



SEASON READY



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Erasmus+

SeasonREADY

Project Number: 2017-1-HR01-KA202-035389

WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR SEASONAL HOSPITALITY WORKERS

**RESEARCH REPORT ON LOCAL/REGIONAL CONTEXTS AND  
PRECONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTRODUCTION OF WORK-BASED  
LEARNING**

Intellectual Output 1

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Executive summary (English)

Executive summary (Croatian)

Executive summary (Greek)

Executive summary (Italian)



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## Content

1. INTRODUCTION .....	4
2. CONTEXT OF SEASONAL WORKERS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING .....	6
Sector profile .....	6
Education for tourism and hospitality .....	8
Employment & seasonal workers.....	13
3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS .....	17
Skills for tourism and hospitality.....	17
Work based learning.....	20
4. METHODOLOGY .....	30
In-depth interviews .....	30
Focus groups.....	31
Survey .....	32
Reporting.....	33
5. RESULTS .....	34
In-depth interviews .....	34
Focus groups.....	37
Survey .....	43
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	49



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is important part of the European Union economy contributing, in total, 10.3 per cent to GDP and 11.7 per cent to employment (direct and induced)<sup>1</sup>. It is even more important for many Mediterranean countries. For example, its direct contribution to GDP in Italy, Greece and Croatia is 5.5, 8 and 10.9 per cent respectively, while employing directly and indirectly 14.7 per cent workforce in Italy, 25 per cent in Greece and 23.5 per cent in Croatia<sup>2,3,4</sup>.

Tourism, especially hospitality as its important part, is work-intensive and its success depends on the quality of work-force. Yet, it is the quality of the workforce that hinders sector's growth, especially in the Mediterranean, owing partly to the seasonality of employment. It is estimated that thirty to forty per cent of all jobs in the hospitality in Croatia, Greece and Italy are seasonal. Many seasonal workers do not have the proper training and, with the migration of skilled workers from south to north Europe, the pool of skilled seasonal workers in economically depressed countries of south Europe is diminishing. Thus, there is a continuous influx of untrained people filling in seasonal jobs. At the same time, their employers are mostly micro and small enterprises without time, skills and resources to train their new employees properly, resulting in mutual frustration and lower than optimal job performance.

Against this broader context, the SeasonREADY project was launched with the aim to improve competitiveness of hospitality and tourism sector by fostering productive, professional and efficient seasonal workforce through development and implementation of a work-based learning program designed to meet the needs of employers and seasonal workers. The specific objects of the projects are to:

- assist enterprises in the development of motivated, skilled, confident and dependable workers in three key areas of hospitality – front-line operations, food and beverages services and housekeeping;
- develop a training methodology based on the principles of work-based learning adaptable to local and regional context;
- assist potential in-house trainers to develop skills and training techniques to ensure training is effective to both employees and employers;

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<sup>1</sup> World Tourism and Travel Council (2018), Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2018 European Union. WTTC, London.

<sup>2</sup> World Tourism and Travel Council (2018), Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2018 Italy. WTTC, London.

<sup>3</sup> World Tourism and Travel Council (2018), Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2018 Greece. WTTC, London.

<sup>4</sup> World Tourism and Travel Council (2018), Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2018 Croatia. WTTC, London.



- provide seasonal workers with the proper mix of skills, knowledge and attitudes required for a job in hospitality sector;
- provide recommendations to stakeholders for the further development of a sustainable WBL methodology in HSME at regional and national level.

The project is implemented by a consortium of six partners from Greece, Italy and Croatia. It is divided in four parts. The first step is to investigate the specific training needs of on-the-job trainers and seasonal staff to develop methodological foundations (intellectual output 2) and training material (intellectual output 3) coupled with the guide with recommendation to policy makers and other stakeholders (intellectual output 4).

This report brings together results from that first step in the project implementation – needs assessments. To put the project in the context of tourism and hospitality and provide basic information necessary to understand the logic of the project's intervention, the report starts with a snapshot of tourism and tourism employment in each partner country, including a short sector profile, information about VET system for tourism and hospitality and seasonal employment data and issues. It then provides, in chapter three, a brief outline of the theories underpinning work-based learning in general, and tourism and hospitality in particular. After that, fourth and fifth chapter are focused on the primary research undertaken to assess specific training needs. The methodological approach is explained in chapter four, while results in the following chapter. Finally, the conclusion brings together the major insights to provide a solid foundation for development of a training methodology, the second step in the project implementation.

## 2. CONTEXT OF SEASONAL WORKERS

### EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The aim of this section is to provide basic information necessary to understand the context in which the project SeasonREADY is taking place.

#### Sector profile

As highlighted in the introductory chapter, tourism is an important economic activity in the entire European Union. The three partner countries are one of the most important tourism destinations in Mediterranean and Europe, all experiencing strong growth over the last couple of years. In 2017, there were 1.322 million tourist arrivals world-wide, with half of that realised in Europe and one fifth of the total in the countries of South / Mediterranean Europe<sup>5</sup>. The three partner countries, in total, realised 86 million international tourist arrivals, a 33 per cent share in the Mediterranean (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1.**

**Number of tourist arrivals and overnights in partner countries in 2016, in mil.**

Country	Arrivals			Overnights		
	Total	International	Domestic	Total	International	Domestic
Greece	23.7	15.7	8.0	101.9	80.0	21.8
Croatia	15.4	13.7	1.7	77.8	72.1	5.8
Italy	116.9	56.7	60.1	402.9	199.4	203.4

*Source: Eurostat (note: data for 2017 not available)*

After France, USA, Spain and China, Italy is the most visited destination in the world. Italy, apart from being popular international tourist destination, also has a large number of domestic tourists. Slightly over half of all tourist arrivals are made up of Italians. Greece, to the large extent, is dependent on international tourists, only about 33 per cent of all arrivals are Greek nationals. In contrast, Croatian tourism is almost completely dependent of international tourists, with domestic realising only 1.7 million arrivals or 11 per cent of total. However, for a truly comparable figure, it is necessary to look at the size of the country and its population in relation to the number of tourist arrivals. When taking the size of the country into account, then Italy still leads with 384 tourists per square kilometre, followed by Croatian with 272 and Greece with 179 tourists. However, in proportion to population, Croatia leads the way with 3.6 tourist arrivals per permanent resident, followed by Greece with 2.2 and only then Italy with 1.9.

<sup>5</sup> World Tourism Organisation (2017). Tourism barometer.



Tourism is an important economic activity, not only for the countries of the European south, but also for the entire European Union. The latest available data from the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), shows that total tourism's contribution to GDP amounts to 10.3 per cent for the EU, and ranges from 13 per cent for Italy to 25 per cent for Croatia. Although the WTTC estimates, especially of the total tourism impact are somewhat larger than the national ones, the WTTC is used as a reference as its methodology is consistently applied in all countries thus enabling comparison.

Tourism is also an important generator of employment (Table 2.2); it employed directly about one million people in the EU. The WTTC estimates that travel and tourism's contribution to employment is about 12 per cent, of which 5 per cent directly. While Italy's employment is the least dependent on tourism, employing about 6.5 per cent directly and about 15 per cent in total, it is an important generator of jobs in, both, Greece and Croatia, where it is estimated that about a quarter of all jobs is directly or indirectly generated by tourism.



**Table 2. 2.**

**Tourism contribution to GDP and employment, 2017**

Country	GDP (% share)		Employment (% share)	
	Direct	Total	Direct	Total
EU	3,9	10,3	5,1	11,7
Croatia	10,9	25,0	10,1	23,5
Greece	8,0	19,7	12,2	24,8
Italy	5,5	13,0	6,5	14,7

Source: WTTC (2018).

### Education for tourism and hospitality

Working in tourism is extremely heterogeneous requiring a variety of skills and expertise and employing people with a vast array of skills. While many working in tourism sector do not have specific training in tourism and hospitality, most countries provide initial VET training for chefs, waiters, receptions, lower level hospitality management (i.e. front office). At the tertiary level, courses in tourism and hospitality management are commonly offered by many universities.

However, there is a caveat in VET training for tourism and hospitality. There is a prevailing perception that jobs in tourism and hospitality are at the lower level of technical competencies. This idea is a result of a technical approach to training, where competencies are divided in micro tasks. Analysing competencies from this technical point of view, these micro-tasks form the core of occupational standards, translated into qualification standards and, then, to learning outcomes. This approach, argues Baum<sup>6</sup>, leads to a permanent dissatisfaction with the quality of workforce because it ignores job complexity in this sector, as it requires not only practical skills, but also emotional labour (controlling and managing emotions), aesthetical labour (to present oneself and behave to a certain standard) and intellectual labour (participating in conversation with guests on a variety of topics). This disparity between formal VET focused on technical skills and actual general or soft skills needed to perform job successfully is one of the main shortcomings of most tourism and hospitality formal VET courses.

Formal VET training is currently undergoing a transformation to meet the challenges of the future, as reflected in the relevant EU documents. In general, there is a push for the workplace learning as the best way to acquire practical skills and work ethics, with an ensuing improvement in training of VET teachers and on-the-job trainers. The partner countries are no exception to that.

<sup>6</sup> Baum, T. (2006), Skills and training for the hospitality sector: A review of issues. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*. 54(3):343-364.



Continuous VET is also part of this reform, as trends change quickly, and workforce need to constantly develop and adopt new skills. Most countries of the EU have a well-developed system of continuous VET aiming for skills upgrade or re-training. This also includes tourism, whether it is foreign labour that needs additional general or occupational training or seasonal workers. In tourism, this is even more important, as many enter the workforce without prior training or experience. The three partner countries, as most of the EU countries, offers formal, initial and continuing VET training for professions in tourism and hospitality.

## Croatia

There are three and four-year VET programmes available in Croatia. Three-year programs are available for chefs, pastry makers and wait staff. Four-year programs are designed for front office and receptions (for hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, transport companies and similar). There are also two-year programs for chefs, designed for students with special needs. These programs, approved by the relevant national body, are delivered through seventeen tourism and hospitality schools located in all bigger cities, and about seventy-five schools offering one or two tourism and hospitality programmes, usually in smaller towns. Although a bulk of tourism activity takes place in the coastal part of the country, tourism and hospital schools are evenly spread throughout the country.

A number of studies enrolled in these programmes varies slightly from year to year, on average five and a half thousand students enrol the initial tourism and hospitality VET programmes, about half opting for three-year ones. Although it would be expected that the enrolment is higher in the coastal area, it is not the case. Consequently, a half of all students are enrolled in schools located in the continental Croatia, where the jobs are scarce and, for the most part, these students create a pool of seasonal skills workers, migrating every spring to the coast.

