BLUE TOURISM
Sustainable Advisor Competence Profile
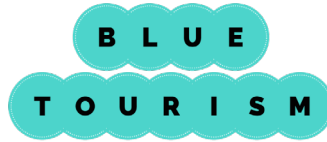
BLUE TOURISM

Build a network of local advisors to put small tourism providers in watercourse regions on a more sustainable path

Country	Partner	
Portugal	**CIMBB**	Comunidade Intermunicipal da Beira Baixa
Portugal	**Mindshift**	Mindshift Talent Advisory
Spain	**INFODEF**	Instituto para el Fomento e Desarollo y la Formación
Slovenia	**UM**	Univerza V Maribor
Romania	**SPEKTRUM**	Fundatia Centrul Educational
Cyprus	**CARDET**	Centre for Advancement in Research and Development in Education Technology
Ireland	**TRH**	The Rural Hub
Portugal	**ITP**	Instituto do Turismo de Portugal

This document is a result of Project Result 2 – "Blue Tourism advisor profile and resources package" – led by Mindshift Talent Advisory

Foreword

Due to the COVID 19 epidemic, the tourism industry has been hit extremely hard as restrictions to international travel have caused a decline of the tourism economy. While this can be seen as an unprecedented economic crisis of our era, especially to countries that rely on tourism as a drive for economic development, it also represents an opportunity to shift tendencies and to strengthen economic resilience, especially in local areas.

The **BLUE TOURISM – Build a network of local advisors to put small tourism providers in watercourse regions on a more sustainable path** project represents an opportunity to rethink tourism as a whole, by shifting more decisively from over tourism models to existing sustainable tourism models, focusing on one renewable resource: water. In this context, **Blue Tourism** is a segment of tourism that involves the promotion of sustainable tourism practices around any watercourse, so as to attract visitors and make sure critical environmental and social impacts are reduced. If on one hand, tourism is highly dependent on the natural ecosystems to attract visitors, on the other hand, it produces critical environmental and social impacts on natural resources and local communities.

From our earliest beginnings, communities have grown and prospered by settling close to water. Oceans, seas, lakes, rivers, streams, dams, and other water resources drive economic growth, but at the same time these blue Earth's natural resources are fast depleting by unsustainable human activities. In this sense, the **Blue Economy** concept must observe the water economy not only as a mechanism for economic growth, but as a resource to improve human wellbeing, social equity and reduce environmental risks and ecological disasters.

Sustainable tourism makes appropriate use of environmental resources, respect the socio-cultural authenticity of local communities, and ensures that economic activities are viable in the long term. According to the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)[1], the United Nations agency responsible for promoting responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism, sustainable tourism should:

1. *Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.*
2. *Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.*

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[1] https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development (last access 03/02/2022)
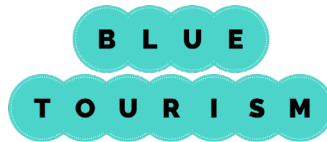
3. *Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.*

The focus in the BLUE TOURISM project is to look at **waterways as a drive for sustainable tourism development**. Almost all European cities were built along waterways and there are many small rivers and streams shaping European's landscapes. These waterways connect cities, peoples, communities, cultures, habits, traditions, itineraries, natural and cultural heritage, all key elements in touristic attractions.

Anchored in the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience (2020/C 417/01)[2], the BLUE TOURISM project aims to find solutions to the current challenges faced by the small tourism sector in watercourse regions by advocating:

1. *How sustainable tourism brings an added value to the long-term socio-economic development of local regions.*
2. *How sustainable tourism helps local communities to cope with the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.*
3. *How the sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage through the creation of new itineraries and tourist attractions and sustainable transports can support and help regenerate local tourism.*
4. *That the promotion of less-known destinations and the uptake of innovative solutions are keen to support local tourism.*
5. *How interregional cooperation on counteracting tourism overcrowding can serve to build a more resilient tourism industry, in local areas, in the long run.*

The BLUE TOURISM project is vehiculating this by equipping a network of future local advisors in **eight key competences** so they can support and advice small tourism providers in watercourse regions to be more sustainable and competitive.

