



# **Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services**

*Final Report*

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Mapping occupation, skills needs and training content**

1. Accessible tourism training should take into account the context of training, the trainee's prior qualifications, knowledge and experience, the level of the training to be delivered and visitors' specific access requirements.
2. If a visitor experience is to be truly accessible then all elements of the supply chain or customer journey must be accessible. As a result, a person's place in the tourism value chain is less important for determining skills and training needs than the *role* that this person fulfils in the business.
3. Thus, skills needs and training provision must differentiate between different skills levels (basic, in-depth) and different occupational roles (Managers with / without customer contact, frontline staff, others (including technical specialists)).
4. Training content and learning outcomes should include Knowledge of disabilities / types of disability and access requirements, Barriers to accessibility & Design for All, Strategic development of accessibility in business, Principles of effective customer service, Proper etiquette for dealing with PwD, Recognising and responding appropriately to people using personal supports and Service animals and assistive technology

### **Existing supply of accessible tourism training**

5. There are wide differences in accessible tourism content in mainstream tourism and hospitality training curricula across the EU.
6. On the whole, the level of awareness and qualifications of tourism services providers is inadequate to address the needs of people with disabilities. There is an urgent need to promote an understanding of accessibility before it is possible to persuade businesses to take up training.
7. Existing training is overwhelmingly directed towards continuing vocational educational training (VET). Current training provisions are often provided on a non-permanent basis or reach too few individuals to have an effective impact on the accessible tourism services.
8. Overall, NGOs are the most active organisations delivering accessibility training for businesses across Europe. NGOs have developed the training in partnership with tourism organisations, tourism boards or businesses in order to feed in the sector knowledge.

9. The standard methods of delivering formal training are online and traditional classroom-based training. Some training providers<sup>1</sup> have developed “blended-learning programme” or “b-learning”. Direct involvement with people with disabilities during training has the greatest level of impact and duration. However, it is also indirectly mentioned as a barrier for businesses to take up the training.
10. A majority of courses are directed to frontline staff. However, there is a recognition that it is important to reach managers for the training to have a more long-lasting impact.
11. Most training introduces introductory-level skills as business conditions often require a fast delivery of training which is focused on giving results in the daily work of every staff member.
12. Motor and sensory impairments rank among the accessibility requirements most often addressed in the training.

### **Existing demand for accessible tourism training**

13. SMEs in the tourism sector make less use of formal training than large enterprises - whether for managers or staff - due to limited financial resources, limited time and difficulties in accessing training courses locally. Informal training and “on the-job” experiences are important tools to enhance staff skills among SMEs.
14. Thus, training should not be limited to structured and top-down approaches to learning and may take the form of “awareness raising” which is less formal and has broader appeal to SMEs.
15. While a number of certificates in accessibility training exist across Europe, these do not give academic credits and most qualifications are not recognised in the wider tourism sector.
16. In several Member States there is growing awareness of the importance of the accessibility market. Awareness may be influenced by government anti-discrimination policies or accessibility may be adopted as part of the strategic development of a country’s or region’s tourism products. The maturity of a tourism destination does not seem to have any bearing on the availability of courses or the uptake of accessibility.

### **Gaps in training provision and the role of EU projects**

17. Key gaps in the existing training landscape include a gap in the actual availability/provision of training, a gap in the development of the business case for

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<sup>1</sup> See for example the case studies on Perfil – Trabalho and Psicologia and TACTALL.

training and a gap in evaluating the impact of training on customers, staff and businesses.

18. The role of EU-projects to remedy the gap in the availability of accessible tourism training has so far been rather limited. EU funded projects have focused on establishing a basic understanding about the target of training initiatives, the main actors who need to be trained (management, staff and different occupational roles) and appropriate training tools, methods and curricula. The main achievement of most of these projects lies in the awareness raised among the participants and the relevant stakeholders.
19. At the same time, EU projects so far have suffered from low transferability and weak dissemination. Accordingly their efforts have not been exploited in a coordinated way. The widespread lack of continuity or uptake of training suggests some projects were not sufficiently embedded in the tourism sector at an institutional level. Many of these EU funded projects were pilot projects with very few participants.

### **Drivers of supply/demand for training**

20. Key factors that influence the supply of training provisions are tourism policy and legislation. In those Member States where accessibility has a strategic role in the development of tourism products there seem to be a higher number of available training courses. Legislation seem to encourage the proliferation of training courses (as well as uptake), at least where this legislation is being properly enforced.
21. The greatest barrier to training is the lack of awareness of accessibility and the lack of a convincing business case for accessibility training. Tourism businesses have little incentive to engage in training for accessibility when this is a poorly understood market. The challenge seems to consist in making a convincing business case for training, structuring the market (demand and supply) for training and spreading awareness of successful business practices by peers.
22. A top-down process of awareness for accessibility seems to favour provision of training courses. Business and trade associations must be fully integrated in efforts to develop an accessible tourism business case.
23. Key actors within organisations such as tourism boards, but also individual businesses or service providers can act as "champions", actively promoting training as an integral part of accessibility strategies.

### **Recommendations**

24. There is a strong case for a recognised European certificate in the area of Accessible Tourism. The field is still sufficiently "young" for such a transferable

qualification to be developed, yet without one, different national variations may appear, which could entail difficulties in the coming years regarding mutual recognition in different EU Member States.

25. Development of such a standard would help address both supply side barriers (by providing a structure to the market for accessible training provision) and some of the demand side challenges (by defining accessible tourism skills as a transferrable and recognised skill).
26. The standard would not require the design of specialised accessible tourism training modules. Rather, the required skills (as defined in section 3 of his report) could be integrated into existing tourism qualification. This would certainly be the case for the basic skills per occupational group defined in section 3 with more in-depth training being provided in separate modules focused exclusively on accessible tourism
27. A full list of recommendations is presented in section 7.

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

**This document is the final report of the study regarding “Mapping of Skills and Training needs to improve accessible tourism services”.** The report includes all findings of the research and data collection, the full analysis of results and a set of conclusions and recommendations. To facilitate dissemination, all country level data and the 20 standalone case study reports are provided in a separate annex.

### 2.1. EU policy context

**The Europe 2020 flagship 'Agenda for new skills and jobs - a European contribution towards full employment' proposes specific actions at EU level on better anticipating and matching of skills and labour market needs to be carried out in partnership with Member States, social partners, labour market and education institutions.** The proposals set out in the Agenda include an EU Skills Panorama aiming to develop the responsiveness of education and training systems to labour market demands and to improve transparency and mobility on the labour market. It should be the starting point for a more coordinated effort to reduce skills gaps and shortages. It should feed into existing networks and working groups at European level to analyse shared challenges and potential common solutions.

**In the field of tourism more specifically, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union has powers "to support, coordinate and complement action by the Member States".** The EU competence is further explained in Article 195, which grants powers to the EU "to complement the action of the Member States in the tourism sector, in particular by promoting the competitiveness of Union undertakings in that sector. To that end Union action shall be aimed at:

- encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector; and
- promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice.”

Leading from these new competences, **the Commission Communication “Europe, the world's N°1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe” lays down an ambitious set of actions** aiming at helping the European tourism industry to promote sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism, to enhance its competitiveness and to consolidate the image and visibility of Europe and its destinations, as the main objectives of European tourism policy. Action 5 of the Communication, Improving Professional skills, is particularly relevant for the present tender. It envisages “the modernisation of tourism activity by stepping-up efforts to improve the professional skills of workers in the sector, with a particular view to facilitating their adaptation to new technologies and new market expectations, for example in terms of health and well-being, and encouraging their mobility. Such



efforts would form part of the 'Europe 2020' strategy, and particularly the flagship initiative 'An Agenda for new skills and jobs'."

**In connection with the ambitions and as part of the European Parliament's "Preparatory Action on Tourism Accessibility for All", the European Commission launched three studies in the area of accessible tourism in 2012, focusing on three main aspects:**

1. market demand;
2. training needs; and
3. supply and performance check

The figure below illustrates the link between the three studies in the context of EU tourism policy.

**Figure 1: Demand for, skills needs and supply of accessible services as part of the EU's Tourism 2020 strategy**



## 2.2. The importance of accessible tourism services

**Tourism today is an extremely important social phenomenon that mobilizes millions of people around the world**, especially in Europe, constituting not only a driver of economic development but also a critical element in improving knowledge, communication and the degree of relationship and respect between citizens of different countries. Within the European social model, tourism can be seen as a social good that

should be available to all citizens, without the exclusion of any group of people, regardless of their personal, social, economic or other life circumstances.