Continuous VET, in general and for tourism and hospitality, is neglected. Only about two per cent of employees are participating in any form of continuous VET, and this is estimated to be even lower for tourism and hospitality, owing to the dominance of micro and small enterprises without resources for funding continuous VET for their staff. The exception are large hotel companies that have their own training system put in place and, more recently programs designed for unemployed wishing to work seasonally in tourism. These programs are mostly funded through the European Social Fund and administered by the Croatian Employment Service. About one hundred twenty educational institutions offer programs for basic training or retraining, or development of advanced skills (i.e. sommelier, cocktail maker). The most common areas of training are for chefs, waiters, front-office as well as housekeeping. The quality of this training is



questionable, as the agency in charge of programs certification only controls the minimal educational standards, without a mandate to control its quality.

## Italy

Regarding secondary education, there are several options to obtain qualification for a job in tourism and hospitality in Italy. The first to mention is the “*Istituto alberghiero*”, a professionally oriented secondary education in hospitality and gastronomy. There are over 250 of such Institutes in Italy. They usually offer three major specialisations: gastronomy (food and wine), table and dining services and front office operations (reception and client services).

The programme takes three to five years. After the three-year period, students obtain a professional qualification diploma which already allows them to work. After completing the five-year programme, students obtain a secondary education qualification that equals to A-level or SAT and allow the graduates to continue at university.

### **Graduates from this type of school are qualified to work in various jobs:**

- Chef
- Cook
- Maître
- Sommelier
- Waiter
- Bartender
- Manager in gastronomy and hospitality facilities
- Receptionist
- Concierge
- Tour operator
- Tour guide
- Animator
- Travel agency manager
- Consultant
- Trainer

Besides some traditional subjects such as maths or Italian language, education plan focuses on subjects respective to their specialisation including food and wine science, cooking, fine dining services as well as management, tourism economy and regulations regarding the tourism sector. Furthermore, students are obliged to study at least one foreign language and do an internship.

### **On tertiary level, there are various options of bachelor’s and master’s degree:**

- Sciences of Tourism



- Tourism Economy

- Management of tourism services
- Hospitality Management.

For continuous VET, some training courses are organised by employers, especially in case of large hotel chains or international companies. In Italy 2015, only 14.5% of companies in tourism sector participated in continuous VET. Most of these companies were large with more 250 employees. In other sectors, employees participate in average twice more in training. Other courses are delivered as evening classes for adults and are provided by the Institutes (*Istituto alberghiero*) described above.

Within continuous VET, an important role is played by the joint bodies, especially supported by the CCNL (*Contratto Collettivo Nazionale di Lavoro*) and inter-professional funds. They organise training programmes on specific subjects for member companies. For example, Confesercenti, through Bilateral Tourist Board, and Fonter Interprofessional Fund (composed of main Italian trade unions), provides continuous training for registered companies. Confesercenti Sicilia, through this fund provides long-life training in Sicily to over 7.000 member companies and over 37.000 employees.

## Greece

The existing VET for tourism in Greece is offered at four levels: upper secondary, post-secondary, tertiary and continuing. At upper secondary level, in the frame of formal education, vocational upper-secondary schools (EPAL) provide initial vocational education in tourism through a three-year programme. Similarly, Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) apprenticeship schools (EPAS) offer 2-year programmes, such as bakery and pastry, hospitality and cooking, that combines in-class education with practical work in a business. The graduates obtain a specialisation diploma at EQF level 4.

At post – secondary level vocational education institutes (IEK) provide five semesters of initial vocational training. Four semesters (1200 hrs.) are spent on theoretical and laboratory training, whereas the last on practical training / apprenticeship (1050 hrs.). After certification examinations graduates are awarded occupational specialisation diplomas (EQF 5). The relevant to the tourist sector programmes offered today are: *Executive in the tourism sector, Bakery & Pastry technician, Technician in hospitality business (front office, housekeeping, supply services), Technician in Cooking – Chef.*

At tertiary level, two higher professional schools operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism. The Higher School of Tourism Education in Rhodes and the Higher School of Tourism Education of Crete, in Ag. Nikolaos Crete. Both of them offer an academic program designed to



prepare senior executives for the hospitality industry and are considered non-university tertiary institutions (EQF 5). The duration of the course offered is three and a half years. The students also realize nine months of industrial placement in total, during which they have the chance to reinforce the links between theory and practice.

Colleges also offer programmes that are outside formal education and training; however, the attestations awarded can be recognised as professionally equivalent to higher education titles of formal education. As far as colleges are concerned the training offers are multiple and constantly augmenting. Indicatively some of the offered programmes are:

- Hospitality Management
- Executive Diploma in Hotel and Tourism Management
- Bachelor in Tourism Management
- Minor Program in International Tourism and Hospitality Management

As far as continuing VET in tourism sector is concerned private and public Lifelong Learning Centres (LLCs) provide continuous vocational training in tourism. LLCs often implement training programmes on behalf of enterprises or in the frame of a variety of funded projects through the European Social Fund. Municipal Lifelong Learning Centres also offered in the past the following training programmes:

- Entrepreneurship and tourism- cultural development – 25 hours
- Alternative Tourism forms- 10 to 25 hours
- Internet promotion services and tourism business management -25 hours
- English for tourism
- French for tourism
- German for tourism
- Spanish for tourism
- Turkish for tourism.

Private centres of vocational education also provide on demand courses for the professional specialization in the sector. In-house training for employees in tourism sector is also funded through the Fund for Employment and Vocational Training (LAEK), which is handled by OAED. A large variety of subjects is covered, usually addressing established needs/ skill gaps.



## Employment & seasonal workers

As already pointed out, tourism and hospitality are important employment generators. Most jobs are generated in the accommodation and food sector. Just these two sectors provide 4.8 per cent of all jobs in the EU. The sector is also noticing a steady rise in employment that grew 12.75 per cent from 2011 to 2016.

### Croatia

- The tourism industry employed 118.6 thousand people in 2017, of which only about 5 per cent part time (Eurostat, 2017).
- Accommodation and food accounted for 105.2 thousand jobs or 6.84 of total employment<sup>7</sup>
- In the period from 2011 – 2016, the number of jobs in the accommodation and food increased by 21.8 per cent<sup>8</sup>.
- A clear majority – 80 per cent – employed have medium level of education, the largest proportion of the three partner countries, owing to a very high level of participation in secondary education; 12 per cent are tertiary educated, while only 8 per cent has low educational attainment<sup>9</sup>.
- Almost 59 per cent are middle aged (22 – 49 years), and there is almost equal proportion of young (15 to 24 years) and older (50 to 64 years)<sup>10</sup>.
- There is a huge demand for seasonal workers – according to the Croatian Employment Service in 2017 there were 40,5 thousand vacancies advertised through the Service, and 36.3 thousand persons seasonally employed through the Service<sup>11</sup>:
  - 25 thousand employed were in the accommodation and food and retail sectors.
  - 10.3 thousand employees took employment outside their place of permanent residence, with the largest migration from the continental north to coastal south.
  - most jobs were in accommodation and food sector, following by retail - wait staff, housekeepers, sales people, chefs, cleaners, assistant chefs, kitchen hands, front office staff and tourist animators.
  - according to the seasonal worker satisfaction survey conducted by the Croatian Employment Service, slightly over half does not have previous experience in seasonal tourism work and, in total, have less than a year of work experience.
  - most work as cleaners (14 per cent), kitchen helpers (12 per cent), assistant chiefs (10 per cent) and chefs (7 per cent). These workers usually have low levels of

<sup>7</sup> CEDEFOP (2018). Skills panorama – accommodation and food.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Croatian Employment Service (2018), Seasonal employment in 2017. At: <http://www.hzz.hr/default.aspx?id=41925> on 8.5. 2018.



education. Those with a degree more often work as waitress and receptionists/front office staff <sup>12</sup>.

While the quality of workforce was the dominant issue up to a couple of years ago, more recently it is the shortage of labour for seasonal work in tourism and hospitality that is the most pressing issue, with employers pushing the government to relax the relatively restrictive and strict policy on working permits for foreign nationals. Workers shortage is experienced recently as Croatian residents seek better job opportunities in countries such as Germany, Austria, Italy, Ireland and Scandinavian countries.

### Greece

- The tourism industry employed 350.7 thousand people in 2017, of which 19 per cent part time (Eurostat, 2017). In general employment in tourism increased between 2008 and 2017, in contrast with other sectors, where employment during the same period fell<sup>13</sup>. Between 2008 and 2017 part time employees in the tourism sector increased from 20.9 thousand to 62.9 thousand (+201.3%)<sup>14</sup>. This increase followed the structural changes in the labour market of the past few years and it has been seen not as detriment of the full - time employment, but as complementary to it, providing at least a part - time employment option to many workers while businesses are following a conservative policy in the midst of the crisis.
- Accommodation and food accounted for 332.6 thousand jobs or 9.29 of total employment<sup>15</sup>
- In the period from 2011 – 2016, the number of jobs in the accommodation and food increased by 15.4 per cent<sup>16</sup>.
- Over a quarter (27 per cent) have low education levels, 59 medium and 14 high level; thus Greece has a highest proportion of tertiary education people working in the sector; a large proportion of low educated employees is attributed, partly, to the secondary school system failing students and oversupply of graduates with tourism and hospitality degrees to the large share of highly educated people working in the sector <sup>17</sup>.
- Almost 68 per cent are middle aged (22 to 49 years), only 11 per cent are young (15 to 24 years) and 19 per cent are older (50 to 64 years)<sup>18</sup>. The percentage of employees in

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<sup>12</sup> Croatian Employment Service – Regional Office Karlovac (2016), A survey of seasonal workers in tourism 2016. At: [http://www.hzz.hr/UserDocsImages/KA\\_Anketa\\_sezonskih\\_radnika\\_2016.pdf](http://www.hzz.hr/UserDocsImages/KA_Anketa_sezonskih_radnika_2016.pdf) on 15/05/2018.

<sup>13</sup> SETE (2018). Employment in Tourism and in the Other Sectors of the Greek Economy, 2008-2017. At: [http://www.insete.gr/portals/0/meletes-INSETE/01/2018\\_Apasxolhsh\\_Tourismos\\_2008-2017\\_EN.pdf](http://www.insete.gr/portals/0/meletes-INSETE/01/2018_Apasxolhsh_Tourismos_2008-2017_EN.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> CEDEFOP (2018). Skills panorama – accommodation and food.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*



the 25-29 and 45-64 age groups increased from 2008 to 2017 while, in contrast, the 30-44 age group saw a fall. This means that in the years of the crisis tourism has provided employment opportunities to population groups that do not have easy access to the job market, including young people and those in the 55+ age group<sup>19</sup>.

- The majority of employees in tourism sector are males<sup>20</sup>, but the number of female employees is significantly higher than in other sectors; this means that the tourism sector provides employment opportunities for population groups that do not have easy access to the job market.
- There is a huge demand for seasonal workers – the seasonal workers in the hospitality sector are about the 43% of the total workers<sup>21</sup>.

