



An initiative of the European Commission



The EU Pact for Skills – Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem

March 2024

The Pact for Skills initiative brings together all types and sizes of businesses, EU umbrella organisations, social partners, vocational and education training providers, and regional/municipal authorities to speak with a unified voice in supporting specific commitments to reskilling and upskilling the European tourism workforce in an effort to meet the objectives of the twin green and digital transition and bolster the resilience of the tourism ecosystem in the medium to long-term. This partnership promotes joint action through the establishment and implementation of large-scale skills partnerships at national, regional, and local levels, which shall build on existing national structures fulfilling Pact for Skills criteria, in order to meet the skills needs of the entire workforce of the European tourism ecosystem, ensuring that any new skills are embedded in the overall policy and curricula for vocational education and training.

Pact for skills: New European Skills Agenda

The European Commission launched the new European Skills Agenda in 2020, announcing 12 actions organised around four building blocks: a call to join forces in a collective action through the Pact for skills, ensuring the right skills for jobs, initiatives to support people in their lifelong learning pathways, and a framework to unlock investments in skills.

The EU Pact for Skills was launched on 10 November 2020. The Pact is the first of the flagship actions under the European Skills Agenda and is firmly anchored in the European Pillar of Social Rights. The 14 ecosystems identified by the Industrial Strategy will build a Pact for Skills for each ecosystem. Commissioners Breton and Schmit organised a high-level Roundtable for the tourism ecosystem in October 2020.

The objective of the Pact for Skills is to promote joint action to maximise the impact of investing in improving existing skills (upskilling) and training in new skills (reskilling). It calls on industry, employers, social partners, chambers of commerce, public authorities, vocational education and training providers, higher education institutions and employment agencies to work together and make a clear commitment to invest in training for all working age people across the Union in the form of a large-scale skills partnership.

The Pact for Skills is accompanied by a Charter outlining a shared vision from industry, social partners, vocational education and training (VET) providers, national, regional and local authorities as regards quality training.

This initiative aims to mobilise resources to make investments in skills and set up a shared engagement model between the various actors mentioned above, to collectively take action to upskill and reskill the workforce of different industrial sectors.

The challenge for the tourism sector

The European tourism industry was severely impacted by the COVID crisis and but has since almost reached recovery. The near collapse of global tourism during the COVID pandemic (loss of 80% in 2020) ¹affected around two-thirds of direct tourism jobs, whilst the entire tourism ecosystem struggles to attract and recruit qualified people for specific jobs. The pandemic has shown there will only be a future for tourism when more sustainable practices are incorporated in the consumption, production, and development of tourism.

The tourism workforce is generally less qualified than the EU working population, with up to 25% possessing low-level qualifications. Changing skills needs and bridging skills gaps in a highly seasonal sector, often involving short-term contracts in a fragmented industry is a major challenge for tourism businesses, education providers and public bodies. Over 90% of tourism enterprises employ less than 10 people – skills training for employees in these small enterprises, especially in ‘nano-enterprises’², must not be left behind.

To remain competitive globally, to meet their economic and social responsibilities, and to meet the challenges of the twin transition, the European tourism industry needs to invest significantly in the up/reskilling of its professional workforce, particularly in digital, green and social skills. While working on essential future skills for tourism, efforts aimed at closing skills gaps and future solutions should be grounded in a solid understanding of the European industry’s skills base today that also addresses short and mid-term needs.

The current situation

Due to redundancies during COVID-19, the tourism industry lost a large number of employees since March 2020 who could not be hired in summer 2021, resulting in a sometimes-desperate demand for staff. Available job candidates crossing over from other sectors were often not sufficiently qualified. Even re-hired staff faced disruptive changes since 2020 on topics such as sanitary measures, use of new IT / digital tools, and increased service quality demand from customers. The estimate that up to 85% of all jobs in 2030 have not yet been invented³, although probably lower in the case of tourism, still indicates the trend towards disruptive changes in the coming years.

The needs

The Pact for Skills has a strategic mid- and long-term approach. However, a quick implementation of its collaborative concept involving all stakeholders in the tourism ecosystem will also allow addressing the urgent short-term needs as outlined above.