**One of the key areas where the tourism sector in Europe can increase its offerings of sustainable and higher quality products and services, with greater value for customers, is by making tourism offers and services "accessible for all".** This objective, when pursued effectively by destinations and businesses, can improve the European tourism sector's competitiveness and lead to increased market share. In particular, the provision of accessible tourism offers and services opens up the market to the growing numbers of older visitors, disabled persons, people with long-term health conditions and families.

**In a parallel study of the Demand for Accessible Tourism in Europe it was calculated that the market size for accessible tourism in Europe was around 780 million trips in 2012<sup>2</sup>.** Yet the demand far outweighs the present market supply. This is an opportunity for businesses that wish to be "early adopters", both within European Member States and relative to the inbound tourism market. In addition to the economic incentive for tourism providers to make their tourism products and services accessible for all visitors, the EU has signed up to the 'UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People 2006', which points to the requirement of 'equal access to tourism and leisure' (art. 30). This signals the political imperative of businesses enabling disabled citizens in the EU to participate fully in tourism, thereby allowing them to exercise their rights to choose travel destinations, without hindrance.

**Through the analysis of the needs expressed by tourists with disabilities and access requirements, there is a clear and growing demand for accessible tourism products and services.** This fact is confirmed by a growing awareness on the part of some tourism operators who are providing some of the new offers to cater for the demand coming from seniors and the segment of people with disabilities.

**Across Europe, there is a broadening understanding that the elimination of physical barriers is one of the first steps to ensuring the inclusion of disabled people in society.** This increasing awareness is reflected to some degree in the tourism sector, where initiatives at enterprise level and in some destinations are tackling the problems of physical access.

### **2.3. The role of accessibility training in the tourism sector**

**Despite the above market and social imperatives, so far, relatively little attention has been paid to the need for education and training of management and staff** in the tourism sector, in matters concerning quality of service and how to

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<sup>2</sup> EU Study: Economic Impact and Travel Patterns of Accessible Tourism in Europe, see: [http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat\\_projects\\_and\\_good\\_practices.1407](http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices.1407)

welcome guests with access needs. Employment in the tourism sector is typically very fluid, being sensitive to seasonal demand and economic factors. Employees therefore need professional qualifications that are recognised and “portable” across national boundaries, and here accessible tourism qualifications should also be included.

**Tourism training programmes can play a vital role in preparing managers and employees to deliver their services in appropriate ways**, respecting not only the diversity of customers' access needs but also specific requirements related to disabilities or long-term health conditions<sup>3</sup>. With suitable training, front-line staff can make disabled and senior guests feel welcome and, in some situations, even overcome some of the physical and functional barriers that are still present in older buildings and environments.

**Accessible tourism training can help to change attitudinal barriers that people with disabilities are persistently facing from staff in the tourism sector.** Such attitudes are largely due to lack of knowledge and consequent misunderstandings. When properly performed, accessibility training gives staff the necessary knowledge, competences and skills to cope with diverse situations and customer needs. With greater confidence, managers and front-line personnel are able to handle situations which could otherwise be seen as difficult or threatening.

**Currently Europe lacks a tradition or widespread practice of training in accessible tourism skills.** As the results of this study show, training courses in skills related to accessible tourism are relatively scarce within existing VET frameworks and commercial training offers. Where there is marginal take-up of such training it has been largely due to short-term initiatives such as EU-funded projects in Lifelong Learning (Leonardo). The experience of these projects is quite varied but many seem to have great difficulties in achieving wider impact, especially beyond their original partnership or geographical boundaries, and they often struggle to achieve long-term continuity. The take-up of such courses and training materials in existing VET structures is not well documented and this study aims to assess the prevalence and quality of these projects, with a view to shaping future actions in the area of accessible tourism skills development.

**Increased training in accessible tourism skills is a vital way to upgrade the qualifications and abilities of managers and employees** in the European tourism sector. Skills development in this area is essential to the ultimate objective of making Europe a world-class destination for all tourists.

**Tourism enterprises need to recruit people with the right skills in order to address the growing number of older and disabled visitors** (OSSATE 2006).

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<sup>3</sup> The EU-funded ETCAATS Life-long Learning project. <http://www.etcaats.eu/?i=etcaats.en.project-description>

Without appropriate training imbalances in the labour market could be seriously exacerbated. Skill mismatch may drive tourists away from Europe to more accommodating destinations. Lack of relevant skills also has negative consequences in terms of less satisfied workers, lower productivity at the enterprise level and a loss of competitiveness in general.

**As demand for accessible tourism grows, the deficit of relevant skills among the staff of tourism enterprises must be taken seriously.** The present study must deliver input for re-orientating the tourism training sector towards providing new training offers for staff at all levels, both in destinations and all types of enterprises. .

**Tourists with specific access requirements can experience difficulties at any point in their journey,** from the earliest planning (gathering and sifting through information), to booking, travelling, in various modes of transport, in accommodations, at attractions, cultural venues, in restaurants and cafes, when shopping or attending a business meeting or conference, when passing through urban areas or natural landscapes, simply finding and using a public toilet, and returning safely home again. It therefore hardly needs to be stated that persons who are employed in any of these parts of the “visitor journey” must be trained to some degree and in certain skills to assist and accommodate all visitors with equal attention, respect and support, when required.

#### **2.4. Study objectives and report structure**

**The overall purpose of this study is to map the staff skills needs to improve accessibility and safety in the tourism services and analyse the availability of corresponding training,** either in Member States (EU-28) or transferable from other world regions. This is done in five steps:

1. **Identification of the necessary knowledge, skills and competences for accessible tourism training,** related to a wide range of specific occupations and roles. An evaluation of existing practices and gaps must examine the full range of experience and integrate these in a common analytical framework.
2. **Establishing criteria for selecting “best practices”** in training approaches, curricula, training materials and “what works”.
3. **Documenting best practices** from EU and international examples of projects, training courses, destinations and enterprises.
4. **Identifying the mechanisms for effective take-up of training,** especially by SMEs, which typically lack financial resources and skills
5. **Developing** concrete recommendations to overcome different barriers to training, marketing and communication channels.

**The results of the study include a map of staff skills and training needs** linked to available training initiatives, in turn corresponding to different occupations and

accessibility requirements. In this vein, the study brings added value to existing data on skills sets and training methods, helping the Commission to devise appropriate strategies and policies for developing the tourism sector’s capability for delivering accessible tourism for all.

**Following the requirements of the terms of reference, table 1 sets out the structure of this final report:**

**Table 1: Report structure**

Section	Content	Reference to TOR
Section 1	Key findings	-
Section 2	This section	-
Section 3	Mapping of occupation and skills needs	Task a) define skills and training needs depending on the nature of services to be provided
Section 4	Overview of existing training initiatives including formal/informal, the role of awareness, supply side drivers, delivery of initiatives, delivery methods, financing and sustainability, content and curricula	Task b.1) provide an overview of existing training material and modules/programmes covering accessibility related content
Section 5	Gap analysis and role of EU projects in overcoming gaps	Task b.2) Gaps between training needs and available material and suggestions how to cover these gaps,
Section 6	Case studies	Task c) best practice case studies on training certain occupations, or training regarding a particular category of disability
Section 7	Recommendations	-

Task 4 in the terms of reference (dissemination) has been addressed as part of the research through validation of country reports with stakeholders and national tourism

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boards and this will be completed with a final conference (date to be agreed) in Brussels.

### 3. MAPPING OF OCCUPATIONS AND SKILLS NEEDS

**This section addresses the training requirements and skills needs for a range of occupations that are identified as being of key importance for the delivery of accessible tourism services.**

#### 3.1. Conceptualising the map of skills needs

Based on desk research, surveys and case studies, it is evident that training of students and personnel should be designed according to a number of important parameters, including:

- The **context of training** (for student education, job trainee, employee-in-service-training, manager or other professional);
- The **trainee's prior qualifications**, knowledge and experience;
- The **level of the training** to be delivered – related to the particular role and job specifications;
- Visitors' **specific access requirements**, arising from a disability (or multiple disabilities), functional impairments, health conditions and other factors. Access requirements may also include the need to use assistive devices or to have assistance from another person or a service animal, e.g. a guide dog or hearing dog.

The overall purpose of accessibility training is to equip managers and personnel in the hospitality sector with the appropriate knowledge, skills and competences to provide a warm welcome and suitable services for all visitors, who may have a variety of different access requirements.

