# European Needs Analysis on Crisis Management for Tourism SMEs

Part 6: Competence Frameworks and Conclusions

Navigating Tourism
Crisis Recovery

# CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

The final report for Intellectual Output (IO) 1 contains six elements:

- Introduction and Methodology
- Online Research
- Good Practice Case Studies
- Literature Review
- Analysis of Industry Interviews
- Competence Framework and Conclusions

All of these resources are designed for either self-learning or to be used in a more formal educational structure. This document forms part six: Competence Frameworks and Conclusions. Please visit https://www.tourismrecovery.eu/resources/ for the full suite of IO1 reports.

On the following three pages three competence frameworks are presented. A competence framework is broadly defined as a "model that broadly describes performance excellence within an organization… [and] a means by which organizations communicate which behaviours are required, valued, recognized and rewarded with respect to specific occupational roles" (IAEA, nd: 3).

Based on the results of the literature review, the interrogation of industry reports and national and regional policies



and, most importantly, the industry interviews undertaken by each project partner, the frameworks outline the skills and knowledge needed to successfully navigate a business through a virulent crisis.
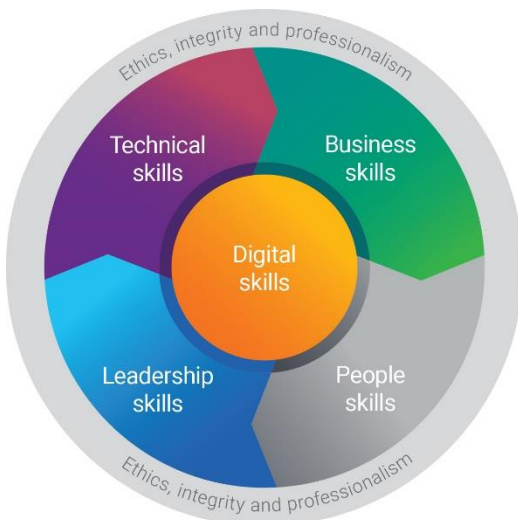
Three frameworks have been created, recognizing that entrepreneurs, business directors and trainers have broadly similar but subtly different competence requirements. These frameworks, and all the material that underpin and inform them, serve as a structure and basis for the development of curricula, trainer guidelines and resources that will be developed in IO2, focusing on an SME audience, and IO3, taking a more holistic higher education perspective on crisis management and recovery.

# TRAINERS' COMPETENCIES

## General competencies

| Item | Evaluation criteria | Competencies |
|---|---|---|
| Business knowledge | Knowledge of the functional areas of a business and its environment | Analyzing the business's operation, in particular the functional areas and their interrelation, from a systemic approach |
| Crisis management knowledge | Ability in making the right decisions during great adversity and critical situations. | Developing skills for assertive decision making to reverse the adverse and negative effects of the crisis within a tourism organization |
| Digital skills knowledge | Appropriate use of digital tools to study and develop academic skills | Acquiring skills in the use of digital tools and platforms that enable acquisition of new knowledge in the field of European tourism recovery |
| | | |

## Specific competencies

| Item | Evaluation criteria | Competencies |
|---|---|---|
| Tourism innovation | Ability in generating tourism innovation projects in the field of tourism | Developing tourism innovation projects |
| Crisis management plan | Developing a crisis management plan | Building an effective and efficient crisis management plan |
| Crisis communication strategy | Designing an effective communication strategy for crisis management | Designing an effective communication strategy for crisis management |
| Emergency policies and procedures | Designing policies and procedures for before and after a crisis | Formulating policies and procedures for times of crisis in tourism organizations |
| Scenario creation | Developing pessimistic, realistic and optimistic scenarios for decision making in the context of a crisis | Identifying and calculating the implications of the possible occurrence of different scenarios: pessimistic, realistic and optimistic, in tourism organizations |
| Identification of contingencies | Ability in identifying unforeseen events that alter and modify action plans | Analyzing the business environment to define possible unforeseen events and threats that threaten the homeostatic balance of the organization |
| Project management | Developing projects with a focus on efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness in the use of resources | Developing organizational projects with a focus on efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness in the use of resources |
| Digital information management | Appropriate use of digital tools for the acquisition of new knowledge | Developing digital skills for the acquisition of new knowledge. |
| Search for information and sources | Ability in searching for reliable resources and information on the Web | Searching for reliable information and resources on the Web |
| Filtering and selecting content on the Web | Ability in choosing and filtering the best sources of information on the Web | Filtering and choosing the best sources of information on the Web |