The **BLUE TOURISM Sustainable Advisor Competence Profile** is a reference document outlining the key knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be a BLUE TOURISM sustainable advisor. It comprises an explicit set of learning outcomes aligned with EU frameworks (EQF and ECVET). It is designed for eLearning environment, for a total of 200 training hours (25 per competence area).

Learning outcomes approach

EQF level

The BLUE TOURISM training curriculum is designed in line with the **EQF level 5** and learning outcomes (LOs) are described in terms of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to be a sustainable water-based tourism advisor.

EQF level descriptors elements[3]		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Attitudes**
Described as theoretical and/or factual	Described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive, and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)	Described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility.

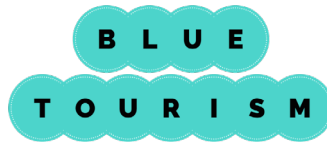| EQF level 5 descriptors elements[4]		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Attitudes**
Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others

ECVET credit points

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is one of the mobility and lifelong learning instruments for learners and workers and it is based on four main principles: 1) Units of learning outcomes; 2) Transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes; 3) Learning agreement and personal transcript; 4) ECVET (credit) points.

ECVET is recognised as a mechanism for the official recognition, accumulation, and transfer of individually achieved learning outcomes, thus guaranteeing equity of the different forms of learning (formal education and training; non-formal training and informal learning).
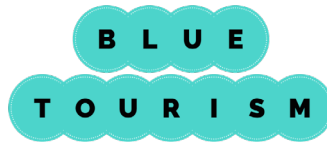
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[3]Description of the eight EQF levels : https://europa.eu/europass/en/description-eight-eqf-levels (last access 01/02/2021)
[4] https://europa.eu/europass/en/description-eight-eqf-levels (last access 01/02/2021)

The BLUE TOURISM Sustainable Tourism Competence Profile features the following ECVET principles: 1) Units of learning outcomes; 2) Learning outcomes described in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes; 3) Teaching and learning hours with allocation of respective ECVET points.

Currently, across Europe, it is consensual to commensurate 1 ECVET point to approximately 25 hours of learning (i.e., hands-on, self-study and assessment hours). The BLUE TOURISM approach adopts this reference to allocate ECVET points to its training programme (i.e., 25 hours of learning = 1 ECVET point).

Competence areas

The BLUE TOURISM Sustainable Advisor Competence Profile comprehends eight competence areas. The **BLUE TOURISM sustainable advisor** is a professional, that gathers relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes, in eight competence areas, to promote the sustainability and efficiently use of natural, cultural, and economic resources in watercourse regions.
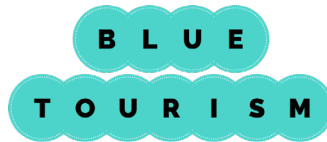
Competence area 1

Developer: Mindshift

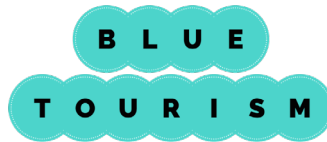|	sustainable tourism & SDGs
	Sustainability focuses on meeting present needs without compromising the possibility of future generations to meet their own needs. It is composed of three pillars: economic/profits, environmental/planet, and social/people. This competence area describes the knowledge, skills and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire and develop in order to guide small tourism providers, in watercourse regions, to adopt more sustainable practices in their local businesses.

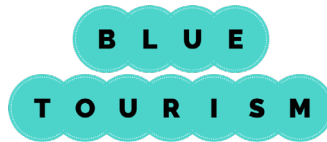| At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:	
Knowledge	**Define** sustainable tourism **Demonstrate** how tourism has the potential to contribute to the SDGs **Describe** the targets that are related to sustainable tourism development included in SDGs 8, 12 and 14
Skills	**Support** small tourism providers defining sustainability priorities for their business **Customise** a plan for the implementation of the SDGs' goals by small tourism providers in watercourse regions
Attitudes	**Advise** small tourism providers on the importance of developing green skills **Debate** on how to address sustainability and the SDGs in tourism activities in watercourse regions