**Visitors may require different services at different points in the "Visitor Journey"**, as first described by Clawson and Knetsch and more recently by Lane<sup>4</sup>. The concepts have since been interpreted with regard to visitors with specific access requirements, by Dickson and Darcy<sup>5</sup>. The figure below illustrates the six phases of the visitor journey.

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<sup>4</sup> Lane, M. (2007) The Visitor Journey: the new road to success. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 19(3), 248–254.

<sup>5</sup> Dickson, T. and Darcy, S. (2012) Australia: the Alpine Accessible Tourism Project and Disabled Winter Sport. In: Buhalis, Darcy and Ambrose, (Eds.) (2012) *Best Practice in Accessible Tourism*. Channel View Publications.

**Figure 2: The Six Phases of the Visitor Journey, Considering the Need for Information about Accessibility and Appropriate Access Measures**



Source: Lane (2007), Dickson and Darcy (2009)

**Tourists with specific access requirements can experience difficulties at any point in their journey**, from the earliest planning (gathering and sifting through information), to booking, travelling (in various modes of transport), in accommodations, at attractions, cultural venues, in restaurants and cafes, when shopping or attending a business meeting or conference, when passing through urban areas or natural landscapes and returning safely home again. It is therefore evident that all persons who are employed in a service role at any part of the "visitor journey" must be equipped to some degree with knowledge, skills and competences to assist and accommodate all visitors with equal attention, respect and support, as and when required.

**As part of this contract, a detailed study has been made concerning the specific occupations in the tourism sector that are – or should be – addressed in accessible tourism training programmes.** Using the ISCO-8 classification of occupations<sup>6</sup>, and following the "visitor journey" model of customer-supplier

<sup>6</sup> International Standard Classification of Occupations (International Labour Organisation). <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/>



interactions, the key occupations in tourism and hospitality have been identified. These are shown in annex to this report.

**The mapping of occupations to skills is presented in the tables below** while the following sections provide the background and rationale for the mapping, including a number of important considerations concerning training and learning in small and medium-sized tourism enterprises.

#### *SME approach to training and business development*

**A prime focus of this study is on the training requirements of tourism SMEs.** To better understand their response to the notion of Access Training, its importance for their business and whether they would engage positively, it is necessary to consider the business culture of SMEs and the role that training can play in the running and development of their business.

**It is widely recognised that SMEs in the tourism sector make relatively less use of formal training than large enterprises, whether for managers or staff, due to a combination of factors which include limited financial resources, limited time and difficulties in accessing training courses locally.** With a small workforce, the owner/manager and every member of the personnel must typically possess or develop a wide range of skills and there is relatively little job specialisation as may be found in large tourism enterprises. Running a tourism business is often seen as a “lifestyle” choice, rather than – or as well as - as a profession and among SMEs there is a strong reliance on “learning by doing”.

**Recent studies of tourism SMEs in the UK point to the role which training can play in building stronger relationships between managers and personnel, while contributing to more efficient and productive work practices:**

“SMEs use not only on-the-job training as their predominant training method, which is, however, consistent with the overall strategic orientation of small firms, but also formal training that provides them with sustained competitive advantage from a well-trained workforce. In this sense, best practice SMEs are concerned not only with short-term survival but also with returns from formal training programmes that are realizable in the long term. Moreover, such an investment in training and development activities belong to the so-called ‘high commitment’ human resource practices that have the capacity to increase SMEs’ effectiveness by creating conditions where employees become highly involved in the organization and work hard to accomplish the organization’s goals. By providing both formal and informal trainings, SMEs create perceptions of organizational support and feelings of trust to their employees, as they indicate their personified commitment to their employees. The commitment approaches of best practice SMEs [...] aim to increase the effectiveness and productivity and

rely on conditions that encourage employees to identify with the goals of the organization and work hard to accomplish those goals. In this sense, they attempt to create a relationship with their employees”<sup>7</sup>.

**To be successful, SMEs also need to develop strategies and long term plans for their business and their employees.** Formal training has been identified as an important factor in a research paper looking at family run and small hotels, which concludes:

“...key areas of family business training are strategy development and planning; the management of cooperation and partnership; the development and conceptualisation of new products or services; and the empowerment of employees within the tourism family business. As entrepreneurs are heavily involved in operational management they should learn to sometimes refrain from daily business to refresh their thoughts and to perform some long-term business development. Training programmes should therefore be developed to address the specific requirements of the family business. To facilitate learning and education, the family system should be (geographically) separated from the business system to maintain best training results. Strategic planning and comprehensive training will assist small and family hotels to identify their strategic competitive advantage and to develop their strategic plan towards achieving their full potential. This will support their competitiveness and will enable them to sustain or grow their business in the future”<sup>8</sup>.

**This research supports the general need for formal training of managers, although it does not specifically address access training.** However, where improved accessibility is seen by an SME owner/manager as a possible “competitive advantage”, it is quite feasible that a focused course of study could contribute to a greater awareness and understanding of accessibility and disability issues and the methods for orientating the business towards the accessible tourism market.

**A European Commission report by tourism and training experts published in 1999<sup>9</sup> notes the importance of training and training systems for upgrading skills, but also points out that new forms of work organisation and a more**

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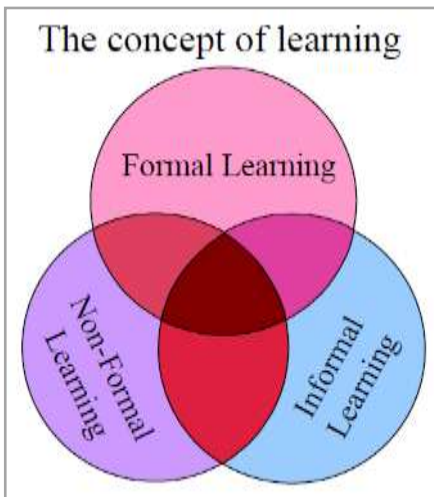
<sup>7</sup> Kyriakidou, O. and Maroudas, L. (2010). “Training and Development in British Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure SMEs”, *Managing Leisure*, 15: 1, 32 – 47.

<sup>8</sup> Peters, Mike and Buhalis, Dimitrios. *Family hotel businesses: strategic planning and the need for education and training*, in Education Training Volume 46, Number 8/9, 2004 pp. 406-415 Emerald Group Publishing Limited, ISSN 0040-0912

<sup>9</sup> European Commission (1999) *Improving Training in Order to Upgrade Skills in the Tourism Industry*. Report of an external expert working group. Rapporteur: Jens Friis Jensen.

**complex business environment require new approaches to training.** The report suggests, "... there is a need to look at all the processes where people are learning in order to understand and improve the totality of the possibilities for developing the human resources as a basis for innovation, productivity, quality and competition in the tourism industry". It goes on to propose that the focus should be not only on training but on learning which, they write, entails "... a holistic approach to meet the new and increased demands on the skills of the workforce". The concept of learning "...embraces both education, training in training institutions, in-company training and other processes on the job and in free time where people are learning".

**Figure 3: The concept of learning**



*Source: European Commission (1999, op cit.)*

**The concept of learning is very closely linked to the concept of competence, which refers to the range of abilities and skills which a person and enterprise may possess or acquire in order to carry out their roles and task effectively.**

This would include:

- The individual's capability to make the full use of technical, personal and soft skills and qualifications in the business context, and
- The company's capability to engage, combine and use the individually based competencies in an organic manner.

**When considering the necessary competences for delivering accessible tourism services, these would include technical skills, general skills, personal skills as well as the "soft skills" needed to make use of the other skills in an organisational/ business context.** Where the formal skills can be acquired in an institutionalised context provided by educational/training institutions the individual needs informal skills and self-learning skills to make use of the formal skills in the job.

### 3.2. Defining occupations and skills requirements

**If a visitor experience is to be truly accessible then all elements of the supply chain or customer journey must be accessible.** This requires varying knowledge and understanding on the part of all of those involved in managing and providing service delivery throughout the chain.

#### *Occupational groups*

**The occupations shown in the mapping tables in this section indicate those that are crucial to this process.** The mapping distinguishes between 'Group 1: Managers' and 'Group 2: Frontline staff' in the various links of the supply chain, for example transport staff e.g. train, bus, taxi drivers for reaching and getting around a destination; legislators, planners and architects who need to ensure that the public realm and any business is developed to be as fully accessible as possible; frontline and back-of-house staff in a range of businesses e.g. accommodation, hospitality and retail. The tables also include 'Group 3: Other Specialists' who may be outside the tourism sector but are involved in delivering accessible environments and services necessary to tourism businesses, e.g. web designers and information managers whose skills in making information systems accessible to people with disabilities is essential to the tourism industry. A full list of occupations for each of the above groups is in the annex. The box below has a short overview of each of the groups.