## Italy

- The tourism industry employed 1.451 million people in 2017, of which 35 per cent part time, the largest share of part timers of all three partner countries (Eurostat, 2017).
- Accommodation and food accounted for 1.423 million jobs or 6 per cent of total employment<sup>22</sup>.
- In the period from 2011 – 2016, the number of jobs in the accommodation and food increased by 17.3 per cent<sup>23</sup>.
- It has the highest participation of low education employees – 42 per cent – of all the partner countries, just over a half have medium level of education and only 7 per cent are tertiary educated, owing to a large extent to a stronger economy than that of Greece and Croatia, making the sector non-attractive to university graduates<sup>24</sup>.
- Almost 63 per cent are middle aged (22 to 49 years), 13.5 per cent are young (15 to 24 years) and 21.8 per cent are older (50 to 64 years)<sup>25</sup>.
- There is significant demand for seasonal workers during whole year. Mostly ski resorts in the northern regions demand staff in the winter season; however, the highest demand for seasonal workers is pushed by the seaside areas in summer months. The demand for labour force grows steeply from April to September and culminates in July and August.

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<sup>19</sup> SETE (2018). Employment in Tourism and in the Other Sectors of the Greek Economy, 2008-2017. At: [http://www.insete.gr/portals/0/meletes-INSETE/01/2018\\_Apasxolhsh\\_Tourismos\\_2008-2017\\_EN.pdf](http://www.insete.gr/portals/0/meletes-INSETE/01/2018_Apasxolhsh_Tourismos_2008-2017_EN.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> IOBE (2013). Η απασχόληση στον τουριστικό τομέα. At: [http://iobe.gr/docs/research/RES\\_05\\_E\\_07012013REP\\_GR.pdf](http://iobe.gr/docs/research/RES_05_E_07012013REP_GR.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> CEDEFOP (2018). Skills panorama – accommodation and food.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*



- For the research carried out in Italy, employers need especially workers who speak fluently one or better more foreign languages. Preferred are those with previous work experience abroad.
- All the three categories of workers (front office, food & beverage, housekeeping) are required. Reception roles are more difficult to cover as the staff is supposed to be more qualified (e.g. foreign languages, PC skills). Jobs in food and beverage field are the most season-dependent as tourist facilities (hotels, resorts, restaurants etc.) demand many more waiters in the peak season. Housekeeping roles are not usually very well-paid and don't require higher education, nevertheless the quality standards need to be ensured. For that reason, enterprises often opt for outsourcing of housekeeping services.



### 3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

#### Skills for tourism and hospitality<sup>26</sup>

In general, EU tourism and hospitality employers display dissatisfaction with the quality of the workforce. The sector, especially accommodation, that employs the largest number of people in the sector, offers temporary, seasonal and part-time work. With a lower than average pay it attracts students (who often take up the job as a lifestyle choice or as an entry into the labour market), young people with low level of education, and migrants. There are more women than man in the sector, as a number of them prefers part-time work. The sector employs higher proportion of people with lower educational attainment than economy on average.

When it comes to employment, the sector is not considered as a good employer, given the low paid, unsocial working hours and poor working conditions, with little or no training or work-based learning and poor career path.

Increasingly, employers report several problems in recruiting employees – partly due to the shortage of people willing to work in the sector and partly to the shortage of skills. In general, the following skills are needed for jobs in the sector:

- Soft skills crucial for service delivery, including language, customer service, cultural awareness and cross-cultural skills, service quality and communication skills.
- Problem-solving skills needed for working in a technology rich environment, notably those related to social media, e-marketing and e-commerce.
- Small business management skills (finance, human resources etc.), along with leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation skills.

Emerging skills needed in the sector are those relating to accessibility, since population ages, so will the number of older tourists that need assistance with mobility, as well as the growing population of people with special needs (reduced mobility, hearing or visual impairment or similar). The second group of emerging skills relates to sustainability, so called 'green skills' for those in tourism and hospitality.

Initial VET for tourism and hospitality cannot provide all the skills needed by the sector as it operates within a wider educational system and it is, for the most part, under the administration of the education department. Thus, it cannot be changed or transformed outside the overhaul of

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<sup>26</sup> Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (2016). Mapping and performance check of the supply side of tourism education and training. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.



the entire VET system. The improvement can more quickly be made through continuous VET, with a heavy emphasis on the appropriate on-the-job training. This is especially important as the number of people with formal VET qualification entering the sector is relatively low. Provision of in-house training, often involving the use of private training firms, is a significant feature of overall provision for adult and continuing education and is especially characteristic of larger companies in the industry. It is clearly more difficult for SMEs to help develop their staff and keep them up to date in the same way, though arrangements through industry associations or sectorial groups is one way of addressing the issue.

A more comprehensive study into the skill needs of the sector was conducted in Croatia by the Institute for Tourism, to support the Ministry of Tourism's lobbying efforts to improve the VET training, against stakeholders' warning of the declining competitiveness of Croatian tourism due to the labour skill shortage. The research results are well aligned with those presented in the above referred to study of EU members states, with a more detailed elaboration of skills gap for lower-end hospitality jobs. When it comes to the occupational skills, Croatian employers listed a number of them, presented in table 3.1.



**Table 3.1.**

**Key competencies in tourism and hospitality occupations**

Type of competencies	Competency
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team work</li> <li>• Foreign languages</li> <li>• Learn to learn</li> <li>• Proactive attitude</li> <li>• Promptness and punctuality</li> <li>• Independence</li> <li>• Sense of responsibility</li> </ul>
General for tourism and hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication in native and foreign language</li> <li>• General education</li> <li>• Organisation of work/tasks</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial competencies</li> <li>• Personal verbal and non-verbal presentation</li> <li>• Motivation to learn</li> </ul>
Sector skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel/rooms cleaning techniques</li> <li>• Identifying and reporting repairs needed</li> <li>• Communication with guests – especially conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• Respecting hierarchy, working standards and procedures</li> <li>• Working efficiently and precisely, with attention to details – especially for front office</li> <li>• Know basic about the hotel and the destination</li> <li>• Understanding guests and their needs - empathy</li> </ul>

When it comes to the seasonal workers, there are two basic issues to deal with – as all three partner countries are facing shortage of workers due to the labour migration to the North, the pool of seasonal workers is less experienced. In Croatia, over 50 per cent of seasonal workers might not have prior experience in tourism and hospitality. Secondly, large hotel enterprises, able to offer better work conditions, higher pay and in-house-training, are better at retaining workers season after season. The prevailing micro and small enterprises thus attract those relatively inexperienced, while at the same time lacking resources to properly train them. This is compounded by the third problem – many micro and small enterprises lack also people with skills needed to provide appropriate on-the-job training. It is therefore of little surprise that seasonal workers, according to the satisfaction survey conducted by the regional offices of the Croatian Employment Service, find the biggest source of frustration mostly in relation to work organisation<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Croatian Employment Service – Regional Office Karlovac (2016), A survey of seasonal workers in tourism 2016. At: [http://www.hzz.hr/UserDocsImages/KA\\_Anketa\\_sezonskih\\_radnika\\_2016.pdf](http://www.hzz.hr/UserDocsImages/KA_Anketa_sezonskih_radnika_2016.pdf) on 15/05/2018.



## Work based learning

This text deals with the conduct of learning activities in organizations. It defines work-based learning, workplace learning and on-the-job training and covers methods and models of learning in organisations with the purpose of identifying the most suitable learning approach for training of seasonal workers in tourism and hospitality sector.

### 3.1 Work-based learning

Work-based learning (WBL) is defined as an educational strategy that combines **academic** education with **work experiences** where academic and technical skills can be applied and evolved. WBL is usually integrated in school-based programmes - vocational education and training (VET) systems. In academic context, the element of work-based learning facilitates young people's transition to work by providing the knowledge, skills and competences which they need for a successful enter into the labour market.<sup>28</sup>

Work-based learning encompasses a diversity of **formal** and **non-formal** arrangements including **apprenticeships, work placement** and **informal on-the-job learning**.

In more general way, WBL can be defined by three key elements: learning through work, learning for work and learning at work.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2 Workplace learning

Workplace learning is **learning by doing** and by **reflecting on experience**. It is mostly an informal process, although line managers have an important part to play in facilitating it. It involves **self-directed learning** usually enhanced by **coaching, mentoring, e-learning** or more formal **planned experience**. It may be delivered in the form of simple observing of more experienced colleagues; conversing, swapping stories, cooperating on tasks and offering mutual support.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.3 On-the-job Training

**On-the-job training** (OTJ) provides learning that happens in the normal work situations. It may constitute the whole training or be combined with off-the-job training.<sup>31</sup> On-the job training foresee teaching the skills, knowledge and competencies that are needed for employees to perform a specific job within the workplace and work setting.

Comparing the definitions of **work-based learning, on-the-job training/learning** and **workplace learning**, a quite small but evident difference in their meaning may be observed. **Work-based**

<sup>28</sup> European Commission (2013): *Work-Based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers*.

<sup>29</sup> Gray, D. (2001): *Assessment series* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/database/id11\\_Briefing\\_on\\_Work\\_based\\_Learning.rtf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/database/id11_Briefing_on_Work_based_Learning.rtf)

<sup>30</sup> Armstrong, M., Taylor, S. (2014): *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice*. Kogan page, London.

<sup>31</sup> European Commission (2018): *EPALE Glossary: On-the-job training* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/it/glossary/job-training-0>



**learning** is evidently connected with school-based education and is set in academic context. Even if the knowledge, skills and competencies are developed in compliance with a real workplace they are meant to be transferable to other workplaces/companies in the industry sector once the student graduates. **On-the-job learning** and **workplace learning**, on the other hand, are more closely linked to a concrete workplace and aren't necessarily connected with academic/school programme or curricula. The knowledge, skills and competencies acquired are relevant for a specific work environment and are tailored to the needs and requirements of the concrete employer. In another words, work-based learning refers to learning from a workplace during an internship as a student and in addition to classroom learning while on-the-job/workplace learning refers to learning acquired as an employee of a company. However, workplace and on-the-job learning can be combined with off-the job elements too. For example, seminars on safety measures for employees in restaurant can take place off-the-job/off-site.

For the purpose of SeasonREADY project that aims at training of (1) seasonal employees in hospitality sector who aren't primarily in education and (2) owners/ managers in charge of recruitment, training and management of human resources, the following text will operate with **the concept of on-the-job training** and **workplace learning**.

### 3.4 Advantages and disadvantages of on-the-job/workplace learning

Many advantages of work-based learning and on-the-job learning can be identified. In the table below, some key advantages for both learner and employer are listed.

Advantages	
Learner	Employer
Development of deep professional expertise	Addressing skills gaps through tailor made training
Development of skills and competencies required to operate in a workplace including hard and soft skills	Positive impact on supply of qualified labour
Improved confidence in learner's work	Positive effect on recruitment and retention
Enhanced learning by feedback given immediately	Improved productivity and performance
Simple and quick integration into the company	Positive effects on continuous staff development
Supported future learning	Cost effective method of imparting skills

When applying on-the-job training in company, there is a risk that the learning process won't be as effective as desired. The quality of on-the-job training delivered at a workplace is significantly dependent on **the trainer's quality** as he/she must be familiar with the concrete workplace, highly skilled at the job/profession, must have strong pedagogical/training competencies and on the top of that a good trainer must have certain soft skills such as communication and interpersonal skills.



