the organisation's learning culture is the internally developed "Excellence at Work" methodology. This programme combines external leadership training with in-house implementation sessions focused on shared values, communication styles, feedback, and accountability. Employees learn to discuss successes and mistakes openly, reflect monthly with their supervisors, and translate these reflections into annual development conversations and growth trajectories.

This approach has led to extensive internal mobility. Many current supervisors, managers, and department heads started as interns or entry-level employees. Career paths are actively shaped through tailored growth agreements, with clear

expectations and support structures. Advancement is normalised, but not guaranteed, employees are encouraged to try, reflect, and, if necessary, recalibrate.

In daily operations, the organisation consciously reverses the effects of digitalisation. While online check-in and automation are available, staff proactively seek guest interaction by visiting guests on-site with tablets, identifying issues early, and strengthening personal contact. This reinforces the role of employees as hosts rather than system operators.

Another notable practice is the emphasis on micro-recognition. Handwritten cards are regularly sent to employees for personal milestones, challenges, or achievements. These small gestures are embedded in leadership routines and reinforce a culture of attention and care.

#### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

The organisation recognises that its approach is time-intensive and requires sustained leadership commitment. Practices such as personal attention, training repetition, and inclusive employment do not scale automatically and depend heavily on engaged managers.

Polyvalent working also presents challenges. Not all employees are immediately comfortable stepping outside their primary role, and additional training and guidance are required to ensure quality and safety across functions.

Furthermore, employing individuals with uncertain residency status involves legal and organisational risks, including sudden relocations imposed by external authorities. Kennemerduinen consciously accepts these risks but acknowledges the complexity this introduces into workforce planning.

The onboarding, particularly in hospitality roles, remains an area for improvement, with the organisation recognising the need for more structured buddy systems and consistency during busy periods.

### *Benefits and outcomes*

The outcomes of this approach are reflected in exceptionally low staff turnover and a consistently high health percentage, a reframing of absenteeism into a positive measure of organisational well-being. Employee engagement is high, and the organisation experiences few difficulties in filling vacancies, even in a tight labour market.

The strong internal culture enhances loyalty, flexibility, and shared responsibility, enabling the organisation to navigate seasonality without losing knowledge. Employees feel seen, trusted, and supported, which translates directly into the guest experience and organisational reputation.

Beyond operational benefits, Kennemerduinen Campings positions itself as a socially responsible employer within the region, demonstrating that leisure and hospitality work can be meaningful, developmental, and sustainable. By combining human connection with professional structure, the organisation offers an example of future-oriented employership in the leisure sector.

### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.kennemerduincampings.com/>

<https://www.np-zuidkennemerland.nl/english/>

## 4.5 BEST PRACTICE: Hotel Texel

Hotel Texel and the Texel Academy illustrate how a regional hospitality business can respond proactively to labour market shortages by combining entrepreneurship, education, and social responsibility. Rather than relying on short-term fixes, this case shows how long-term thinking, personal attention, and skill development can strengthen both organisational resilience and the wider local community.

### 4.5.1 Background information

Hotel Texel is a family-rooted hospitality business located on the island of Texel, employing approximately 50 permanent staff members. The organisation operates as a full-service hotel with restaurant, wellness facilities, and leisure offerings. Due to its island location, Hotel Texel faces structural challenges related to labour market scarcity, ageing demographics, and limited housing availability.

In response to these challenges, the owner co-founded the Texel Academy ten years ago. This academy offers an accelerated MBO-level (vocational level) hospitality education, allowing students to complete a two-year programme within one year. Students live, learn, and work on Texel, combining formal education with guaranteed work placements at local hospitality businesses. The initiative is collectively supported and financed by island entrepreneurs, positioning it as a sector-wide, non-commercial response to labour shortages rather than a competitive recruitment tool.

The academy and the hotel reinforce one another: Hotel Texel benefits from a steady inflow of trained talent, while the academy remains closely connected to real-world hospitality practice.

## 4.5.2 Analysis and overview

### *Key principles*

A central principle in this case is the belief that hospitality is a profession, not a fallback option. Working in hospitality requires craftsmanship, passion, and continuous learning, regardless of whether the role is in housekeeping, service, the kitchen, or management. This conviction underpins both recruitment and training decisions.