#### **Box 1: Key occupational groups**

##### ***Group 1: Managers***

Regardless of industry, managers and owners need to achieve knowledge and skills in relation to disability awareness. However, some managers identified, such as hotel and restaurant managers, are in closer contact with customers and work at places where they might have to overcome obstacles and resolve problems directly with customers. These types of managers should therefore have increased hands-on skills to anticipate and overcome "real-time" obstacles. As shown in some of the case studies, the initial drive for accessibility within an organisation is often prompted by one person introducing and actively promoting the idea of accessibility. Owners and managers can become "champions" for accessibility within the enterprise and, possibly, towards the outside world, orientating the business towards this market. In this vein, it is important that managers have, at least, an introductory level understanding of hands-on skills as well as theoretical knowledge.

A sub-set of Managers/Owners are those who are more likely to come into contact with

customers on a daily basis. Their skill set requires an in-depth understanding of the business dimension of accessibility, but they also need to have in-depth skills on how to overcome practical hands-on obstacles. Therefore, their skills level dealing with customers should be the same as for frontline staff. Experts who validated the occupation tables for this study agreed that this is important, as many tourism enterprises are micro- or small, resulting in managers' roles being fluid, encompassing more than one strict job description. For example, a Bed & Breakfast owner would have both business development and reception duties.

### ***Group 2: Frontline staff***

Frontline staff are the representatives of tourism facilities and services. These occupations need to have consistent customer service skills as well the ability to assist tourists with different access requirements. It is essential that frontline staff have in-depth hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles as well as professionalism in greeting all visitors in an appropriate manner. Essentially, disabled customers should expect the same service-levels as non-disabled customers. In addition, it is important that frontline staff also understand the importance of the accessibility market in generating business. For example, some qualitative comments gathered in the online survey (relating to availability) showed that the need for accessibility training can be generated bottom-up., i.e. frontline staff emphasise the importance of training to management. However, it was agreed that since employment in the tourism sector is often low skilled, there is also a need to limit the focus to the most essential skills to have. Therefore, in-depth awareness of different accessibility needs and practical skills were considered to be of most pressing importance.

### ***Group 3: "Others" (specialists)***

In this context, the group referred to as "others" consists of occupations which are far removed from the physical customer. Instead, their skills needs lie in understanding the specific needs of different types of disabled tourists and others with accessibility needs, in order to facilitate the accessible tourism in practice. For example, web-designers and architects.

**The broad distinction between managers and frontline staff is acknowledged in several of the courses that have been examined in this study.** For example the online course delivered by Kéroul has a separate section for managers.

**However, many access training courses require that all staff, including managers, should have knowledge and understanding of:**

1. The different types of disabilities (at a general level) and the access requirements that relate to these; and
2. An understanding of appropriate responses in terms of service to best serve these customers and meet these requirements, based on experience and feedback from this customer base.

**This knowledge is essential for frontline staff who will interact with customers either directly or indirectly e.g. by phone.** They need to be able to understand the right questions to ask, have a clear understanding of the service and the facilities that the business can offer and most importantly, by being aware of different disabilities understand why these are offered and the impact or difference it can make to customer service.

**Clearly managers and owners need also to be aware of these so that they are in a similar position to be serve customers from a position of understanding and of leadership, championing the need to ensure the business is inclusive, not only for the benefit of the customer but also the business itself.** For managers, knowing why and how to address accessibility should be viewed as part of their strategy for improving overall quality in their business. Any training that they receive about accessibility must therefore encompass issues of policy and strategy development, highlighting what they need to think about in terms of developing their business. They need to consider what is required in information, the built environment, service and facilities.

#### *Skill levels*

**For defining skills requirements that are specific to certain occupations, it is necessary to take a closer look at:**

- the actual job/task entails
- where the person is working or expects to work
- what degree of customer contact they may have.

**In identifying the required levels of access training, experts have pointed to the need for either “basic” or “in-depth” skills requirements appropriate to the occupational roles (manager, frontline and other specialists) and the degree of customer contact involved in work tasks.** The difference between the two levels can be defined with reference to the levels used in EQF – European

Qualifications Framework, which is a general framework applicable to all Vocational and Educational Training. The EQF levels span from 1 to 8.<sup>10</sup>

For “Basic” training we propose EQF level 4, summarised as follows:

**Table 2: Basic skill requirement**

Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Example
Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities	Vocational school

For “In-depth” training we propose EQF level 5 (and above)

**Table 3: In-depth skill requirement**

Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Example
Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others	HND

As no accessible tourism training qualification has yet been codified according to the EQF system, the distinction between “basic” and “in-depth” skills would need to be

<sup>10</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf_en.htm)

further verified by a panel of experts familiar with EQF, VET, Disability and Tourism issues.

*Training types and learning outcomes*

**The particular skills that are needed for providing accessible tourism services are, firstly, the same skills as are required for good customer service provided for everyone.** Core skills are communication, body language, tone of voice, knowing how to listen, words to use, questions to ask and how to ask them.

**Such skills should be seen as a natural extension to core customer service skill,** highlighting the benefits that offering training can bring to everyone on a personal level in carrying out their work and for the people receiving improved service, which should potentially be everyone, if the right questions are asked and the correct response provided.

**For this study, the essential training types and skills relating to accessible tourism services have been categorised under the following seven headings:**

**Table 4: Training types**

Comprehension and awareness of accessibility			Hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles			
1. <i>Knowledge of definition of disabilities / types of disability/ access req's.</i>	2. <i>Barriers to accessibility &amp; Design for All</i>	3. <i>Strategic development of accessibility in business</i>	4. <i>Principles of effective customer service</i>	5. <i>Proper etiquette for dealing with PwD</i>	6. <i>Recognising and responding appropriately to people using personal supports</i>	7. <i>Service animals and assistive technology</i>

**In the matrix overview it should be noted that the main objectives of training are comprehension/awareness and hands-on skills.** These training types are divided into 7 “learning outcomes”, as shown above. The distinction between knowledge and hands-on skills is found in all access training courses to some degree, although the specific 7 categories of learning outcomes may not always be present.

**The first two learning outcomes relate to the key issues of Disability, Access Requirements and Design for All while the third addresses Strategic**



***development of accessibility in business.*** Outcomes four, five, six and seven are the “hands-on” skills which may be taught by a combination of simulations, demonstrations, exercises involving disabled (or other) guests, and through cases or situations presented in written, audio or video formats.

**For each of the above learning outcomes, training irrespective of occupational group needs to consider the following key elements:**

- **Who** - the people or the customers that will benefit from their increased awareness
- **What** - what they need to think about in terms of the range of different access needs, not all disabilities are visible not everyone sees themselves as disabled, but may well have access requirement
- **How** - the staff can meet the requirements of these customers through the service they offer and how they offer it, through facilities that are available
- **Why** - often neglected, but staff need to understand the impact on people and the difference their awareness and understand and response can make to a customer with access requirements.