If the trainer lacks one of those skills, he/she will confuse and stress the trainee without achieving real learning outcomes and the training will be counter-productive for both trainee and employer.

Another common weakness is that on-the-job training is sometimes given in a rush or in a hasty manner so the trainee doesn't have time to absorb all the information and develop the skills and the trainer doesn't have sufficient time to give feedback.

Besides, on-the-job training represents a significant investment (of financial, time and human resources) which can lead to no effect if the company fails in the retention of trained employees or suffers from high turnover.

## 4. Learning methods

On-the-job and workplace training can be delivered through various methods. Major part of the process should be planned and provided by the company; additional self-study effort is required by the trained employee. Below, some typical examples of on-the-job training are listed:

### 4.1 Company-managed

#### 4.1.1 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a method of learning which combines learning in school and training in a company. Normally the company provides an apprentice with a contract and reward. At the end of the apprenticeship, the trainee receives a fully recognised diploma and qualification.<sup>32</sup>

Advantages	Disadvantages
Deep practical experience recognised by a certificate	Apprenticeship is usually low paid and less esteemed within the work team
Opening access to certain careers through an apprenticeship	Time-consuming
Combination of school-based and work-based learning	Suitable for students not employees

#### 4.1.2 Job-shadowing

In general, job shadowing means working side-by-side more experienced colleague. The core of this method lies in spending time with someone who is doing a particular job in order to learn how to do it. In academic context, job shadowing is an educational program where a trainee learns about a particular occupation or profession. In job shadowing, a business (partners with an educational

<sup>32</sup> European Commission (2018). *Employment, social affairs & inclusion: Apprenticeship* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1198&langId=en>



institution) provides an experience for a student of what it is like to perform a certain type of work by having them accompanied by an experienced worker as they perform the job.<sup>33</sup>

Advantages	Disadvantages
Learn to do the job and related processes and operation in real work setting	Experienced worker may “waste” time with explaining his job to the trainee which may lead to decrease of productivity and frustration on both sides
Opportunity to observe experienced worker	
Learn more about a concrete workplace and its culture	
Suitable for students and employees	Usually doesn't reflect learning needs of the trainee

#### 4.1.3 Coaching and mentoring

**Coaching** is a traditional training method which includes focus on (1) an individual's needs and accomplishments, (2) close observation, and (3) impartial and non-judgmental feedback on performance.<sup>34</sup>

**Mentoring** is training system in which a senior or more experienced individual (the mentor) is assigned to act as an advisor, counsellor, or guide to a junior or trainee. The mentor is responsible for providing support to, and feedback on, the individual in his or her charge.<sup>35</sup>

Advantages	Disadvantages
Support the integration of a new worker to the job and organization.	Dependent on the quality and motivation of coach/mentor
Stimulates motivation through the sense of achievement that comes from feedback	
Development of communication and interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, leadership skills	Risk of mismatched mentor/coach-mentee team
Effective transfers of professional and personal skills	Transfer of “bad” habits or old ways of doing
Adaptable to the learning needs of each trainee	Time-consuming
Effective way of sharing workplace culture and commitment to the organisation	More suitable for training of high-skilled staff

<sup>33</sup> *Job shadowing*. Business Dictionary [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/job-shadowing.html>

<sup>34</sup> *Coaching*. Business Dictionary [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/coaching.html>

<sup>35</sup> *Mentoring*. Business Dictionary [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mentoring.html>



It is a simple way of practical training under which the trainer demonstrates an operation while the trainee observes carefully. Such training can be done in a real workplace setting or in a simulated environment.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Simple/time-saving training which doesn't require special equipment	Interpersonal skill are hardly transferred
Trainer doesn't need special competencies – only professional skills related to a specific job	Limited space for trainees' practice
Feasible in small and micro enterprises	Limited opportunities to assess the learning outcomes

#### 4.1.5 Simulation and role-playing

In case of some industries/job positions, simulation may be preferred in order to assure safety of the trainees, clients or public. Role-play simulation is an experiential learning method in which trainees improvise within a simulated scenario. It intends to build first-person experience in a safe and supportive environment.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Expedient in high-risk working environment	Resource-expensive (trainers, setting for simulation, previous preparation of training, materials, time-consuming)
Creative approach stimulating motivation	
Positive effect on team building and the newcomer's integration	
Opportunity to prepare trainee for unexpected situations	

Other company-managed methods of on-the-job training might be **induction training, planned experience, job rotation, understudy, instructions** etc.

## 4.2 Self-managed

Self-managed methods of on-the-job learning represent an additional tool which can support the whole process. Company/trainer should provide the trainee with necessary materials (such as worksheets) and instructions. Trainee is supposed to accomplish the work alone, follow-up meeting with trainer is recommended in order to give feedback and answer eventual questions. Typical examples of such methods are:

- Self-assessment questionnaires
- Guidelines
- E-learning
- Homework
- Learning diaries



As mentioned above, methods of on-the-job learning can be combined with each other and with off-the-job elements. The success of each method depends on well-set learning objectives (reflecting learning needs), character of the job and the working environment as well as on the trainer's competencies and the trainee's motivation. Learning process can be supported by applying both company- and self-managed methods together.

## 5. Models of work-based learning

Models of work-based learning are based on combination of school education and experiential learning in a workplace. European Commission identifies three main models of WBL:

### 1. Apprenticeships schemes

Apprenticeship (known in Austria and Germany as the "dual system") is defined as education or training combining periods in an educational institution or training centre and in the workplace.<sup>36</sup>

### 2. School-based VET

It is school-based VET which includes **on-the-job training** periods in companies. On-the-job training periods typically cover internships, work placements or traineeships that are incorporated as a compulsory or optional element of VET programmes leading to formal qualifications.

### 3. WBL integrated in a school-based programme

Elements of WBL can be integrated through on-site labs, workshops, restaurants, junior or practice firms, simulations or real business/industry project assignments. The aim is to close to real life or real-life working environments.

## 6. Models of on-the-job training

There are many models of on-the-job training which differ according to the sector, company and workplace where applied. Models combine on-the-job training with off-the-job elements and non-formal ways of learning with formal education. A specific model of OJT should reflect learning/training needs identified by **gap analysis** (identifying the gap between what people know and can do and what they should know and be able to do) including a review of **corporate, collective and individual needs**.

In following text, some models of structured workplace-based OJT are explained.

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<sup>36</sup> European Commission (2013): *Work-Based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers*.



## 6.1 Four Steps OJT Model<sup>37</sup>

One of the first structured on-the-job training programs was launched during World War I in the shipbuilding industry by Charles R. Allen.

### **Step 1: Preparation**

Show workers what they are required to do.

### **Step 2: Presentation**

Tell workers what they are required to do and why they are required to do it.

### **Step 3: Application**

Let workers perform the required tasks.

### **Step 4: Inspection**

Provide feedback, informing workers of what they have done right and what they have done wrong.

## 6.2 Seven Steps OJT Model<sup>38</sup>

### **Step 1: Introduction**

Discuss and agree on learning objectives.

Discuss the acceptable standards of knowledge and performance.

Answer any questions.

### **Step 2: Trainer shows and tells**

Trainer: explains and performs each step.

Trainee: observes each step and questions the trainer.

### **Step 3: Exchange of roles**

Trainee: explains each step and responds to questions.

Trainer: performs each step and questions the trainee.

### **Step 4: Trainee shows and tells.**

Trainee: explains the step, gets permission and then performs each step.

Trainer: give permission and observes each step, ask questions as the trainee performs.

### **Step 5: Conclusion**

Recognize accomplishment.

Discussing the performance.

### **Step 6: Documentation**

Training documentation: an attendance sheet, learning objectives achieved, certification document etc.

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<sup>37</sup> On-The-Job Training. *Reference For Business* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Oli-Per/On-the-Job-Training.html#ixzz58xnmdoRa>

<sup>38</sup> Seven Step OJT Training Model. *Occupational Safety & Health Training Academy* [online]. [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <https://www.oshatrain.org/courses/pages/703ojt.html>



## Step 7: Validation

Observe and question the employee to validate that the training has been successful and that the employee has developed the required competencies and attitudes related to the work.

### 6.3 Social Workplace Learning Models

Social learning concept is based on learning through knowledge sharing among employees.

It is a new trend in on-the-job training that offers a complement or alternative to the traditional expert-driven content-focused approach to learning. There are 4 main models of Social Workplace Learning<sup>39</sup>.

**Directed Social Learning Model** – social approaches are used to reinforce or test understanding in the expert-driven content-focused approach to learning. Trainer's/manager's role is limited only to ensure that people participate and keep on track. MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is an example of this approach.

**Guided Social Learning Model** – is based on collaborative working focused on building a framework for the sharing of ideas and knowledge in order for individuals to learn from one another.

**Team Social Learning Model** –teams and groups share their knowledge and experiences as part of the daily flow of work.

**Individual Social Learning Model** –the individual builds his/her own professional network of colleagues and contacts (Personal Learning Network) to exchange ideas and experiences outside the organisation.

### 6.4 Types of on-the-job training

Training programmes in companies can be concerned with different roles and for them required skill and competencies including:

- manual skills, including apprenticeships;
- IT skills;
- team leader or supervisory training;
- management training;
- interpersonal skills such as leadership or team building;
- personal skills, e.g. assertiveness, coaching, communicating, time management;

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<sup>39</sup> Hart, J. (2014). *Learning in the modern workplace: 4 Models of Social Workplace Learning*. [online]: [Accessed on 06-03-2018] Source: <http://www.c4lpt.co.uk/blog/2014/06/12/4-models-social-workplace-learning/>



- training in organizational procedures or practices such as induction, health and safety, performance management, equal opportunity or managing diversity policy and practice.<sup>40</sup>

## 7. Training in tourism and hospitality

Certain kind of learning happens in every workplace if only in simple unstructured non-formal way. However, to ensure effective and efficient learning, provided training should be well targeted and tailored to the needs of individual employee, work position and company.

### 7.1 Training for seasonal staff

The sector of hospitality and tourism has many specifics that must be respected when designing a training programme for employees. In this sector, a significant number of **seasonal staff** is hired to cover few months long season. Considering the length of their contract and the frenetic character of the peak periods, seasonal workers face quite difficult task – they must familiarize with the workplace, learn to do all the operations and represent well the organization in very short time and usually under stressful circumstances. However, providing the temporary worker with a well-planned training is necessary to ensure the quality of services. Even if some professional skills can be transferred in a short time, other key elements of quality service such as employees' commitment to the organization are very difficult to share in a hasty manner.