Another key principle is the emphasis on communication and social skills as core competencies. While technical knowledge can be taught, the ability to connect with guests and colleagues, read social situations, and communicate confidently is considered increasingly scarce and therefore increasingly valuable in a digitalised society.

The organisation also strongly values personal fit over formal credentials. Recruitment and retention decisions are based not only on skills but on motivation, attitude, and interpersonal compatibility within teams. There is an explicit recognition that not every role suits every person, and that mismatches should be addressed early and transparently.

The approach is grounded in shared responsibility. Employers, employees, educational institutions, and the local community all play a role in creating sustainable employment and meaningful career paths.

### *Examples and case studies*

The Texel Academy itself serves as the most prominent example. Students undergo an intake process in which their personality, preferences, and development potential are matched with suitable hospitality businesses on the island. If a placement proves unsuccessful, students are actively supported in finding a better fit elsewhere, ensuring continuity and psychological safety.

Within Hotel Texel, digital tools such as QR-code ordering and online check-in are selectively deployed. Rather than replacing staff, these technologies are used to create space for meaningful interaction. Personal contact is concentrated in

moments where it adds the most value, such as in the lounge bar or restaurant and allowing staff to focus on storytelling, guest experience, and relationship-building.

Employee development is approached flexibly and individually. Staff members who express interest in additional training (whether job-related or more broadly developmental) are often supported financially and logistically, even when it does not guarantee long-term retention. In return, clear expectations are discussed regarding commitment and mutual intent.

#### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

This human-centred approach requires significant time, and emotional investment from leadership. Personalised matching, coaching, and flexibility can lead to ambiguity if boundaries are not clearly communicated.

Career progression within a small organisation is inherently limited. While employees can grow into supervisory or managerial roles, vertical advancement eventually reaches a ceiling, leading some high-potential employees to leave after several years. The organisation consciously accepts this as a healthy and inevitable outcome.

Additionally, balancing flexibility with fairness can be challenging. Individual arrangements regarding schedules, leave, or development opportunities must be managed carefully to avoid perceptions of inequality within teams.

Digitalisation poses an ongoing tension: while efficiency tools are necessary, over-reliance risks the neglect of human interaction that defines hospitality.

#### *Benefits and outcomes*

The combined approach of Hotel Texel and the Texel Academy has significantly improved talent attraction and retention in a structurally tight labour market. Vacancies are filled more consistently, and employees demonstrate higher engagement, loyalty, and professional pride.

The organisation benefits from strong internal cohesion, low turnover relative to the sector, and a workforce that understands hospitality as a craft rather than temporary employment. Employees feel seen as individuals, not interchangeable labour, which strengthens commitment and service quality.

Beyond organisational outcomes, the initiative contributes to the social and economic sustainability of the island. By attracting young people, investing in education, and encouraging social responsibility, Hotel Texel and the Texel Academy position hospitality work as meaningful, future-oriented, and socially embedded.

This case demonstrates that human-centred employership when combined with education, community collaboration, and long-term vision can serve as a powerful response to both labour market challenges and broader societal change.

#### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.hoteltexel.com/>

<https://www.waddenacademy.com/de-eilanden/texel-academy>

## 4.6 BEST PRACTICE: Sawadee Reizen

Sawadee Reizen demonstrates how a medium-sized travel organisation can maintain strong employee engagement, low turnover, and organisational resilience by placing people, dialogue, and shared responsibility at the core of its operations. Rather than relying on formalised policies or rigid frameworks, the organisation builds its people strategy around trust, accessibility, and continuous conversation.

### 4.6.1 Background information

Sawadee Reizen employs approximately 70 office-based staff members and works with a large network of travel guides worldwide. The organisation is part of a larger international travel group but operates with a high degree of autonomy and a distinctly human-oriented culture. The Head of People plays a broad role, covering traditional HR responsibilities, learning and development, crisis support, and leadership of the travel guide department.