Such training and skills improvement generates confidence, something which is know that businesses and staff don't always have, there is a fear of 'getting it wrong' or 'saying the wrong thing'

### **3.3. Map of skills and training requirements for managers/owners without client contact**

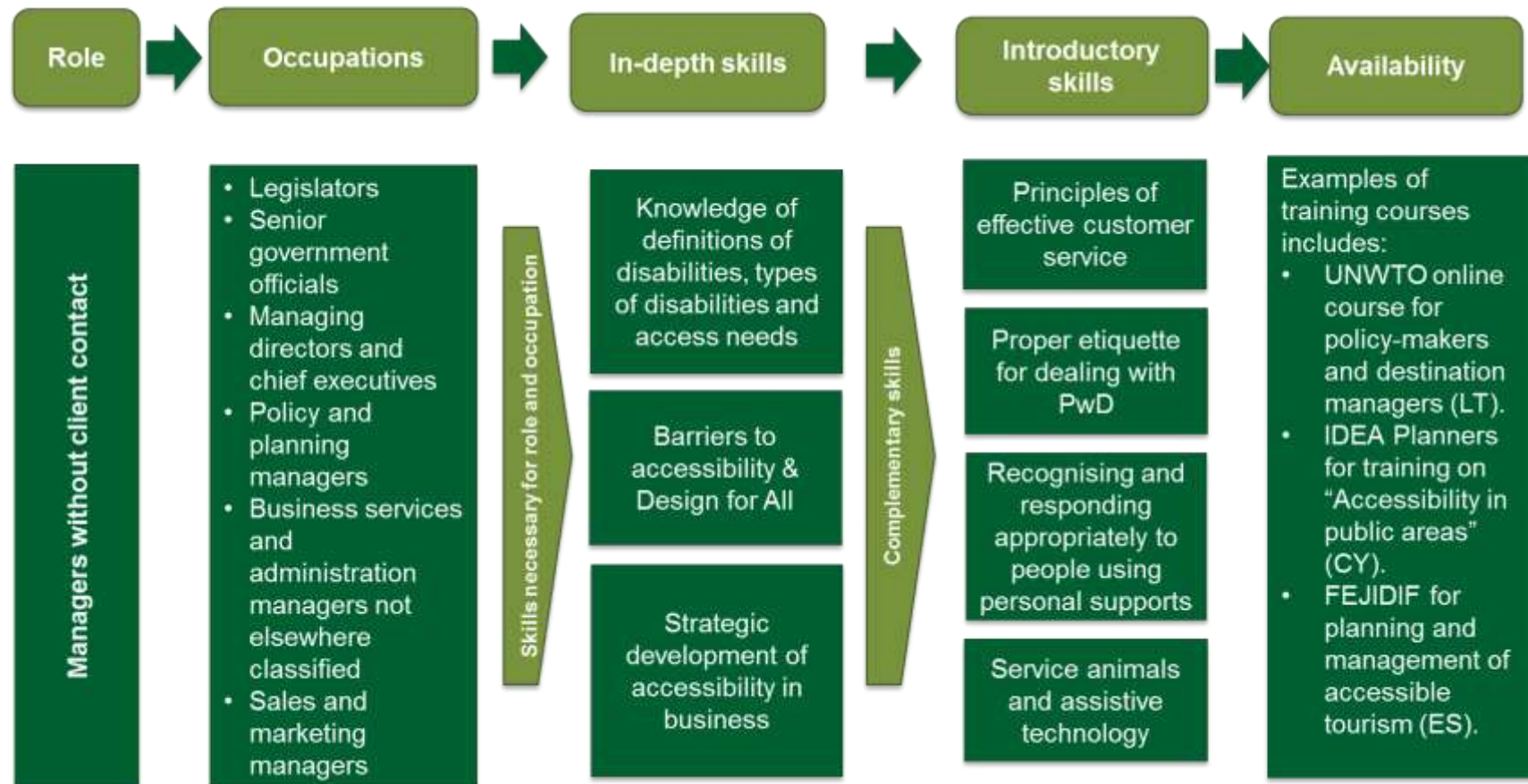
In regard to Group 1: Owners/Managers, managers need to have introductory level hands-on skills in order to overcome practical obstacles. In particular, the idea of champions was put forward in several case studies showing the importance of individuals driving accessibility forward. The initial drive for accessibility within an organisation is often prompted by one person introducing and actively promoting the idea of accessibility. In this vein, it is important that managers have, at least, an introductory level understanding of the theoretical importance of accessibility. As pointed out above the, some managers are further removed from clients and the emphasis of their skills need should instead be on the comprehension and awareness of accessibility including understanding barriers to accessibility and the concept of Design for All. It is important that this sub-set of managers have a strategic understanding of the market potential of accessibility and the importance of including accessibility in firm operations. These managers will normally not directly engage with clients and therefore hands-on skills are not strictly necessary as elaborated for the manager group below.

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

**Table 5: Owners/Managers [without client contact] skills needs**

<b>Group 1: CEOs / Managers / Team Leaders / Owners of Tourism Related Businesses</b>				(ISCO 1111) Legislators (ISCO 1112) Senior government officials (ISCO 1120) Managing directors and chief executives (ISCO 1213) Policy and planning managers (ISCO 1219) Business services and administration managers not elsewhere classified (ISCO 1221) Sales and marketing managers			
<b>Level of Training</b>	<b>Training types</b>						
	Comprehension and awareness of accessibility			Hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles			
	<i>Knowledge of definition of disabilities / types of disability/ access req's.</i>	<i>Barriers to accessibility &amp; Design for All</i>	<i>Strategic development of accessibility in business</i>	<i>Principles of effective customer service</i>	<i>Proper etiquette for dealing with PwD</i>	<i>Recognising and responding appropriately to people using personal supports</i>	<i>Service animals and assistive technology</i>
<b>Introductory level</b>				x	x	x	x
<b>In-depth level</b>	x	x	x				

**Figure 4: Mapping of skills need for “Managers without client contact”**



### **3.4. Map of skills and training requirements for managers/owners with client contact**

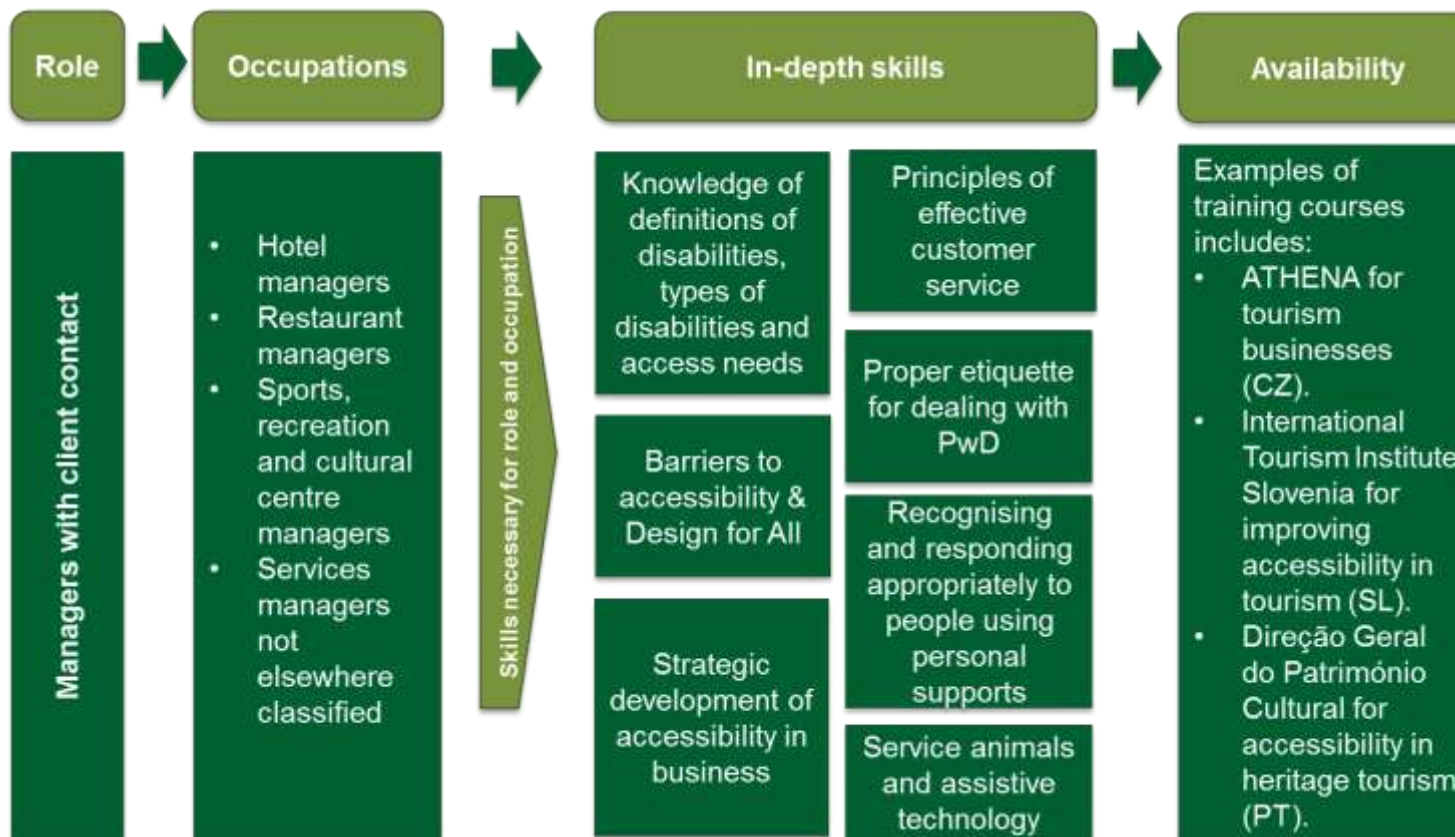
The second group of Managers/Owners are those who are more likely to come into contact on a daily basis with customers. Their skill set requires an in-depth understanding of the business dimension of accessibility, but they also need to have in-depth skills on how to overcome practical hands-on obstacles. Therefore, their skills level dealing with customers should be the same as for frontline staff. This is important as many tourism enterprises are micro- or small, resulting in managers' roles being fluid encompassing more than one strict job description. For example, a B&B owner would be charged with both business development and reception duties.