### 7.2 Training for trainers

Besides a well-planned training for workers, another decisive factor can't be overlooked - **the quality of the trainers**. In many SMEs, it is the **manager** who is in charge of the staff training. Even assuming that the manager/ trainer is an expert at his/her own job, the ability of delivering knowledge to the trainee is not a natural thing. Moreover, managers who are responsible for the business and at the same time have to carry out training, encounter some serious challenges that can lead to elevated stress levels, frustration and subsequently to decrease in quality of both management and training.

For that reason, trainers and managers should have the use of training materials and procedures as well as at least basic course for trainers.

### 7.3 Recommendations for on-the-job training in tourism and hospitality

According to the research conducted within TTRAIN project<sup>41</sup>, on-the-job training in tourism should be **short, work-related** and **practical**. Flexible structure is also a huge advantage. The training programme should be designed as easily adaptable according regional, sectorial and company context.

<sup>40</sup> Armstrong, M., Taylor, S. (2014): *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice*. Kogan page, London.

<sup>41</sup> TTRAIN – Tourism Training the Trainers - GAP analysis (2015). Available online: <http://trainingfortourism.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/TTRAIN-Gap-Analysis.pdf>



In order to facilitate the implementation of training, it should be easy to understand for non-professional in-house trainers and managers who will take over the training.

**Blended learning** structure seems to be the best compromise for effective and time-saving training – for example a combination of off-the-job and online training together with suitable methods of on-the-job training.

Considering the short period of employment of seasonal workers, some training methods seem to be more convenient than others. Reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages of different OTJ methods showcased above, **demonstration-observation** with some elements of **coaching** or **mentoring** can be evaluated as a favourable blend for training of seasonal workers.

- **Demonstration-Observation**

Simple and time-saving way of practical training – the trainer demonstrates an operation while the trainee observes. It doesn't require any special resources so it is applicable also in small and micro enterprises. On the other hand, limited opportunity of interaction between trainer and trainee prevent transmission of interpersonal competencies, adequate feedback and sharing commitment to the company. To balance the weaknesses mentioned, coaching or mentoring features can be applied together with the training based on demonstration and observation.

- **Coaching**

Training approach focused on the individual's needs and accomplishments, close observation, and impartial and non-judgmental feedback on performance provided by the coach.

- **Mentoring**

Training system in which more experienced individual (the mentor) acts as an advisor, counsellor, or guide to a junior or trainee.

The individual-oriented approach included in both coaching and mentoring supports the development of interpersonal competencies, supports commitment sharing and stimulates trainees' motivation.

As mentioned above, this method is a resource-expensive therefore inconvenient for the purposes of seasonal staff training. However, it doesn't mean that coaching/mentoring should be abandoned for good. In seasonal staff's training some elements of these methods can be applied – for example feedback sessions of group mentoring (1 mentor providing individual support to more mentees). Coaching/mentoring approach can be adopted also in the combination with self-managed learning, for example self-studying followed by an individual/group meeting with trainer in order to discuss the material and answer eventual questions.



## 8. METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfil objectives of this stage of the background research on training needs of seasonal workers in tourism and hospitality, three research methods were used:

- in-depth interviews,
- focus groups,
- and a survey.

The research was designed to harness the view of a broad range of stakeholders involved in the human resources management for tourism and hospitality, dealing with the seasonal workers in particular: owners/managers of hospitality enterprises, tourism and hospitality VET trainers, relevant professional organisations and policy makers. As the aim was to obtain insights into the training needs of the seasonal workers, three methods were combined to ensure triangulation of results.

### In-depth interviews

These interviews were designed with an aim to obtain insights into the practices of seasonal workers employment and training needs from the perspective of institutions and organisations involved in their training and employment. At the same time, this activity acts as an early dissemination activity with an aim to introduce SeasonREADY project early on to gain support and assistance in the later stages of the project.

In line with the above broad objectives, respondents can be grouped into four categories:

- Employer organisation (small hotel associations, hotel associations and similar) to learn of the main problems that their members face when it comes to meeting seasonal demand for labour and their training needs;
- Intermediaries such as national/regional/local public employment agencies, private employment agencies to learn of the hiring practices, preferred skills and competencies, experience and problems encountered in terms of skill and experience deficiencies;
- Employee organisations such as (seasonal) hospitality worker unions to learn about skills and educational needs from the employee's perspective and, possibly, learn about good practices;
- VET schools/ trainers involved in (seasonal) hospitality workers education to dwell more deeply into the skills and competencies needed, preferred educational methods and, also, good practices.



The interview guide with the instruction on selecting respondents and conducting the interviews was distributed to the partners for comments and suggestion. After slight corrections in light of the partner comments, the final guide was prepared for partners in charge of the national data collection. The interview guide proposed a set of questions tapping into the four main themes:

- general situation with seasonal workers in hospitality, in the three targeted professions (food and beverages, front office and housekeeping);
- the skills expected from seasonal workers in these three professions;
- perceived skills gap for each of the three professions;
- type of training that would be best suited for seasonal workers training in the micro and small enterprises in hospitality.

Initially, it was proposed to conduct ten interviews per country. In order to strengthen the design of our study, we have agreed to use the data-saturation approach, meaning that we will continue conducting interviews up to the point where we are not getting any new insights and thus further data collection and/or analysis are unnecessary. By applying this approach, fifteen interviews were conducted of which seven in Croatia, six in Italy and ten in Greece, in late January and early February 2018. The lower than planned number of interviews was partly due to the saturation principles, and partly to the timing of the interviews during winter months. All interviews were tape recorded (upon obtaining respondent permission), transcribed in the national language with synopsis done in English to facilitate data analysis and reporting.

## Focus groups

The aim of the focus groups was to gain insights into problems related to training of seasonal workers, in particular the skill shortage in three occupations - front desk, food & beverage and housekeeping as well as to detect the skills that managers/on-the-job trainers need to train seasonally hired staff more effectively.

Main research topics and goals of group discussion were to:

- Examine employers' experience with educating seasonal workers;
- Detect necessary skills for seasonal workers;
- Determine the gap between expected and actual basic skill set.

The criteria used for participant selection were:

- Managers of SMHE directly involved with 3 main occupations of seasonal workers- front office, food & beverage and housekeeping.



- Managers should come from at least 3 different companies/hotels and if there will be more of them from the same company, they must have different functions related to the training and supervision of the three occupational groups of seasonal workers.
- If at the moment of conducting the focus groups, it is not possible to get sufficient number of managers from SMHE then participants can be from the enterprises conducting on-the-job training within the formal VET.

In total, three focus groups were conducted with 20 participants, ranging from four in Croatia to nine in Greece, in the period from May to June 2018. Similar to the in-depth interviews, focus groups were tape recorded (after obtaining participants permission) and transcripts made in national languages, with summaries in English. For the number of participants and their structure see Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1.**

Focus groups – participants and their structure per partner country

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIVES OF:</b>
Croatia	4	Hotel owner (1), sales and marketing hotel manager (1), resort human resource manager (1), trade association (1)
Greece	9	Regional tourism association, VET trainers (2), hotel owner association (2), hotel owner (3), VET tourism consultant
Italy	7	Hotel owners (1), restaurant owners (3), resort managers (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	

## Survey

Finally, a survey of seasonal workers was conducted in three partner countries in order to obtain a self-assessment of the training needs from those for whom the training is to be developed. The specific aim of the survey was to obtain information about training needs and preferences of seasonal workers.

To collect the data, a questionnaire, consisting of twelve close-ended questions, was used. Questions tapped into the following:

- prior work experience
- formal qualification
- training needs of seasonal workers
- training needs of their trainers.



A draft questionnaire in English was developed and circulated among the partners. After few changes in light of the comments obtained, the final questionnaire in English was prepared and translated to national languages by partners in charge of the national survey administration. Questionnaire was designed for self-completion utilising snow-balling sampling method for the speed and efficiency, with a quota defined by the proposal to be between 10 and 20 per partner country. In total, 108 respondents participated in the survey, ranging from 30 in Greece to 43 in Italy (Table 4.2.). It was administered in June and July 2018. Each partner has entered data into a standardised data-entry sheet and the lead partner, with a help of the Olympic Training has conducted descriptive (frequency) analysis.

**Table 4.2.**

**Number of respondents by partner country**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Croatia	35	32
Greece	30	28
Italy	43	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>

## Reporting

The reporting of results is organised by the research methods used. For the in-depth interviews and focus-groups analysis was done by the key themes that emerged from the summaries provided in English, while the survey results were analysed by frequencies.

With a view that the results of this research serve as a foundation for developing curriculum and training materials initially in English for all partner countries and then with some adaptation to the partner country's needs, the results are presented jointly with some national comparisons made where appropriate.

When it comes to the survey, results are reported by total. With the small sample size and convenience sampling the analysis remained at the level of description, but nevertheless useful for ascertaining relative importance of educational areas and training, especially when backed up by qualitative research that has provided a broader context for understanding the underlying issues in more depth.



## 9. RESULTS

This chapter is intended to provide an analysis of the training needs based on the methodological approach presented in the previous chapter.

### In-depth interviews

Although the three partner countries differ slightly in terms of tourism demand and supply (ratio of domestic vs. international tourists; tourism intensity; structure of tourism and hospitality enterprises), they all share similar problems when it comes to the workforce, in particular owing to the seasonality of demand. Common to all three partner countries are:

- Lack of seasonal workers in general, in particular for front office and for up-market service delivery; this is especially the case in Croatia, where all respondents highlighted the lack of people ready to take up seasonal work with most of those with a sound experience left to work abroad;
- Seasonality impacting adversely seasonal workers' motivation to learn and develop their skills, as they take up seasonal work in hospitality out of necessity rather than personal choice; subsequently they do not develop professionally, their personal development is slowed down and their skills do not evolve;
- Due to the seasonal nature of work where there is poor career path development, employees do not put an effort in their skill development, while for employers it is too expensive to provide additional training (either through hiring trainers or by providing in-house training a few days in advance of enterprises opening), leading in most cases to an ad-hoc on-the-job training for which they are poorly trained;
- For employers it is also risky to invest in seasonal workers as they are rarely loyal to an enterprise, tending to change employers from season to season, or even within the season;
- Due to a poor training and skills acquired through doing the job, employees lack confidence and adaptability to different circumstances, what becomes most noticeable in peak season when, due to poor training and lack of operational procedures, they are not able to work under pressure and solve problems effectively; this is most obvious in food and beverages services;
- While housekeeping is the core of the hospitality industry, this job is often underestimated as it does not require specific competencies; however, as housekeeping is perceived to require simple skills, training needs of housekeeping staff are often underestimated.

Skills that seasonal workers lack in **general** are:

- Customer service



- Welcoming attitude
- Empathy – willingness / readiness to help customers or meet their needs and expectations
- Ability to provide quality service to guests with special needs
- Communication skills
  - General
  - Foreign languages, especially English
  - Sensitive to cultural differences
- Professional attitude
  - Personal grooming
  - Motivation for work /pride in job well done
  - Work ethics
- Team work
- Ability to work under pressure
- Emotional intelligence
- Flexibility /multitasking.