The workforce is relatively young, with an average age of around 30, alongside a smaller group of long-tenured employees who have been with the company for decades. Sawadee Reizen deliberately remains compact in size, as leadership believes that personal connection, familiarity, and accessibility are easier to preserve within a limited organisational scale.

### 4.6.2 Analysis and overview

#### *Key principles*

A central principle within Sawadee Reizen is that employees are not viewed as resources or numbers, but as individuals whose voices matter. Decision-making is strongly informed by dialogue rather than hierarchy. Management is highly accessible, and the organisational structure is deliberately flat, enabling direct communication across roles and seniority levels.

Another key principle is flexibility grounded in responsibility. Employees are given considerable freedom in how they organise their work, such as hybrid working, reduced hours during high-pressure periods, or unpaid leave, provided that responsibilities are fulfilled and work quality remains high. This balance is actively discussed rather than enforced through strict rules.

The organisation also places strong emphasis on cultural fit. Recruitment focuses not only on competencies, but on whether someone aligns with the values, communication style, and collaborative nature of the organisation. This approach aims to prevent mismatches that could negatively affect both performance and wellbeing.

#### *Examples and case studies*

One concrete example of Sawadee's approach is its open and participatory way of shaping policies. Brainstorm sessions initiated by the director allow employees from different departments and age groups to openly share ideas, concerns, and wishes, ranging from work schedules to social activities. Input from younger employees, such as preferences for shorter workweeks, is taken seriously and weighed against organisational realities.

Learning and development is handled pragmatically. While vertical promotion opportunities are limited due to the organisation's size, employees are encouraged to develop skills horizontally. This includes funding external courses (e.g. Excel training), coaching trajectories, and exposure to different functions. Additionally, almost all employees are given the opportunity to join study trips, tailored to their department, ensuring close connection with the product and the customer.

A notable sector-wide initiative is the "Reisgenoten" network, co-founded by Sawadee's director. This inter-organisational programme connects young professionals from multiple travel companies, enabling them to build industry-wide networks and broaden their perspective beyond their own employer. The initiative reflects a collaborative rather than competitive mindset within the sector.

### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

While the people-centred approach yields many benefits, it also presents challenges. The absence of formalised frameworks for areas such as AI usage or structured career paths can create ambiguity. Development opportunities depend heavily on individual initiative and managerial attentiveness, which may lead to inconsistencies. Low turnover, while generally positive, can limit the attraction of fresh perspectives and external experience. Leadership recognises that occasional outflow can also be healthy, enabling renewal and learning from outside practices.

Balancing diverse generational expectations remains an ongoing challenge. Younger employees often prioritise work-life balance and flexibility, while more experienced staff may hold different views on responsibility and availability. Addressing these differences requires continuous dialogue and mutual adjustment.

### *Benefits and outcomes*

The most visible outcome of Sawadee Reizen's approach is its exceptionally low staff turnover and high levels of employee loyalty. Many employees remain with the organisation for years, even in a competitive labour market.

Employees report appreciation for the informal atmosphere, accessible leadership, and the organisation's willingness to accommodate personal circumstances. This contributes to psychological safety, early signalling of work pressure, and prevention of long-term absenteeism.

At organisational level, the close connection between employees, customers, and the product strengthens service quality and authenticity. Sawadee Reizen shows that maintaining a manageable organisational size, combined with genuine attention to people, can be a viable long-term strategy in a rapidly changing travel industry.

### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.sawadee.nl/>

## 4.7 BEST PRACTICE: Da Peppino

Pizzeria Da Peppino highlights how a small hospitality business can successfully attract, retain, and develop young employees by combining visible leadership, social connection, and realistic flexibility. Rather than relying on formal HR systems, the organisation builds commitment through presence on the work floor, continuous dialogue, and clear opportunities for growth within the sector.

### 4.7.1 Background information

The organisation is a hospitality business (Italian restaurant) employing approximately 26 staff members, largely consisting of young people and students. Many employees join at a very young age, often between 15 and 17 years old and remain with the organisation for several years, which is uncommon in the hospitality sector where turnover is typically high.

Ownership is hands-on: the owner and co-owner work on the floor multiple days per week and are consistently visible during busy periods. The business operates with a strong focus on internal development, training employees from entry-level positions (such as dishwashing) towards more complex roles in the kitchen, service, and even management.