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

**Table 6: Owner/Managers [with client contact] skills needs**

<b>Group 1: CEOs / Managers / Team Leaders / Owners of Tourism Related Businesses</b>				(ISCO 1411) Hotel managers (ISCO 1412) Restaurant managers (ISCO 1431) Sports, recreation and cultural centre managers (ISCO 1439) Services managers not elsewhere classified			
<b>Level of Training</b>				<i>Training types</i>			
Comprehension and awareness of accessibility				Hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles			
	<i>Knowledge of definition of disabilities / types of disability/ access req's.</i>	<i>Barriers to accessibility &amp; Design for All</i>	<i>Strategic development of accessibility in business</i>	<i>Principles of effective customer service</i>	<i>Proper etiquette for dealing with PwD</i>	<i>Recognising and responding appropriately to people using personal supports</i>	<i>Service animals and assistive technology</i>
<b>Introductory level</b>							
<b>In-depth level</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

**Figure 5: Mapping of skills need for “Managers with client contact”**



### **3.5. Map of skills and training requirements for frontline staff**

It is essential that frontline staff have in-depth hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles as well as professionalism in greeting all visitors in an appropriate manner. It is important that frontline staff also understand the importance of the accessibility market in generating business. For example, some qualitative comments gathered in the online survey (relating to availability) showed that the need for accessibility training can be generated bottom-up., i.e. frontline staff emphasise the importance of training to management. However, since employment in the tourism sector is often low skilled, there is also a need to limit the focus to the most important skills to have. Therefore, in-depth awareness of different accessibility needs and practical skills were considered to be of most pressing importance.



Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

**Table 7: Frontline staff skills need**

<b>Group 2: Frontline Staff</b>				This skills set should be identical to all Frontline staff <sup>11</sup> (see also Annex for the full list)			
<b>Level of Training</b>	<b>Training types</b>						
	Comprehension and awareness of accessibility			Hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles			
	<i>Knowledge of definition of disabilities / types of disability/ access req's.</i>	<i>Barriers to accessibility &amp; Design for All</i>	<i>Strategic development of accessibility in business</i>	<i>Principles of effective customer service</i>	<i>Proper etiquette for dealing with PwD</i>	<i>Recognising and responding appropriately to people using personal supports</i>	<i>Service animals and assistive technology</i>
<b>Introductory level</b>		x	Not relevant				
<b>In-depth level</b>	x			x	x	X	X

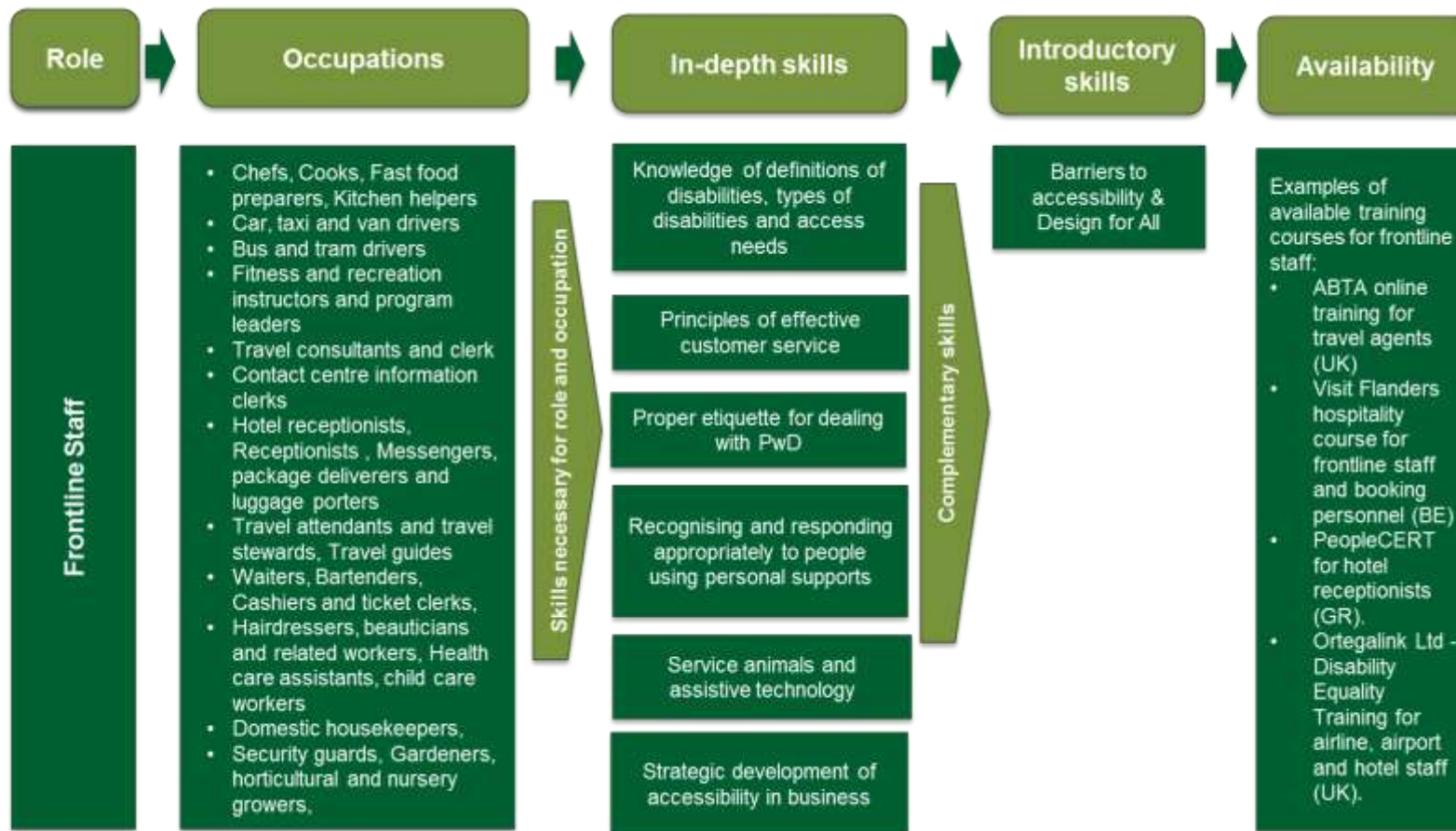
<sup>11</sup> These include the following occupations: (ISCO 3434) Chefs, (ISCO 8322) Car, taxi and van drivers, (ISCO 8331) Bus and tram drivers, (ISCO 3423) Fitness and recreation instructors and program leaders, (ISCO 4221) Travel consultants and clerks, (ISCO 4222), Contact centre information clerks, (ISCO 4224) Hotel receptionists, (ISCO 4226) Receptionists, (ISCO 5111) Travel attendants and travel stewards, (ISCO 5113) Travel guides, (ISCO 5131) Waiters, (ISCO 5132) Bartenders, (ISCO 514) Hairdressers, beauticians and related workers, (ISCO 5152) Domestic housekeepers, (ISCO 5321) Health care assistants, (ISCO 5414) Security guards, (ISCO 6113) Gardeners, horticultural and nursery growers, (ISCO 9411) Fast food preparers, (ISCO 9412) Kitchen helpers, (ISCO 9621) Messengers, package deliverers and luggage porters, (ISCO 5230) Cashiers and ticket clerks, (ISCO 5120) Cooks, (ISCO 5311) Child care workers.