Skills gap for work in **food and beverages**:

- Empathy
- Customer service – people skills, politeness
- Personal manners (smile, empathy, patience, assertiveness)
- Work under pressure
- Product knowledge
- Professional / technical skills, especially mastering new techniques (i.e. cocktail), new methods in food preparation and trends in serving food
- Personal hygiene
- Hygiene in food handling (storage, preparation, cleaning).

Skills gap for work in **housekeeping**:

- Knowing standards and work by these standards
- Accuracy
- Quality control
- Ability to complete task quickly
- Hygiene



- Responsibility for inventory / minimising damage
- Patience
- Basics of foreign language
- Care to ensure guests are comfortable.

Skills gap for work in **front office**:

- Communication skills
- Multitasking
- Foreign language
- Intercultural skills
- Technical skills (reservations, invoicing, booking)
- Customer service – politeness, greetings, empathy, smile, positive attitude
- Problem solving
- Customer care – empathy, smile, welcoming and friendly attitude
- ICT skills.

Finally, when it comes to training preference, most participants agreed that on-the-job training would be a preferred option, with a variation in terms of delivery and funding. Some suggested that such training should be delivered by an outside instructor (if not prohibitively expensive or not self-funded), possibly prior to commencing the work, but most agreed that in-house trainer would be better option, providing that such person has appropriate training skills.

Skills that in-house trainer need to possess, according to the responses are:

- Technical skills for the job
- Knowledge transfer
- Emotional intelligence
- Communication
- Leadership
- Ability to motivate
- Basic of organisational behaviour – ability to identify employee strengths and weaknesses
- Empathy – understanding employee point of view
- Patience and helpfulness.



## Focus groups

Since results of the focus groups held in the three partner countries are heterogeneous, the results will be presented here by the general theme by country.

### Croatia

The problem of seasonal workforce in SMHE sector is a multi-layered one. Firstly, employers recognize difficulties in finding said workforce and keeping them returning on seasonal basis. Secondly, there are issues with quality of those employees – primarily regarding the young coming without minimum of required skills, but more importantly without motivation to work (which applies not only to the young but it is a wider issue). Finally, participants view social climate, state laws, parent influence and youth's perception of itself and the market as additional problems.

- When conducting job interviews, employers stress:
  - Motivation for work as the one of two key factors in hiring.
  - Previous experience (especially in food and beverage sector).
  - General impression of the employee (meaning manners, politeness, willingness to learn).
- Level and form of education vary among personnel within all of the establishments represented in focus group – from unqualified to university educated workers.
  - Reception workers are easier to find, as it is perceived as a finer, office job.
  - Regarding housekeeping in their establishments, employers stress having well manners as a necessary trait and perceive the work as the least demanding of the three sectors and thus requiring least qualification. Perception of their work is that of a repetitive one in which housekeeping has a check-list they need to uphold.
  - In food and beverage, employers state that qualification and profile of formally educated personnel does not meet the standards of their profession – primarily concerning waiters and cooks.
- Perceived employees' skills differ from actual ones: employers perceive a troubling self-image and expectation dissonance in their employees regarding their skills, experience and expected salary at the beginning of their careers.
- Social climate and profession image are distorted in a manner that on one hand, individuals believe everyone can wait tables and it being an easy job with low reputation, which in turn results in low enrolment rates in vocational schools and underqualified or unqualified workforce.



- Situation differs when it comes to cooks and chefs, whose profession is steadily gaining media popularity in the past years.
- Formal training and previous experience play a more significant role in food and beverage sector than in any other, while additional previous training is considered a plus.
- Training strategies for employees in food and beverage section do not differ among employers.
  - All employers provide a training upon hiring new personnel, mostly in the manner where members of the younger generations take on a role of an apprentice for a while, while experienced staff acts as mentors, thus providing the younger with the necessary knowledge older generation possesses.
  - All participants (employers) are involved at least partially in new staff training, but generally delegate such tasks to their experienced employees.
  - Regardless of their previous relevant training, it is still necessary for employees to undergo training due to different demands and work environments.
- Problems in performing their jobs are connected with:
  - Employees' lack of experience and knowledge (i.e. having basic serving skills for a waiter, working in new programs for receptionists or cleaning poorly).
  - Lack of motivated workers to do the job adequately – which is why they keep repeating key factor of motivation for work when it comes to good employees.
- Employers do not vary their approach in confronting day-to-day mistakes in differently educated personnel. Approach varies mostly due to different establishments and work climate. Companies have soft protocols to handle situations that arise, but not on a level of an individual, but on a company level.
- Teamwork poses a minor problem which reflects more as an adaptation period in establishments that hire people from different parts of country due to different mentality.
- Each sector requires different skill set:
  - Food and beverage – preparation and serving skills, interpersonal, organizational and communication skills. Waiters also have to be well mannered and polite;
  - Housekeeping – interpersonal skills, foreign languages;
  - Reception – foreign languages, interpersonal and communication skills, computer knowledge.
- Employers organize informal and formal trainings when employees first start working and in their hypothetical view wouldn't mind investing in them further, but still generally wage benefits and losses in such opportunities.



- Employers state that there are situations where employees aren't interested in developing advanced skills in their profession, but generally view trainings as a positive development which helps them perform their job.
- While discussing additional education and courses their employees could take, employers see culinary sector as one with the most options and most worth investing. On the other hand, they have high expectations from the waiting staff, but there are fewer opportunities for additional education for them.

## Greece

Employers prefer to hire interns from initial and continuous VET programs. For front office they hire university educated, while others come with lower level of education. Housekeepers have high rate of turnover. In any case, seasonal workers stay with an employer for about two years, moving on after gaining initial experience.

While employer prefer to hire people with experience, less popular destinations and / or smaller companies not able to offer good remuneration package have no much choice, often hiring people with no training or experience. In such case, they look for right attitude and social skills.

Motivation is an issue with seasonal workers. Many, especially younger, see it as a temporary source of income; this being compounded by a relatively low wage. The older workers are more motivated and committed, especially when management acknowledge and recognizes their efforts.

The participants consider very important formal education, but also prior experience (especially in large, branded, upmarket hotels) and prior training. Personal characteristics and horizontal skills such as communication skills, sales skills, problem solving are considered as positive characteristics for seasonal hiring. This varies by the type of jobs:

- For food and beverages formal educations is almost a prerequisite
- For front office tourism degree is preferred, but they also look for foreign language, communication and self-presentation skills.

Despite preference for some prior experience or education, as such staff is hard to find, most seasonal workers need training. This is also the case with those holding formal qualification without work experience.

Performance of the seasonal staff is acceptable, but further improvements are needed. The workers in the front office are mostly stable, they are tertiary educated and their performance is satisfactory.



But in the case of workers in F&B (not the chefs if there are any) and in housekeeping most problems relate to poor communication and in interpersonal relationships skills, atop lack of qualifications and skills.

In many cases the owners of small hotels are not qualified. Such people do not understand the need for such training and they do not invest in the training of their personnel. This negatively affects the performance of their seasonal staff, as they do not receive proper guidance –if any. Some of them pointed out that problems related with roles and hierarchy may arise when the owners are absent, but the problem is not so serious in small hotels.

The participants said that they provide training in the beginning of the season to all their seasonal workers. The most experienced seasonal workers are more malleable, and they are easily familiarized with the hotels' procedures. The ones with less training or no training cannot perform as they wish to.

Most of the hotel staff must have some standard skills such as: patience, good communication, politeness, personal skills, smile, problem solving skills, ability to handle difficult situations, fluency in foreign languages – mostly but not exclusively in English. Culture of providing services, common courtesy and handling cultural differences of guests are also important. Important skills are also considered to be the skills to handle harassments and bullying behaviours.

- Housekeeping: organizational skills, time management, safety & hygiene rules.
- F&B: technical skills in cooking and pastry, service, wine tasting, sales.
- Reception/ front office: organizational skills, time management, interpersonal skills, consistency, sales, use of reception systems.

Also, there is a lack in systematic provision of practical and appropriate theoretical training by the state. Even some trained workers do not have adequate skills because they have received only theoretical training which is not well related to the actual real needs. On the other hand, a student cannot get the necessary practical training if this training starts in the middle of the high season as it usually happens -this is a structural drawback as the trainings in tourism shouldn't necessarily follow the conventional educational schedule.

In general, they do not provide structured training to their employees as it is not easy to undertake the time and money cost, they just take advantage of some funded training offers which are not customized to their needs and they are not so efficient in terms of up-skilling.

They usually organize some informal training in the beginning of the season delivered by the owner or by an experienced member of the permanent staff. Generally, their managers or even they themselves as hotel owners do not have enough skills to support a WBL procedure. Some of them are not theoretically trained and they have not skills as trainers.

The trainers – mentors should have additional to technical skills and knowledge in their field of work, transmissibility, not having and transmit stress and they should use a lot of examples. These trainers should be theoretically trained. The option of exchange of trainers or trainees between small hotels was proposed as a challenge.

## Italy

According to the Italian respondents, seasonal workers are difficult to find and train. Usually, young, inexperienced and not properly qualified people are hired for seasonal jobs. Their contracts generally last from three to four months.

Seasonal workers are mostly recruited through announcements and personal contacts. Preferred are candidates with previous experience, ideally from abroad or from well-known employers (employers claim to count on references).

However, a good seasonal worker doesn't have to be necessarily experienced. Important qualities that make them stand out are professionalism, credibility and their will to work. According to the respondents' opinion, the best workers are usually those with previous work experience abroad. Their qualities are: broader general knowledge, better technical skills, knowledge of languages, independence and autonomy, managerial skills, customer skills of high standard and good self-presentation.

The minimum requirement for all seasonal workers is the ability to communicate in foreign languages. Another crucial feature is the positive attitude and smile. The managers agreed that it is the number one trait in tourism and hospitality.

Summarizing up the research results from Italy, the skills required from seasonal workers are:

- English language on B2 level (considering especially front office positions but ideally all staff should be able to communicate in English).
- Another foreign language as an advantage.
- Knowledge of the city and region, its culture and history to be able to give useful information to clients.



- General skills in customer care – positive attitude, sense of hospitality, will to learn, curiosity, ambition, credibility and reliability.

Although employers have quite clear idea of ideal skill-set, they don't apply any specific techniques to assess them. Competencies of seasonal workers are usually evaluated by simple observation of their performance.

Employers in tourism and hospitality sector perceive multiple difficulties in employing seasonal staff. The major concern is their poor motivation and engagement caused by the low pay and the fact that the job is for a short period only. It is also common that the seasonal workers break the contract when they find a more fixed position.

Employers also often encounter lack of independence and autonomy in young workers. Furthermore, lots of them don't cope well with working under time pressure (e.g. in peak hours in restaurants). Italian respondents often mentioned a poor knowledge of English. Besides, lots of touristic and hospitality facilities struggle to find people who can speak other foreign languages, especially German, French and Russian.