Competence area 2

Developer: SPEKTRUM

	ethics & social responsibility in tourism
	Ethical and socially responsible tourism is the junction where tourist expectations and destination needs meet at environmental, social, and economic level. This competence area describes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire and develop to guide small tourism providers in watercourse regions to initiate and run more ethical and socially responsible practices in their businesses.
At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:	
Knowledge	**Define** ethics and socially responsible tourism highlighting its impact on small tourism businesses, local communities, and economy **Provide** examples of ethical and socially responsible tourism businesses and practices
Skills	**Support** small tourism providers assessing the social and environmental impact of their business **Explain** the importance of adopting and integrating the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (UNTWO)
Attitudes	**Guide** small tourism providers on how to manage the ethical operation of their business:1. supply chain; 2. the local community (in the tourism destination); 3. Workplace; and 4. customers **Advise** small tourism providers to include accessibility into their policies and businesses strategies

Competence area 3

Developer: CIMBB

	natural & cultural heritage
	Almost all European cities were built along waterways, there are many small rivers and streams shaping European's landscapes. These watercourses connect cities, people, communities, cultures, habits, traditions, itineraries, all key elements in touristic attractions. This competence area describes the knowledge, skills and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor needs to acquire to support small tourism providers, in watercourse regions, in strengthening efforts to protect, safeguard and promote the natural and cultural heritage.

At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:	
Knowledge	**Differentiate** natural heritage and cultural heritage **Define** tangible and intangible heritage **Correlate** watercourses (rivers, lakes, small rivers, and stream) as natural and cultural heritage assets
Skills	**Facilitate** the comprehension of the existing UNESCO Culture Conventions, and in specific the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage **Provide** references and tools for small tourism providers to devise a plan for managing the tourist-carrying capacity in watercourse regions
Attitudes	**Assess** the level of commitment of small tourism providers, in specific those located in watercourse regions, towards the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage **Demonstrate** the role of small tourism providers, in specific those located in watercourse regions, in local heritage management

Competence area 4

Developer: INFODEF

	competitiveness & sustainable local business development
	Tourist companies offer services that cause variable impacts in the balance between people, planet, and business benefits. It is extremely important to expand knowledge about the different practices to promote business competitiveness associated with sustainable development at the local level. This competence area describes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire and develop to guide small tourism providers in watercourse regions to find the balance between business competitiveness and sustainability in their local businesses.

At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:	
Knowledge	**Define** sustainable competitiveness **Differentiate** between ESG criteria and Corporate Social Responsibility **Establish** the relation between the ESG criteria and the SDGs
Skills	**Exemplify** why the ESG criteria (Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance) are relevant for small tourism providers **Outline** the role of destination management (DM) as a universal strategic approach for attaining competitive advantages **Relate** competitiveness and social responsibility in local development through sustainable tourism practices in watercourse regions
Attitudes	**Advise** small tourism providers, in watercourse regions, on the advantages of incorporating ESG criteria in their local business **Raise** awareness on applying sustainable business techniques to increase the competitiveness of local tourism companies

B L U E

T O U R I S M

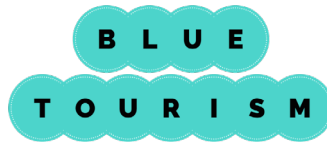**Competence area 5**

Developer: UM

	internationalisation strategy
	In the context of the tourism sector, internationalisation means designing a product or service so it can meet the needs of people from different cultural background. This includes getting familiarised with values and behaviours of diverse target groups. Internationalisation also extends to networking and cooperation between different stakeholders in order to improve performance in a sustainable way. This competence area describes the knowledge, skills and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire in order to guide small tourism providers in implementing an internationalisation strategy efficiently, observing the sustainable management practices.