### 4.7.2 Analysis and overview

#### *Key principles*

A core principle is leading by example. Management does not position itself above daily operations, but actively participates in both front- and back-of-house work. This visibility reinforces credibility, trust, and a shared sense of responsibility.

Another key principle is mutual give-and-take. Young employees are offered flexibility in scheduling, room for social needs, and tolerance for modern habits (such as brief phone use), while clear expectations regarding performance and responsibility remain in place. The organisation consciously avoids rigid rule enforcement in favour of dialogue and situational judgment.

Da Peppino also strongly believes in development over replacement. Employees are not seen as fixed in one role, but as individuals with potential who can grow at their own pace. Internal training, feedback, and encouragement form the basis of this philosophy.

### *Examples and case studies*

Retention figures illustrate the effectiveness of this approach. Several employees have worked at the organisation for five to eight years, starting as teenagers and growing alongside the business. Many who temporarily leave—for study, relocation, or full-time employment elsewhere, eventually return because they value the work atmosphere and sense of belonging.

Development pathways are concrete and visible. Employees frequently progress from dishwashing to food preparation, kitchen assistance, pizza baking, or front-of-house service. Some have discovered a passion for hospitality through this trajectory and subsequently enrolled in hotel or culinary education, despite initially studying unrelated disciplines.

Training is embedded in daily practice. Short, informal feedback conversations are complemented by occasional structured self-assessment exercises, where employees compare their own evaluation with that of management. Additional training sessions, such as wine tastings led by external suppliers, strengthen product knowledge and support the transition from “service staff” to true hosts and hostesses.

Digitalisation is limited where it could undermine social interaction. While back-end systems are modern and efficient, tablets at tables are avoided to preserve eye contact, conversation, and personal attention as core elements of the guest experience.

### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

This approach requires constant attentiveness from leadership. Balancing friendliness with authority is challenging, particularly when managing employees

of similar age. Clear boundaries must be maintained to ensure that informality does not erode standards.

Flexibility in scheduling also depends on having a sufficiently large team. Without adequate staffing levels, accommodating individual preferences would become unsustainable. Additionally, reliance on informal processes rather than formal HR structures may limit scalability as the business grows.

Generational differences present another ongoing challenge. Younger employees often experience high perceived pressure from school, social life, and work, requiring managers to continually adapt expectations and communication styles.

#### *Benefits and outcomes*

The most significant outcome is exceptionally high employee retention for the sector. Staff loyalty, willingness to cover shifts, and readiness to “go the extra mile” are direct results of the trust-based relationship between management and employees.

The organisation has also become a talent incubator for the hospitality sector, guiding young people towards long-term careers rather than short-term side jobs. This contributes not only to business continuity but also to strengthening the broader industry.

Finally, the strong social culture, characterised by teamwork, shared responsibility, and genuine connection, translates directly into guest experience. Employees act as hosts rather than task-oriented staff, creating the warm atmosphere that encourages repeat visits and long-term success.

#### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.pizzeriadapeppino.nl/>

## 4.8 BEST PRACTICE: The Doubletree by Hilton

This best practice illustrates how a large, internationally operating hospitality organisation can successfully combine corporate frameworks with locally tailored, human-centred practices. The DoubleTree by Hilton Amsterdam Centraal Station demonstrates that scale and standardisation do not have to come at the expense of personal attention, employee wellbeing, and meaningful work. By strategically integrating technology, sustainability, and social responsibility, the hotel positions itself as a future-oriented and attractive employer in a highly competitive labour market.

### 4.8.1 Background information

The DoubleTree by Hilton Amsterdam Centraal Station is a managed Hilton hotel employing approximately 350 staff members and operating 557 rooms, multiple food and beverage outlets, meeting facilities, and one of Amsterdam's most popular rooftop bars. As part of Hilton's managed portfolio, the hotel operates under Hilton Corporate policies while retaining a degree of autonomy in local implementation.