The lack of skills is due to poor work experience of seasonal workers and unsatisfactory education and training provided by schools.

Considering all of the latter, majority of the seasonal employees need additional training once entered the job. Yet, employees (in general) are not very interested in taking additional courses. Few of the participants in the Italian focus group shared their experience with language courses they organized for their employees. The courses took place at a VET centre after the working hours. Despite of initial interest demonstrated by the employees, the turnout was very low and only few completed the course. Participants to the focus group agreed that employees are not aware of the importance of lifelong learning and are not motivated and willing to improve their skills. *(At this stage we have to add that we do not know how the employers motivated their employees to participate in the language course. We either can't estimate how many employees would attend and finish the course if it took place within working hours and its successful completion was linked to some kind of award).*

Although on-the-job training seems to be vital for season staff, small and medium enterprises do not have sufficient capacity to provide high quality training.



In the case of initial training, workers are ordinarily accompanied by a senior colleague who didn't receive any special support to develop their training skills. The managers generally choose an employee who knows well the job and have suitable personality traits. They don't choose the best worker but the one who can communicate and transfer their knowledge.

Job shadowing or informal coaching are the most often used ways of training new employees. Training is always executed internally and based on the employer's experience, intuition and common sense.

To provide a good quality internal training, the employer/manager needs some training on the proper job, teaching and communication skills. Sometimes, managers underestimate their need to work on their own self-development. Besides the perfect knowledge of their work, they need to understand jobs of their employees, keep updated about the relevant legislative to ensure appropriate training to their staff. Employers should also avoid shifting the "burden of training" to the employees making them fully responsible for their own training.

## Survey

Reflecting stratification of sample by the occupational area, of the total number of respondents:

- 38 (35 per cent) worked in housekeeping
- 38 (35 per cent) in food and beverages
- 27 (25 per cent) in front office
- 1 (1 per cent) something else

Most of the respondents are females (68 per cent), while their age is varying, 29 per cent are between 26 to 30 years old, 27 per cent up to 25, 23 per cent between 31 to 40 years old.

About 20 per cent of respondents worked seasonally for the first time; at the same time 57 per cent could be classified as permanent seasonal workers, as this was their third or third plus season. For the remaining 21 per cent it was second time to work seasonally in tourism.

Prior to working as a seasonal hospitality worker, 36 per cent did not have any experience, and 40 per cent a little, confirming the results of the interviews and focus groups.

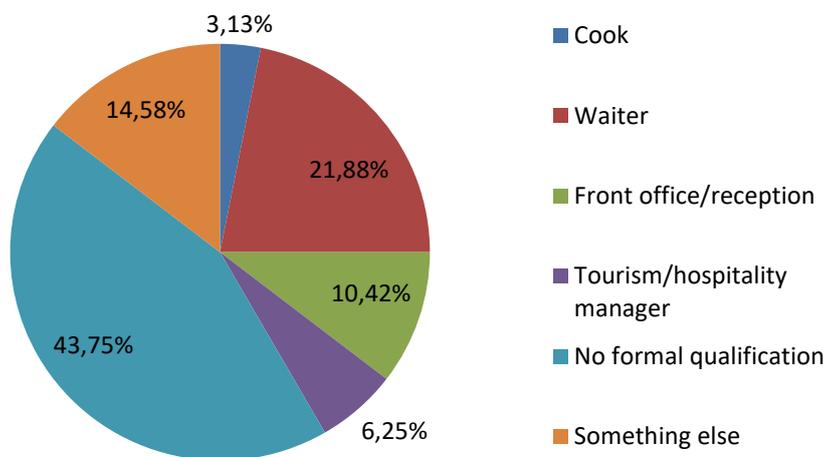
Most of the respondents have finished high school (65 per cent), while only 27 per cent are highly educated.

A large proportion of respondents – 44 per cent – did not have any formal qualification in tourism and hospitality. If holding a formal qualification, it was most often for waitressing and in front office or general tourism/hospitality management (Picture 5.1.). Other qualifications ranged from lawyers to electricians.

Even though the formal qualifications were lacking, 52 per cent stated that they need to improve some of their practical skills.

The duration of their occupation as seasonal workers as well as their age is positive correlated with their need to improve their skills. This means that seasonal workers that are more mature and work more years in the sector can more easily understand what their real needs are and are willing to improve their skills.

**Picture 5.1.**  
Formal qualification of respondents



The skills that those willing to learn would like to improve are mostly relating to the preparation and serving of beverages (33 per cent), cooking (10 per cent), ICT skills (12 per cent) and handling complaints (8 per cent) (Table 5.1.).



**Table 5.1.**  
Skills that respondents would like to improve

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Bar tending, cocktail making, barista	20	33.33
Computer literacy, using	7	11.67
Cooking course	6	10.00
Complains management	5	8.33
Cleaning	4	6.67
Foreign languages	3	5.00
Software used for hotel management	2	3.33
Customer service, communication with customers	2	3.33
Breakfast	1	1.67
Cost control/ budget	1	1.67
Business plan development	1	1.67
Contractual negotiation	1	1.67
Food and beverage	1	1.67
Tourism	1	1.67.
Hostel management	1	1.67.
Hotel legislation and laws	1	1.67.
Housekeeping	1	1.67.
Detergents and materials used for cleaning	1	1.67.
Star dining service -master chef	1	1.67.

When it comes specifically to foreign languages, the most in demand are English (27 per cent), and German (24 per cent), followed by French (17 per cent), Italian and Russian 14 per cent each).

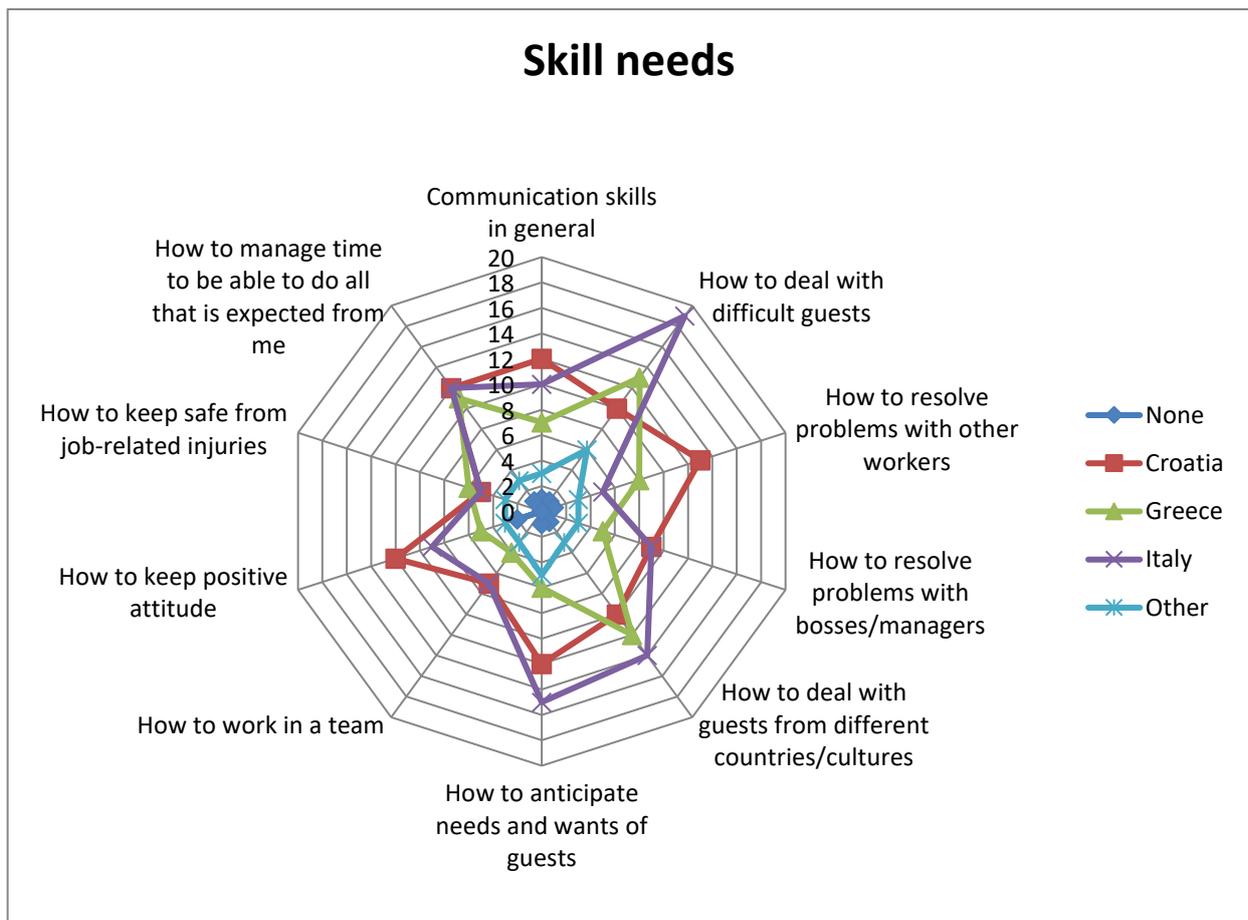
A battery of skills, derived from in-depth interviews and focus groups as missing, was presented with respondents asked to mark each skill or knowledge that they would like to acquire or further develop. As illustrated in Table 5.2., dealing with difficult guests, intercultural skills, anticipation of guests needs, time management and communications skills in general were in demand, none by more than 45 per cent of respondents. Such a low level of interest in acquiring new skills confirms the dominant view of managers that seasonal workers are not particularly keen on improving their performance, as they do not seek to develop career in tourism and hospitality and/or see this work only as a temporary source of income.



**Table 5.2.**  
Skills that respondents would like to improve

Additional knowledge	Frequencies	Percent
How to deal with difficult guests	49	45.37
How to deal with guests from different countries/cultures	40	37.04
How to anticipate needs and wants of guests	39	36.11
How to manage time to be able to do all that is expected from me	39	36.11
Communication skills in general	33	30.56
How to keep positive attitude	31	28.70
How to resolve problems with other workers	30	27.78
How to resolve problems with bosses/managers	26	24.07
How to work in a team	21	19.44
How to keep safe from job-related injuries	19	17.59

From the following radar (spider) graph it is obvious that somehow the same patterns of required skills exist in all countries of the project.





It seems thus that respondents, when left free to respond, have tended to identify more practical skills that they would like to learn. However, soft skills were not detected freely, but only when prompted, indicating the low level of awareness of the range of skills that they need for their work performance as well as for the personal satisfaction with their jobs.

To gain insights into the training approach respondents were presented with a battery of items pertaining to their training, asking them to mark all that seems appropriate. As it could be seen from Table 5.3., they have a clear idea of what they need when taking up seasonal jobs. Most would like to see the work organisation to be explained better as well as what is expected of them. They also would like to have more time for training and adjustment and, very importantly, they need to be respected and felt understood.