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

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**Figure 6: Mapping of skills needs for “Frontline Staff”**

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services



### **3.6. Map of skills and training requirements for other specialists**

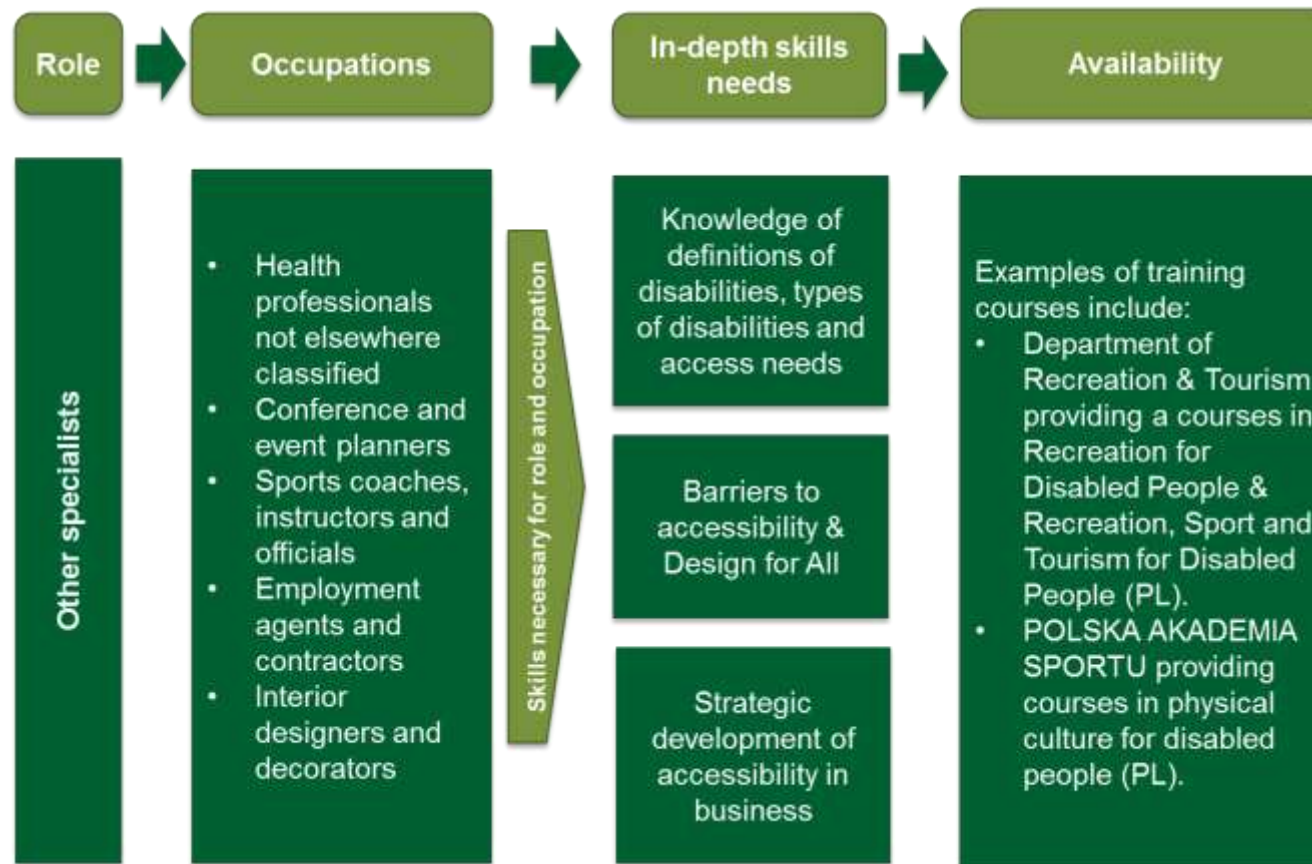
The “other” group, is divided into two groups, including “other specialists” and “others specialists – technical professions”. These professions may not directly relate to the tourism sector, but are important professionals who facilitate accessibility in practice. They need to have an introductory level awareness of access requirements and different barriers to accessibility.

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

**Table 8: Other specialists skills need**

<b>Group 3: "Other specialists"</b>				(ISCO 2269) Health professionals not elsewhere classified (ISCO 3332) Conference and event planners (ISCO 3422) Sports coaches, instructors and officials (ISCO 3333) Employment agents and contractors (ISCO 3432) Interior designers and decorators			
<b>Level of Training</b>	<b>Training types</b>						
	Comprehension and awareness of accessibility			Hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles			
	<i>Knowledge of definition of disabilities / types of disability/ access req's.</i>	<i>Barriers to accessibility &amp; Design for All</i>	<i>Strategic development of accessibility in business</i>	<i>Principles of effective customer service</i>	<i>Proper etiquette for dealing with PwD</i>	<i>Recognising and responding appropriately to people using personal supports</i>	<i>Service animals and assistive technology</i>
<b>Introductory level</b>	X	X	x	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not relevant
<b>In-depth level</b>							

**Figure 7: Mapping of skills need "Other Specialists"**



### **3.7. Map of skills and training requirements for other specialists – technical professions**

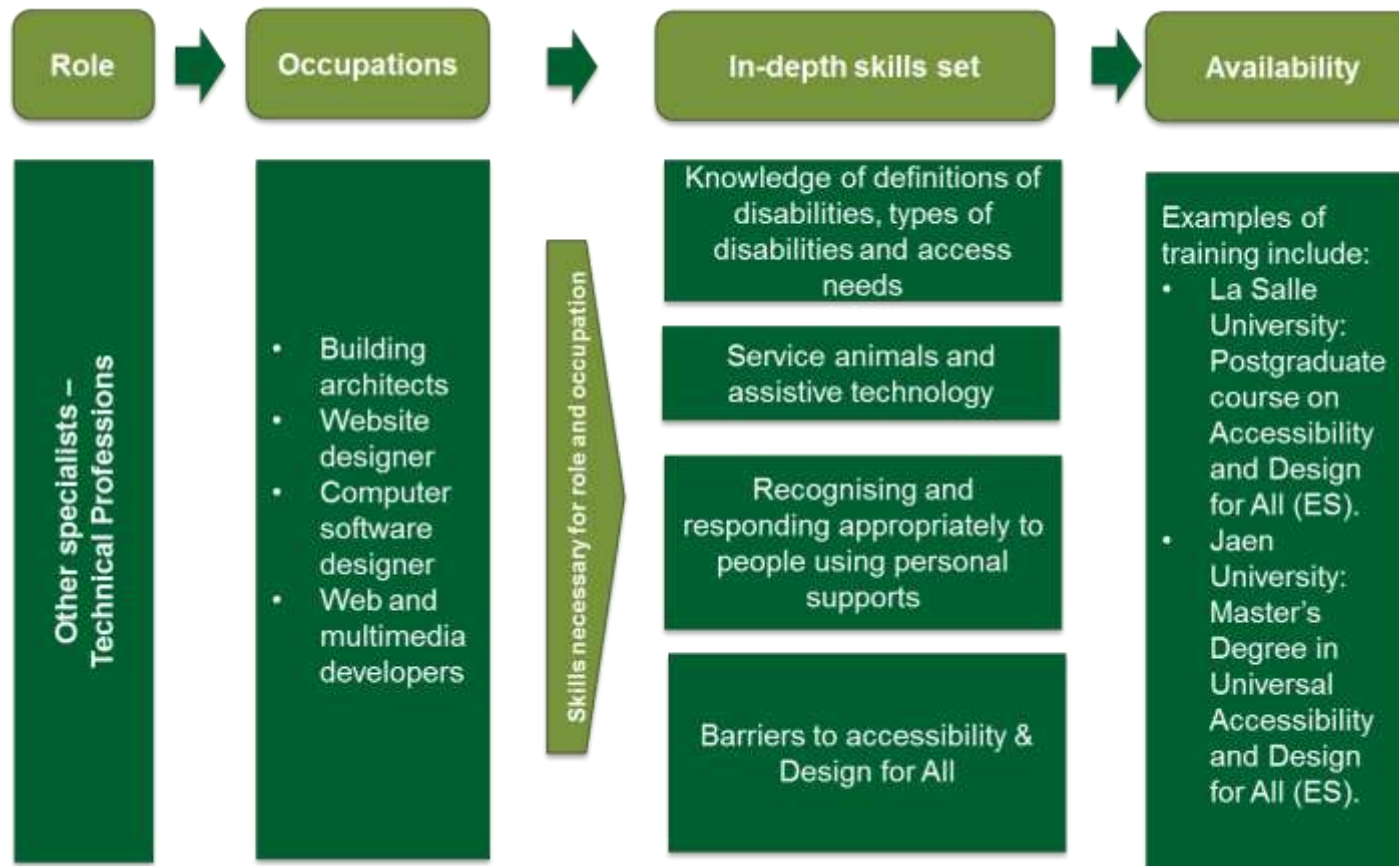
The “other – specialist” group encompassing technical professions include architects, website designers and computer software designers. They need to have in-depth theoretical knowledge of different access requirements and barriers to accessibility. However, they will also need to have in-depth knowledge of assistive technology, service animals and people using personal support in order to develop appropriate measures for access requirements.