¹ OECD global figures - Tourist arrivals in Europe were down by 70%

² Businesses run by 1-2 persons i.e. self-employed or holiday rentals

³ Realizing 2030: A Divided Vision of the Future.

<https://www.delltechnologies.com/content/dam/delltechnologies/assets/perspectives/2030/pdf/Realizing-2030-A-Divided-Vision-of-the-Future-Summary.pdf>

- **Immediate action** should focus on recovering the lost workforce, with re- and up-skilling both current and lost workforce in core new skills that are in demand as an important factor. This requires quick, non-bureaucratic and flexible public-private (PPP) cooperation between the public sector, education systems and the tourism eco-system (especially industry and trade unions) as first practical step of the Pact for skills.
- **Long-term**, the disruption in skills demand and priorities together with a foreseeable shift in the composition of the workforce presents an opportunity to reset the tourism sector, making it fit for the future through Skills Intelligence (the early detection of skills gaps, new occupational profiles), changes in training methodologies, and profound changes in the formal and informal education system as regards flexibility, quick uptake of new needs and opening up to lifelong training. This requires close and constructive cooperation between authorities that are responsible for legislation, teaching and training (HE / VET) entities and the private sector (industry and workforce).

The ambition

The Pact for Skills in Tourism intends to serve as a recovery strategy that implements an up/reskilling framework, maximising the potential of the tourism sector, building resilience and meeting the challenges of the green and digital transition. This in turn creates new job opportunities and paves the way for a skills partnership for the tourism ecosystem as a whole. It presents a roadmap towards skills transformation and contributes to post-COVID recovery through immediate, short, and long-term action and strategy. It further broadens the outcomes of the Blueprint on Sectoral Cooperation to address skills needs in the tourism sector, which provides key inputs to the future work of the skills partnership. The partnership also builds on inclusivity and openness for all other existing or future stakeholders, initiatives, or projects to jointly cooperate under one European umbrella through an agreed governance structure. It shall set the base for overall higher qualification of the workforce in the sector, reducing job insecurity and improving working conditions that could assure higher levels of recruitment and retention of workers.

Governance

The Pact for Skills needs to be structured at different levels, each of them with a series of objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are to be defined - both in concept and parameters - at each level:

- **European Union.** Transnational organisations from Social Partners and the education system are encouraged to sign the Pact for Skills Charter as an expression of support for the general principles of the Pact for Skills. Although such organisations cannot be held responsible for implementing specific key performance indicators (KPIs) or commitments to be implemented through projects on the ground, they can support a series of KPIs as concepts that shall be used and quantified at the operative levels (national / regional), governance guidance, and the overall monitoring system to be applied. Even though the Pact for Skills commitments are engaged by stakeholders in a voluntary context, they should be ambitious, robust and realistic.
- **National / regional level.** The practical implementation of the Pact for Skills (skills partnerships) in Tourism shall take place at the level where the legal framework for training and skills development is defined and compliance can be monitored. Depending on the Member State, this is either the national or the regional level. At these levels, specific skills partnerships are to be set up within the generic Pact for Skills framework, involving existing actors and institutions in vocational education and training, selecting several concrete KPIs from amongst the following list to be achieved, and the parameters that shall apply for each of them. The public sector at this level shall assure the necessary infrastructure and resources, in combination with private funding if available.

Key Performance Indicators for the Pact for Skills in Tourism

Note: KPIs are suggested objectives at EU level to be supported as a vision and as desirable targets by the signatories but may be modified in national/regional skills partnerships in accordance with the needs and ambitions of the local partners. Monitoring will be done by these same groups and then upscaled to calculate European-wide values.