**Table 5.3.**

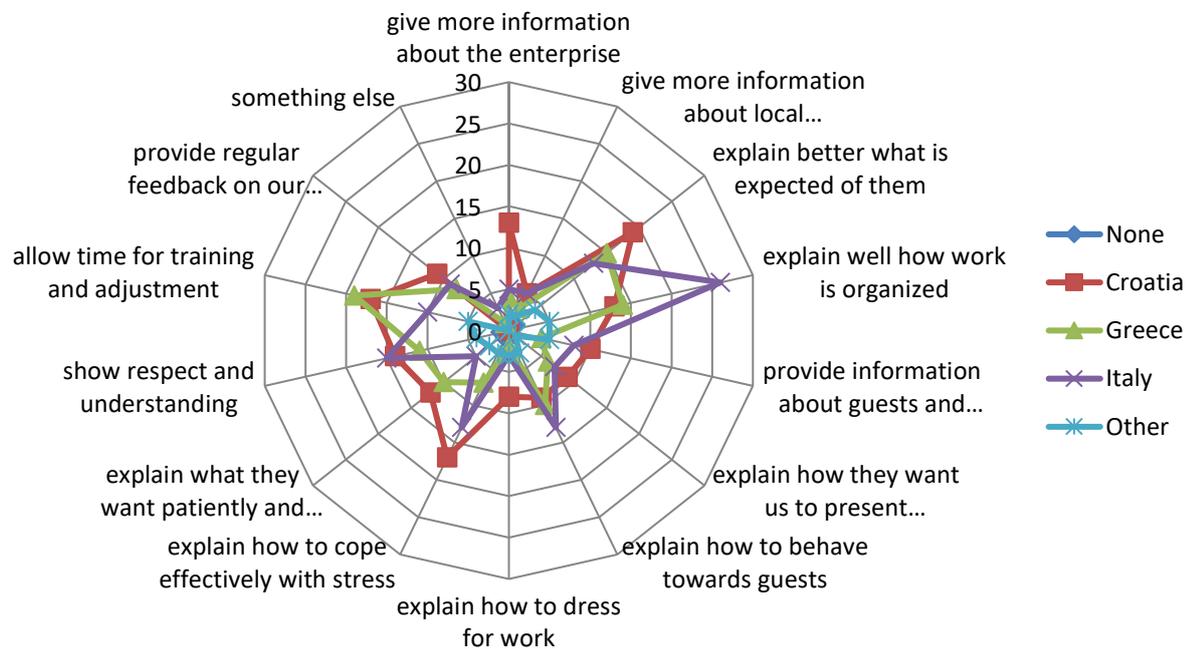
**Skills that respondents would like to improve**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Explain well how work is organized	58	53.70
Explain better what is expected of them	52	48.15
Allow time for training and adjustment	51	47.22
Show respect and understanding	45	41.67
Explain how to cope effectively with stress	41	37.96
Explain how to behave towards guests	35	32.41
Explain what they want patiently and slowly	30	27.78
Provide regular feedback on our performance	28	25.93
Provide information about guests and their needs	27	25.00
Give more information about the enterprise	25	23.15
Explain how they want us to present ourselves	23	21.30
Give more information about local attractions/area	16	14.81
Explain how to dress for work	17	15.74
Something else	4	3.70

With some minor exceptions the same pattern exists between the partner countries as shown in the following radar (spider) graph.



## Recommendations for the skills that people who oversee seasonal workers should have





## 10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this report was to ascertain the training needs of, both, seasonal workers and their on-the-job trainers, in order to design the training material responding to their real needs. In addition, a wider analysis of the tourism and hospitality in terms of tourist demand and employment issues was conducted to set the broader context of the project, and a short overview of main theoretical issues pertaining to the overall training for tourism and hospitality, furthermore the methods available was also conducted within the scope of this report.

The analysis of tourism and tourism employment issues in the three countries showed that all three countries share the main characteristics of tourism demand – that of seasonality. Seasonality generates several problems, of which an important is seasonality of employment. Seasonal employment, coupled with low pay and unsociable working hours, and often requiring worker migration from the permanent place of residence, impinges on the quality of workforce. This than have an adverse effect on the quality of service and, finally, the sector competitiveness. More recently, with the fast growth in tourist arrivals/overnights, the demand for workers in tourism and hospitality is also on the rise in Europe in general, leading to the shortage of labour. The countries of south Europe are particularly affected by outmigration, as many leave for north Europe and better pay.

While most countries provide initial and continuous VET training for tourism and hospitality, the number of people with formal education is far below the sector's needs. In addition, there is a growing criticism that the initial VET is not giving students proper skills for the job. On top of the insufficient initial VET training for tourism and hospitality, continuous VET training in the three partner countries is scarce, of questionable quality and available mostly to those working in large hotels. Therefore, many employed in the sector do not have a formal VET training for the job. Apart from the low number of formally trained employees, the sector is mostly employing those with low and middle educational attainment. All of these are even more pronounced when it comes to seasonal workers.

While the employers in general are quick to criticize the initial VET for the poor quality of employees, they are often confused when it comes to the skills employees would ideally possess. In general, they readily point out to the lack of practical skills. A body of literature points out to two compounded issues. Firstly, employers do not really understand difference between practical/technical and general skills. Secondly, reducing jobs in tourism and hospitality to technical processes, jobs are overly simplified as low skilled, ignoring the emotional and intellectual labour that often



accompanies job performance in tourism and hospitality. This is confirmed by results of our research, where when asked, employers, VET trainers and policy makers have mostly pointed out to a set of general skills that they would like to see the seasonal workers to possess – such as communication skills, command of foreign languages and, generally service culture.

At the same time, our research has also pointed out that, while work-based learning is a preferred method for (seasonal) workers in tourism and hospitality, the lack of proper training of trainers is a huge issue. Firstly, people working in the sector – owners and managers – often do not have the proper training or well develop technical skills for the job that they do. Secondly, even if excellent at their job, they do not have proper training on how to train others. Thirdly, training requires time of both, trainers and employees and funding. Seasonal workers are not willing to fund their own training, while employees are unwilling to pay for the time seasonal workers are in training.

While SeasonREADY cannot solve the complexity of issues associated with the proper job performance of seasonal staff, it can be designed to improve the situation in two key areas – ensuring proper training for trainers so that the training of seasonal workers would be more efficient and to mutual satisfaction and, secondly, provide tools for the effective training of seasonal workers in three professions employing the bulk of seasonal workforce – food and beverages, housekeeping and front office.

**In terms of the scope of training for trainers, the following skills / traits need to be developed:**

- Technical skills for the job
- Knowledge transfer
- Emotional intelligence
- Communication
- Leadership
- Ability to motivate
- Basic of organisational behaviour – ability to identify employee strengths and weaknesses
- Empathy – understanding employee point of view
- Patience and helpfulness.

**From the seasonal workers point of view, the trainers should focus on:**

- Taking time to explain how work is organised in the company/enterprise
- Give a clear information what is expected from each employee



- Allow enough time for training and adjustment – the latter is important as many seasonal workers, even if having prior experience, are likely to be first time with the employer
- Show respect and understanding
- Understand that the workers are under stress and provide them with the coping strategies
- Explain the way that they want to behave towards guests – what standard of service and assistance is expected
- Do not assume that showing how something is done one or twice is enough – be patient, explain slowly and as many times as required
- Provide regular feedback on their performance
- Give them some information on who the guests are and what they expect
- Provide more information about the company.

Skills that are needed by seasonal workers are summarised in Table 6.1. Firstly, skills are divided into general and job specific skills needed for all, regardless of the type of work that they perform. Then, additional skills (over and above those pertaining to all jobs) are listed by the three occupations – food and beverages, front office and housekeeping.

**Table 6.1.**

**Skills needed for seasonal workers in general and by occupation**

Occupation	Type of skills	Skills
<i>For all jobs</i>	Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ welcoming guests</li> <li>○ willingness / readiness to help customers or meet their needs and expectations</li> <li>○ deliver quality service to guests with special needs</li> <li>○ overall customer care - smile, sense of hospitality, will to learn, curiosity, ambition, seriousness</li> <li>○ ability to provide information about destination</li> <li>○ managing guest complaints</li> </ul>
	Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ overall good communication skills</li> <li>○ ability to communicate in foreign languages, especially English at B2 level</li> <li>○ ability to accommodate cultural differences in communication</li> <li>○ Appropriate non-verbal communication – friendly attitude, smile, helpfulness, friendly attitude</li> </ul>
	Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-presentation</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Motivation for work /pride in job well done</li> <li>○ Work ethics</li> <li>○ Team work</li> <li>○ Ability to work under pressure</li> <li>○ Flexibility</li> <li>○ Multitasking</li> </ul>
<b>Food and beverages</b>	<b>Job specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Technical skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ general cooking skills</li> <li>▪ new techniques (i.e. cocktail)</li> <li>▪ cooking and pastry making</li> <li>▪ wine tasting</li> <li>▪ sales</li> <li>▪ bartender skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ New methods in food preparation and trends in serving food</li> <li>○ Hygiene in food handling (storage, preparation, cleaning)</li> <li>○ Product knowledge</li> </ul>
	<b>General skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal hygiene</li> <li>○ Professional, polite manners for waiters</li> </ul>
<b>Housekeeping</b>	<b>Job specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Knowing and understanding standard of work</li> <li>○ Quality control</li> <li>○ Taking care of inventory/reporting damage and repair</li> <li>○ Understanding and following hygiene and safety rules</li> </ul>
	<b>General skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accuracy</li> <li>○ Ability to complete tasks quickly</li> <li>○ Hygiene</li> <li>○ Patience</li> <li>○ Basics of foreign language - greetings</li> <li>○ Interpersonal skills</li> </ul>
<b>Front office</b>	<b>Job specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Technical skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ reservations</li> <li>▪ invoicing</li> <li>▪ booking</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ ICT skills / knowledge of reservation systems</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Knowledge about destination – attraction, restaurants, entertainment, excursions</li></ul>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Multitasking</li><li>○ Customer service – politeness, greetings, empathy, smile, positive attitude</li><li>○ Problem solving</li><li>○ Organizational skills</li><li>○ Sales skills</li><li>○ Time management</li></ul>

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From our research, therefore, it is clear that seasonal workers need additional training, even when they already have some prior experience.

It is also evident that such training is needed more in relation to the general skills that are usually result of a sound education and personal traits, but also can be acquired quickly under the proper guidance

Seasonal workers, more than anything, would like that employers show them respect, give them acknowledgment for the work well done and be patient in explaining how they expect the job to be done. This puts a weight on the in-house trainers who, by and large, need to possess adult training knowledge and skills, what is currently not the case. Training the trainers is therefore a key to having a quality workforce who will stay with the employers for more than one season and be satisfied and proud of the work they do.