The hotel is owned by AXA Investment Managers and forms part of a network of seven managed Hilton hotels in the Netherlands, enabling close collaboration and knowledge sharing. In addition to his role as General Manager, leadership is actively engaged in broader sustainability initiatives, including the founding of *Hotels for Trees* and participation in the Green Hotel Club, reinforcing a strong sustainability-driven vision.

### 4.8.2 Analysis and overview

#### *Key principles*

A core principle underpinning this best practice is the belief that employees are the organisation's most critical asset. Leadership is grounded in accessibility, openness, and a deliberately flat organisational structure.

Hierarchy is minimised in daily interactions, fostering a culture where all employees, regardless of role, feel seen, heard, and valued.

Another key principle is data-informed people management. Staff satisfaction and engagement are continuously monitored through three central indicators: vacancy levels, absenteeism, and staff turnover. These metrics are reviewed monthly at departmental level and are used as early-warning signals rather than control mechanisms. Conversations around absenteeism are framed supportively, focusing on wellbeing and job fit rather than enforcement.

The organisation also embraces adaptive employability. While technical knowledge remains relevant, the emphasis is increasingly placed on emotional intelligence (EQ), adaptability (AQ), and communication skills. Digitalisation and AI are viewed as enablers that free up employee time for meaningful guest interaction rather than replacements for human contact.

### *Examples and case studies*

One concrete example is the hotel's approach to recruitment and employer branding. Traditional vacancy texts have been replaced by short, video-based, experience-driven job profiles developed with an external partner. These profiles highlight daily activities, team dynamics, and real employee testimonials, offering candidates a realistic and appealing picture of working life within the hotel.

Employee feedback is systematically collected through Hilton-wide engagement surveys, internal communication platforms, polls, and so-called "experience interviews" conducted when employees leave. These interviews focus on understanding lived experiences rather than formal exit procedures, allowing the organisation to identify structural issues such as scheduling fairness or workload distribution.

A standout initiative is the hotel's comprehensive wellbeing programme, developed in partnership with the Empower platform. This programme is structured around five pillars: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, financial wellbeing, learning and development, and purpose. Activities range from yoga sessions, mindfulness training, and financial planning workshops to barista

courses, creative learning sessions, and volunteering opportunities within the local community. Additional personalised support, such as coaching or grief counselling, is made available when employees face personal challenges.

### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

Implementing such an extensive people-centred approach requires sustained leadership commitment, financial investment, and organisational maturity. Without strong managerial capabilities, there is a risk that flexibility and informality could lead to inconsistency or perceived inequality.

Operating within a large corporate framework also introduces constraints. The adoption of advanced AI solutions must align with Hilton's global IT and data governance policies, limiting local experimentation speed. Moreover, as employees become highly employable through training and development, some degree of talent outflow is inevitable, although this is largely absorbed within the wider Hilton network.

Balancing digital efficiency with authentic hospitality remains an ongoing challenge, particularly as guest expectations and technological adoption continue to evolve.

### *Benefits and outcomes*

The outcomes of this approach are measurable and significant. The hotel reports exceptionally low reliance on agency staff, minimal vacancy levels, and sustained periods of absenteeism as low as 3–3.5%, well below industry averages for large urban hotels. Staff turnover remains healthy and explainable, rather than problematic.

Employees value the open culture, strong wellbeing support, and opportunities for growth, both within the hotel and internationally through Hilton's talent mobility programmes. This has strengthened loyalty, engagement, and internal referrals, further enhancing the hotel's employer reputation.

At organisational level, these practices translate into higher service quality, stronger guest satisfaction, and improved competitive positioning within the Amsterdam hospitality market. The case demonstrates that even within a global corporate structure, locally embedded, human-centred employership can deliver sustainable value for employees, guests, and the business alike.

#### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.hilton.com/en/brands/doubletree-by-hilton/>

## 4.9 BEST PRACTICE: Center Parcs BeNeLux

Center Parcs Europe demonstrates how a large, geographically dispersed hospitality organisation can address structural labour market challenges through a coherent, long-term people strategy. By combining learning and development, employee engagement, inclusive leadership, and smart use of digital tools, the organisation positions employees as the central driver of guest experience, operational continuity, and future resilience.