# ENTREPRENEURS' COMPETENCIES

## General competencies

| Item | Evaluation criteria | Competencies |
|---|---|---|
| Entrepreneurial knowledge | Constructing a business plan in the field of tourism | Developing a business plan in the field of tourism considering strategic, marketing, operational and financial aspects. |
| Crisis management knowledge | Ability in making the right decisions during great adversity and critical situations. | Developing skills for assertive decision making to reverse the adverse and negative effects of the crisis within a tourism organization |
| Digital skills knowledge | Appropriate use of digital tools to study and develop academic skills | Acquiring skills in the use of digital tools and platforms that enable acquisition of new knowledge in the field of European tourism recovery |
| | | |

## Specific competencies

| Item | Evaluation criteria | Competencies |
|---|---|---|
| Tourism innovation | Ability in generating tourism innovation projects in the field of tourism | Developing tourism innovation projects |
| Crisis management plan | Developing a crisis management plan | Building an effective and efficient crisis management plan |
| Crisis communication strategy | Designing an effective communication strategy for crisis management | Designing an effective communication strategy for crisis management |
| Emergency policies and procedures | Designing policies and procedures for before and after a crisis | Formulating policies and procedures for times of crisis in tourism organizations |
| Scenario creation | Developing pessimistic, realistic and optimistic scenarios for decision making in the context of a crisis | Identifying and calculating the implications of the possible occurrence of different scenarios: pessimistic, realistic and optimistic, in tourism organizations |
| Identification of contingencies | Ability in identifying unforeseen events that alter and modify action plans | Analyzing the business environment to define possible unforeseen events and threats that threaten the homeostatic balance of the organization |
| Project management | Developing projects with a focus on efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness in the use of resources | Developing organizational projects with a focus on efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness in the use of resources |
| Digital information management | Appropriate use of digital tools for the acquisition of new knowledge | Developing digital skills for the acquisition of new knowledge. |
| Search for information and sources | Ability in searching for reliable resources and information on the Web | Searching for reliable information and resources on the Web |
| Filtering and selecting content on the Web | Ability in choosing and filtering the best sources of information on the Web | Filtering and choosing the best sources of information on the Web |

# DIRECTORS' COMPETENCIES

## General competencies

| Item | Evaluation criteria | Competencies |
|---|---|---|
| Leadership and management skills | Mastery of leadership theories and application for specific situations | Developing leadership skills for the management of heterogeneous groups |
| Crisis management knowledge | Ability in making the right decisions during great adversity and critical situations. | Developing skills for assertive decision making to reverse the adverse and negative effects of the crisis within a tourism organization |
| Digital skills knowledge | Appropriate use of digital tools to study and develop academic skills | Acquiring skills in the use of digital tools and platforms that enable acquisition of new knowledge in the field of European tourism recovery |
| | | |

## Specific competencies

| Item | Evaluation criteria | Competencies |
|---|---|---|
| Sustainable Tourism and Territorial Planning | Generating sustainable tourism proposals | Developing sustainable tourism projects, in line with the land-use planning of a given site |
| Events and Business Tourism | Planning and organization of events in the tourism sector | Planning and organizing events in the field of business tourism |
| Tourism innovation | Ability in generating tourism innovation projects in the field of tourism | Developing tourism innovation projects |
| Crisis management plan | Developing a crisis management plan | Building an effective and efficient crisis management plan |
| Crisis communication strategy | Designing an effective communication strategy for crisis management | Designing an effective communication strategy for crisis management |
| Emergency policies and procedures | Designing policies and procedures for before and after a crisis | Formulating policies and procedures for times of crisis in tourism organizations |
| Scenario creation | Developing pessimistic, realistic and optimistic scenarios for decision making in the context of a crisis | Identifying and calculating the implications of the possible occurrence of different scenarios: pessimistic, realistic and optimistic, in tourism organizations |
| Identification of contingencies | Ability in identifying unforeseen events that alter and modify action plans | Analyzing the business environment to define possible unforeseen events and threats that threaten the homeostatic balance of the organization |
| Project management | Developing projects with a focus on efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness in the use of resources | Developing organizational projects with a focus on efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness in the use of resources |
| Digital information management | Appropriate use of digital tools for the acquisition of new knowledge | Developing digital skills for the acquisition of new knowledge. |
| Search for information and sources | Ability in searching for reliable resources and information on the Web | Searching for reliable information and resources on the Web |
| Filtering and selecting content on the Web | Ability in choosing and filtering the best sources of information on the Web | Filtering and choosing the best sources of information on the Web |

# IO1 CONCLUSIONS

The reality of the COVID-19 pandemic is that global tourism will be hard hit throughout 2020 and beyond, even with the spread of the virus being brought under control, affecting both the international and domestic tourism markets; given the limited resources of tourism SMEs, many solvent firms could go bankrupt (OECD, 2020). This is clearly a huge issue in some countries such as Iceland, where tourism became the countries' most important export industry after the financial crash in 2008; Iceland and Spain are ranked two of the top three OECD countries in terms of the proportion of the total GDP contributed by the tourism industry (OECD, 2020).