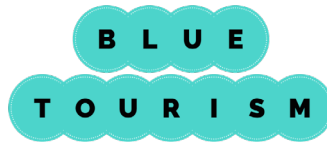| At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:	
Knowledge	**Define** internationalisation in sustainable tourism **List** the advantages and disadvantages of internationalisation for local small tourism provides in watercourse touristic destinations **Identify** key elements for an internationalisation strategy
Skills	**Select** best practices of cases of internationalisation of small tourism business in watercourse destinations **Evaluate** best practices of cases of internationalisation of small tourism business in watercourse destinations and propose improvements
Attitudes	**Guide** small tourism providers in designing an internationalisation plan, observing sustainable management practices **Supervise** small tourism providers in the implementation of an internationalisation strategy, including sustainable management practices

Competence area 6

Developer: ITP

	branding & digital marketing
	Communication is the key to generate a better and solid business and this competence area describes the knowledge, skills and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire and develop to introduce small tourism providers to set of relevant concepts and tools regarding branding strategy for tourist sites located in watercourse regions; and also, to lead them into applying digital marketing strategies to promote their business in a more effective and sustainable way.

At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:	
Knowledge	**Define** branding and digital marketing applied to blue tourism **Identify** tendencies in blue tourism marketing
Skills	**Apply** branding strategy components, approaches, and key tools to develop a successful brand strategy for blue tourism destinations **Evaluate** real life examples of brand identity in terms of their application of branding strategy (case studies) **Create** a marketing plan for a blue tourism destination brand
Attitudes	**Guide** small tourism providers in applying branding and marketing strategies to promote blue tourism destinations **Supervise** small tourism providers with the implementation of branding and marketing strategies to blue tourism destinations

Competence area 7

Developer: TRH

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2"></td>
<td>networking & local partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tourism industry is a complex global environment in which networking among diverse actors and stakeholders is essential in order to supply integrated tourism products and provide the best service to the visitor or tourist. This competence area explores the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire in order to build local networks and partnerships amongst the various stakeholders, such as tourism enterprises, tourists, national tourism offices, infrastructure providers and other types of supporting organisations who are directly or indirectly involved in tourism to build competitive advantage as a sustainable blue destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Define the importance of networking and local partnership within sustainable tourism
Describe how networking can be effective in boosting local partnerships to promote blue tourism offers
Identify best practice examples within the tourism sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Identify opportunities for local collaboration networks
Demonstrate how local networks and partnerships could be operationalised in their region
Argue for the creation of local sustainable networks centred on blue tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Collaborate with tourism stakeholders to encourage networking and local partnerships
Guide and promote a more collaborative approach to sustainable tourism locally through tourism networks</td>
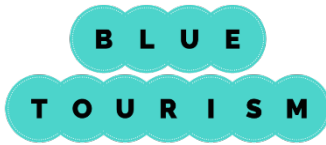</tr>
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BLUE TOURISM

Competence area 8

Developer: CARDET

	innovation & digital transformation
	Innovation and digital transformation respond to the growing demand for a *digital tourism* business ecosystem model, especially post-COVID-19. The use of modern technologies in business operations contributes to the ability of businesses to build resilience, gain a competitive advantage over their peers and secure viability. This competence area describes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes the sustainable tourism advisor must acquire and develop to guide small tourism providers in watercourse regions to adopt more sustainable practices in their local businesses through digitalisation.
At the end of this unit professionals will be able to:	
Knowledge	**Define** digital innovation in the tourism industry and how digital presence impacts productivity and profits. **Give** examples of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills needed in the different tourism sectors (i.e., accommodation, food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, and travel services) **Provide** examples of appropriate digital environments (VR, AR, etc.) in each tourism sectors
Skills	**Select** the most suitable digital business transformation methods to improve business processes as well as customer experience **Apply** the techniques and methods learnt to assist small tourism providers acquiring a digital skillset, at all seniority levels
Attitudes	**Advise** small tourism on the use and management of communication technologies (ICTs) tools, including Virtual Reality (VR), to allow them to provide an excellent tourist experience to customers. **Monitor** small tourism digitalisation process in the three areas of focus: business model and processes, staff skills development and customer experience

PROJECT

BLUE
TOURISM

PARTNERSHIP

CIMBB
COMUNIDADE INTERMUNICIPAL
BEIRA BAIXA

TURISMO DE PORTUGAL escolas

University of Maribor

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EL FOMENTO DEL
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MINDSHIFT
Talent Advisory

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& DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

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