### 4.9.1 Background information

At the core of this best practice is the conviction that employees are the primary drivers of guest experience. While technology and data are increasingly important, Center Parcs believes that service culture, personal attention, and human interaction will remain the key differentiators in hospitality.

A second guiding principle is engagement over satisfaction. The organisation deliberately focuses on employee involvement, commitment, and connection rather than short-term satisfaction metrics. This perspective is embedded in the belief that engaged employees are more resilient, loyal, and capable of delivering consistent quality.

The organisation also embraces inclusive leadership as a strategic necessity. Diversity in age, culture, gender, background, and employment status is recognised as a structural reality within the workforce. Rather than managing this diversity through rigid categorisation, Center Parcs promotes awareness, dialogue, and adaptability among leaders at all levels.

Continuous development and adaptability are central principles. Employees and leaders are expected to remain agile in response to technological, social, and organisational change, supported by accessible learning opportunities and a strong feedback culture.

## 4.9.2 Analysis and overview

### *Key principles*

A core principle underpinning Center Parcs' approach is the conviction that employees make the difference in hospitality, especially in an era of increasing digitalisation. While technology is used to optimise processes, service culture, human interaction, and employee engagement are seen as the decisive competitive factors.

Another key principle is engagement over satisfaction. Rather than focusing solely on employee happiness, the organisation prioritises commitment, connection, and long-term involvement. This belief is embedded in the philosophy that engaged employees are more likely to stay, perform well, and contribute positively to guest experience.

The organisation also embraces inclusive and adaptive leadership. Diversity is approached broadly, encompassing generational differences, cultural backgrounds, gender balance, and distance to the labour market. Leadership is expected to adapt to different employee needs while maintaining clear direction and shared values.

Center Parcs applies a holistic view of employability, recognising that work performance is closely connected to physical health, mental wellbeing, financial stability, and personal circumstances.

### *Examples and case studies*

A flagship example is the annual Happy at Center Parcs engagement survey, conducted via an anonymous digital platform. Employees are invited to share experiences, concerns, and suggestions in a psychologically safe environment. The platform allows for dialogue without forcing disclosure of identity, enabling trust-based feedback. Survey outcomes are translated into concrete action plans at park, country, and European level, with progress transparently communicated back to employees.

Employee wellbeing is addressed through a comprehensive support framework that includes physical, mental, financial, and social dimensions. Initiatives range from budget coaching and healthy food options to psychological support, yoga sessions, and online wellbeing training. These resources are also accessible to employees' family members, reinforcing a holistic view of employability.

Leadership development is structured around nine core leadership principles and tailored to different organisational levels. Floor managers focus on practical people management skills such as conflict handling, feedback, and resilience, while senior leaders engage in strategic leadership, trust-building, and advanced feedback mechanisms (e.g. 360-degree feedback and behavioural profiling tools). Leadership training is explicitly linked to the desired guest experience.

Talent development is organised through a European-wide high-potential programme involving approximately 25 participants annually. This year-long programme combines leadership development, strategic projects, international networking, and exposure to senior management. Participants are selected through structured performance and potential assessments and represent diverse disciplines and countries.

Inclusion initiatives include a structured Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging (D&I) framework built around four pillars: generational diversity, cultural diversity, labour market accessibility, and gender balance. Dedicated D&I ambassadors and country-level committees facilitate workshops, dialogue sessions, and awareness training, with inclusive leadership embedded as a core competence.

### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

The scale and complexity of this integrated approach require sustained investment, coordination, and leadership commitment. Without strong alignment between corporate frameworks and local park implementation, initiatives risk becoming fragmented or perceived as top-down.

Digital tools play a central role in engagement and learning, but they require ongoing support to remain accessible to all employee groups, particularly those with limited digital skills or home access to technology.

Another challenge lies in balancing data-driven processes with situational flexibility. While structure and consistency are necessary, hospitality environments demand real-time judgement and human responsiveness that cannot be fully standardised.

Finally, developing highly employable staff inevitably leads to some talent outflow. The organisation consciously accepts this as part of a healthy labour ecosystem, provided that internal retention remains strong and career pathways are visible.