In other partner countries, such as Ireland, tourism was one of the first sectors to be deeply impacted by the pandemic, as measures introduced to contain the virus led to a near-complete cessation of tourism activities around the world. In Spain, Between January and September 2020, the country lost €43 billion in overseas tourist revenue (European Central Bank, 2020). Due to the dramatic contraction in the tourism industry, many workers may become unemployed or displaced. While other sectors may absorb some of the displaced workers, low-skilled, casual and temporary workers, typical of many parts of the tourism industry, are likely to be the first to lose their jobs and may find it difficulty in seeking employment in other sectors of the economy (UNCTAD, 2020).

In terms of policy responses to the crisis individual countries reacted in a multitude of ways. For example, in Iceland an annual survey of Icelandic tourism businesses was undertaken for the Icelandic Tourism Cluster and the Icelandic Travel Industry Association in 2021 to understand, among other things, how Icelandic businesses were handling the pandemic and how it threatens the industry. In Germany, state and regional measures were introduced to support a range of industries, on the principle that companies should be in the same position as they would be without the causal event and aid should be granted as a priority to those companies that experience reduced revenues or liquidity bottlenecks as a direct result of state-imposed closures.

Examples of good practice related to how tourism SMEs overcame the imposed restrictions were identified across the partner countries. In Ireland, for example, the BuJo burger bar in Dublin created a digital drive-thru using WhatsApp to take orders, a clever way to work around the social distancing guidelines and testament to the innovation and flexibility exhibited by many business owners. The Paderborn Cultural Office in Germany devised a best practice approach to support the regional tourism industry, through recommendations for organisers for hosting events during the pandemic, an initiative replicated in many areas as regional and national authorities strive to find the compromise between business activity and public safety. Spanish authorities in Spain, for example, created the "Galicia Safe Destination" programme, a rethinking of tourist products adapted to new hygiene requirements.

In order to survive, and thrive, a new or enhanced set of skills may be required by SME owners and employees, ensuring that future crises, whether global or localized, see businesses better prepared and able to adapt to restrictions, demand fluctuations or supply constraints. Future Place Leadership (2020), for example, supports:

- Understanding new market needs and focussing on segments that have the ability to bounce back more quickly.
- Revising products with health and safety in mind.
- Enhancing digital skills in particular.
- Working in collaboration across the sector.

It suggests that business review the present crisis, to understand the issues and constraints, and indeed the opportunities, and ensure better preparation for future such events. Other suggested coping mechanisms include:

- Product diversification.
- Exploring domestic markets.
- Creating and demonstrating effective leadership
- Identifying areas where cost reduction measures can be implemented.
- Making the most of organisational support.

Some or many of these elements were picked up in the stakeholder interviews undertaken as part of IO1. Participants identified a number of existing courses which explored relevant subjects, from scenario planning and crisis management in Scotland, to change management and health and safety in Spain. Quizzed on the most appropriate subjects for a course programme specializing in crisis management, the principal responses were grouped under the following headings:

- Finance and funding
- Effective communications
- Mental health management
- Disaster recovery plans
- Business planning and strategizing
- More effective digital skills
- Creative marketing and consumer analysis

It was suggested that step-by-step guides would be very useful for businesses, along with the facility to learn about good practice in other countries. These results, and the key findings from the industry reports, have been used to create competence frameworks aimed at trainers, directors and entrepreneurs, which will underpin and inform the development of the invaluable training resources developed by the T-CRISIS NAV consortium.

These resources will help to facilitate the adaptation, change and evolution that were key words reported by the BBC when exploring survival techniques for tourism businesses. In the short term this has meant expanding into new activities for some businesses, or altering what they offer, or when/how they offer it, to customers. In the medium-term, it reports that SMEs are looking to new forms of sustainable or innovative tourism business practices; from turning to more carbon -neutral business practices to offering 'slow tourism' opportunities that encourage people to spend longer in communities, the industry has shown that it has the capacity to reinvent (elements of) itself.