- Establishment of National/Regional Skills Groups with participation of all stakeholders (*industry, social partners, training providers, destinations, governments*) by **end-2025** in all tourism regions of Europe as a standard mechanism for the implementation of the Pact for Skills.
- Training/education and up/reskilling⁴ a mean **10%** of the tourism workforce each year from 2023 until 2030 to tackle the skills gaps in the tourism ecosystem both for the current workforce and new entrants⁵. This commitment represents a total of 7,500,000 tourism sector workers (60%) participating in upskilling or reskilling actions annually by 2030⁶.
- Enabling conditions:
 - o Share of services and workers that are aware of the need to up- and reskill (**100%**)
 - o Share of services and workers that have effective career guidance and development services available (**50%**)
 - o and share of services in the tourism ecosystem that declare to have access to dedicated support for up- and reskilling actions (**50%**)
 - o Where applicable, workers and their representatives should be involved in identifying training needs, setting up training plans, implementing the training and evaluating the results.
- Increase of blended training concepts (apprenticeships, internships, etc.) in formal training curricula (**KPI: tbd**)⁷, with an emphasis on green and digital skills.
- Increase the up/reskilling activities and participation by **40%** for the employed workforce, and by 80% for unemployed until 2025, focussed on job retention / job offers.
- Increase the number of successful training certifications by **10% per annum**.
- Increase of integration of formal recognition of work experience and certifications from lifelong learning actions into formal higher-level certificates⁸ (**KPI: tbd**).
- Achieve a mean duration of training, education, re- and up-skilling activities of **50 hours per participant per year**.
- Annual revision and update of skills demand and development per region. In view of the foreseeable dynamic of new skills and occupations in the next years, as a target, in the period 2022 - 2030 and across Europe, each year at least **two new skills** and **three new occupational profiles** shall be detected and addressed already in the following year by adequate training offers⁹.

⁴ **Upskilling:** improve the level and scope of existing skills. **Reskilling:** add new (previously not existing) skills to the qualification / change the skills profile of a person

Upskilling or reskilling actions may include any formal or non-formal education or training supported by employers or associated training organisations in line with the definition of the European Labour Force Survey.

⁵ In 2019, 12,5 million employees were working in the Tourism ecosystem excluding tourism services in "shared economy" (Source: estimate from the Tourism LSP, please see: https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/about/industrial-ecosystems-and-partnerships/tourism_en).

⁶ This objective is in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, which aims to have at least 60% of all adults participating in training every year by 2030. In order to achieve this target, the Tourism LSP aims to have 2,500,000 workers participating in upskilling and reskilling actions each year by 2025 (estimated to mean 20% of the workforce); 5,000,000 workers participating in upskilling and reskilling actions each year by 2027 (estimated to mean 40% of the workforce); and 7,500,000 workers participating in upskilling and reskilling actions each year by 2030 (estimated to mean 60% of the workforce)

⁷ Blended training concepts both refers to a mix of on-the-job learning through internships and apprenticeships together with **blended** learning, which combines traditional face-to-face classroom **training** and high-tech eLearning.

⁸ In some Member States i.e. Spain, work experience and training certifications are being transformed or integrated into formal higher-level certificates (certification exercise). In Portugal, work experience, training, life experience are certified through a recognition of competences process aiming a school/professional degree certification

⁹ National and regional skills groups and/or partnerships should identify any new skills competences and/or occupational profiles required for the sector each year, which should be subsequently addressed in training offers.

- Real-time detection in skills gaps through data mining and cooperation between public and private employment agents, either jointly evaluating their existing statistics and data or by setting up a new integrative system. **Timeline: started in 2022, two years for design (2024), two years for full implementation (2026).**
- Special attention to disadvantaged groups or groups at risk of social exclusion (women, youth, immigrants, self-employed, workers with disabilities...) regarding re-/upskilling, and to integrate them into the tourism job market. **KPI: number of up/reskilled persons from these groups 20% above their share in the overall workforce.**
- The high-level of the quality of training offers should be ensured, following e.g. the guidelines on quality assurance in the Blueprint project for sectoral cooperation to address skills needs in the tourism sector, or other appropriate European guidelines on educational quality assurance. **(KPI: tbd)**

CONTACT with the Pact for Skills in Tourism – PacTS4ALL:

How to join? <http://tinyurl.com/2vv4uu3x>

Resources repository: <https://tinyurl.com/my75xp6w>

Interested in a national or regional skills partnership? <https://forms.gle/htbEHo6zDAR8r9c78>

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Supporting organisations to the Pact for Skills in the tourism ecosystem

European/national associations and companies





European Trade Unions



VET/Higher Education providers





National, regional, and municipal authorities