### *Benefits and outcomes*

The outcomes of this best practice are both measurable and cultural. Center Parcs has achieved significant improvements in employee engagement scores over consecutive years, with sustained increases in promoter and satisfaction metrics. Several parks that previously faced high vacancy levels now operate with minimal staffing shortages.

Retention has improved through stronger onboarding, faster recruitment processes, and a more personal candidate experience, including rapid follow-up and direct contact with hiring managers. Time-to-hire has been reduced to under two weeks in many cases.

Employees report greater trust, psychological safety, and clarity regarding development opportunities. Leadership capability has strengthened across levels, contributing to more consistent service delivery and improved guest experiences.

At a broader level, Center Parcs positions hospitality as a respected profession rather than temporary work, reinforcing pride in craftsmanship and long-term employability. The case demonstrates that sustainable workforce strategies are not driven by single interventions, but by coherent systems built on dialogue, inclusion, and continuous learning.

### *References and External Resources*

<https://www.centerparcs.nl/>

## 4.10 BEST PRACTICE: Avila Reizen

The case of Avila Reizen illustrates how a medium-sized travel organisation translates good employership into concrete practices that strengthen skills development, employee engagement, and long-term resilience. The organisation positions people, purpose, and adaptability at the core of its strategy, closely aligning with European ambitions around skills portability, sustainable growth, and human-centred work.

### 4.10.1 Background information

Operating for over fifteen years within the travel sector, the organisation has grown steadily into a Benelux-based company with international linkages. Rather than rapid scaling, its development reflects a conscious choice for sustainable growth, combining commercial ambition with strong attention to employee wellbeing and social impact. The organisation functions in a tight labour market where specialised knowledge and interpersonal competences are scarce, making internal development and retention critical. This context shapes its approach to skills, learning, and workforce organisation.

### 4.10.2 Analysis and overview

#### *Key principles*

At the heart of the organisation's approach lies a clearly articulated mission that balances four pillars: customer satisfaction, employee wellbeing, financial health, and positive societal impact. This mission is not symbolic but operationalised through daily practices and shared governance.

Key principles strongly resonate with EU skills frameworks:

- People-centred work design, emphasising flexibility, trust, and dialogue.

- Transversal and soft skills such as empathy, communication, creativity, and cultural awareness as core professional competences.
- Lifelong learning, supported through workshops, internal mobility, and experiential learning.
- Digital adaptability, where tools such as AI are positioned as supportive instruments rather than replacements for human expertise.
- Sustainability and citizenship skills, embedded through active engagement with social and environmental initiatives.

### *Examples and case studies*

The organisation provides employees across functions: sales, back office, and management, all opportunities to gain experiential knowledge through travel, workshops, and cross-functional exposure. Career paths are deliberately structured yet flexible, allowing employees to progress from entry-level or internship roles to senior and leadership positions.

A buddy system supports onboarding, while continuous dialogue through evaluations and team meetings ensures skills development remains aligned with both individual aspirations and organisational needs. Sustainability initiatives, such as partnerships with local communities, conservation projects, and social foundations, are integrated into daily work and internal communication, reinforcing values-based learning and employee pride.

### *Potential pitfalls and challenges*

Despite its strengths, the organisation faces structural challenges common across Europe. High reliance on soft skills and specialist knowledge makes recruitment difficult, especially in niche roles. Flexibility, while valued, requires careful governance to maintain fairness and consistency across the workforce.

Additionally, the absence of a fully formalised employer branding or skills strategy could limit scalability and external visibility.

As the organisation grows, balancing informality with more structured skills frameworks may become increasingly necessary.

#### *Benefits and outcomes*

This approach yields tangible outcomes: high retention of young talent, strong internal mobility, and a workforce equipped with transferable skills applicable across the hospitality and travel ecosystem. Employees demonstrate strong engagement, adaptability to technological change, and commitment to sustainability objectives.

By embedding skills development in meaningful work, social purpose, and human connection, the organisation positions itself as a best-practice example of how European employers can strengthen competitiveness while enhancing inclusive, future-proof careers.

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# SKILLS SYNTHESIS

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



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

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

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