**Table 9: Other Specialist – Technical professions skills level**

<b>Group 3: "Other specialists – Technical professions"</b>				(ISCO 2161) Building architects (ISCO 2166) Website designer (ISCO 2512) Computer software designer (ISCO 2513) Web and multimedia developers			
<b>Level of Training</b>	<b>Training types</b>						
	Comprehension and awareness of accessibility			Hands-on skills to overcome practical obstacles			
	<i>Knowledge of definition of disabilities / types of disability/ access req's.</i>	<i>Barriers to accessibility &amp; Design for All</i>	<i>Strategic development of accessibility in business</i>	<i>Principles of effective customer service</i>	<i>Proper etiquette for dealing with PwD</i>	<i>Recognising and responding appropriately to people using personal supports</i>	<i>Service animals and assistive technology</i>
<b>Introductory level</b>			No relevant	No relevant	No relevant		
<b>In-depth level</b>	x	x				x	x



**Figure 8: Mapping of skills need “Other Specialists – Technical Professions”**



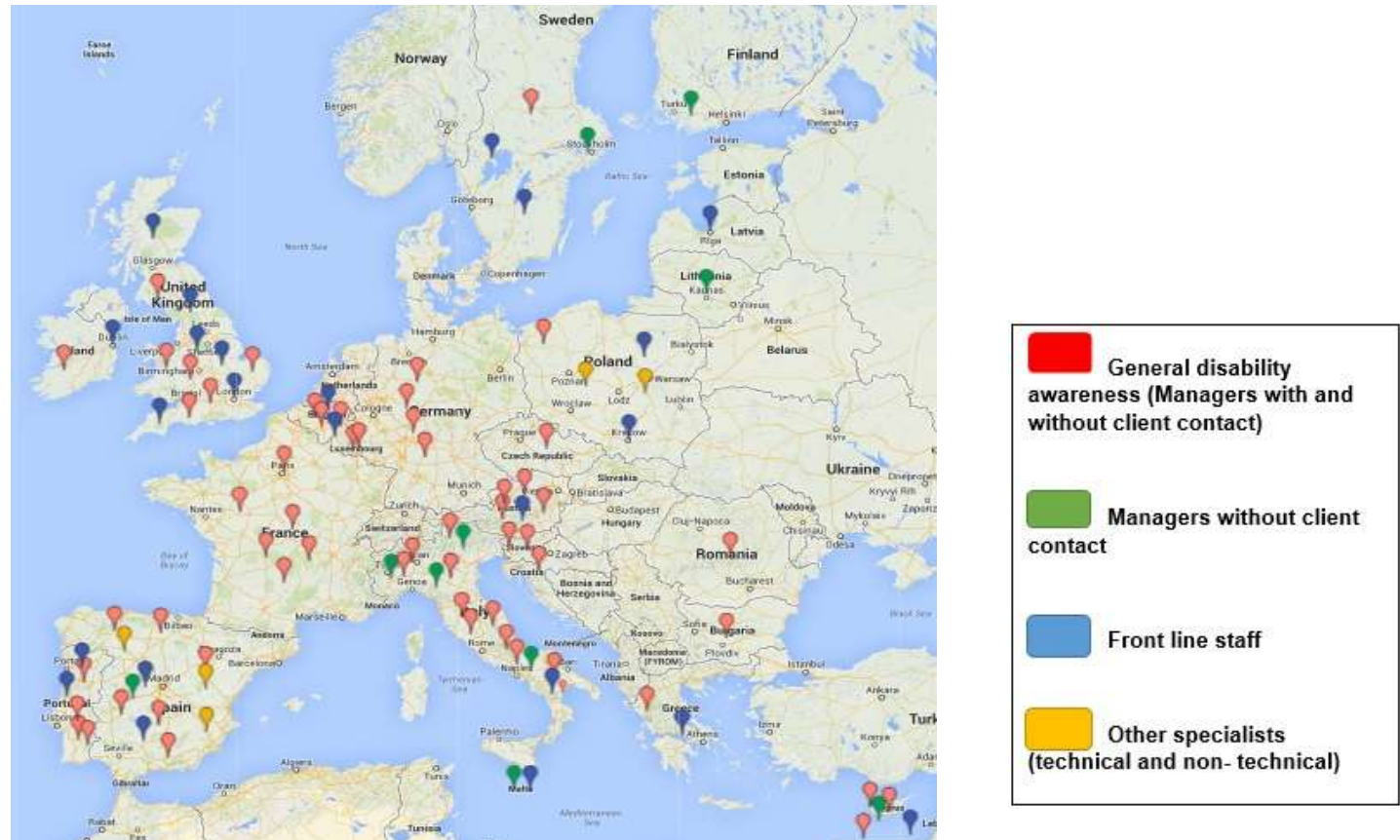
## Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

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The following map indicates the level of availability of training courses related to the above mentioned occupations. As will be further discussed in Section 4, availability of training provisions does not necessarily give an indication of the impact on the overall provision of accessible tourism services in any given location. In addition, one permanent course provided in a Member State may have a more long-lasting impact than a course given sporadically and to fewer participants. Hence, the below maps should be used as an indication of the availability of training, but is not exhaustive and does not indicate the quality of training or the overall state of accessible tourism in the given location.

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

Figure 9: Map of availability of courses across Europe



*Additional notes to the mapping tables above*

**The tables above provide a broad overview of skills requirements by occupational group.** While an effort has been made to present a comprehensive picture it is also clear that individual situations and requirements may differ substantially.

1. **It should be noted that the specific occupations listed in the above tables have not been mapped to specific disabilities.** This is due to the fact that in the context of hospitality and tourism, where visitors may present a wide range of different access requirements, there is a need for all occupations to meet every disabled person firstly as a guest, whose needs are not related primarily to having specific personnel (i.e. occupations) whose job it is to support them.
2. **It is important to keep in mind that “accessibility” is at the same time very broad and very personal.** It is important to recognise that each customer is an individual. This principle applies whether or not any access requirements are taken into account. There is a need for all staff to broadly understand the wide range of accessibility requirements they may have, even then they may well meet someone who falls outside of what they might have been told to expect, so the key is to ensure that staff have the skills and are equipped to respond to whatever needs or situations they may be faced with so that they can apply these to help the customer in the best possible way they can. Often those with access requirements are stereotyped as someone who is a wheelchair user. The reality is, just considering disabled people at the moment, that not all wheelchair users are the same and each will have individual ability and needs for service and support, e.g. some might be part-time wheelchair users, some full-time, while others will use a powered wheelchair. Some may travel independently, some might not. In addition there are those who blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, have learning difficulties, have a long term illness such as diabetes or cancer.

**Thus, whilst broad overarching categories of occupations are presented, within each of these there will be many different skills requirements related to meeting the needs of each individual.** All of the occupations that have been identified will ideally need to be familiar with if not all then most of the access needs that the industry needs to address, so the skills that are identified apply to each of them.

3. **There are certain skills which can make a big difference to the welcome given to people with certain disabilities.** One example is the ability to communicate with deaf or hard-of-hearing persons, using sign language. For businesses that seek to include special services for deaf persons as part of their business profile or brand, having sign language skills would be an essential part of the requirements for staff who come into contact with visitors. For businesses in general, having one member of staff with a rudimentary

knowledge of sign language can be an added advantage. Also, simply knowing to have alternative means of communication at hand – such as a pencil and paper – and having visual or vibrating alarms for deaf visitors is an important consideration in any tourism business.

**Clearly, where specific groups of disabled customers are targeted by a tourism business some more specific staff skills may be required to support the activities that are offered.** Examples of such activities include horse-riding, sailing and other outdoor sports for children or adults with mental or physical impairments. In such cases the staff are usually prepared to assist clients through their experience or training acquired from contact with the customer group in question. For such activities some formal qualifications are available in some countries, such as instructors for disabled diving and sailing.

**With respect to Group 3, “Other specialists”, there are a number of technical professions whose expertise is called upon to deliver environments, products and services that contribute directly or indirectly to the tourism experience.** These occupations can make valuable contributions to enhancing accessibility for visitors with access needs if they have been suitably trained in disability awareness and specific approaches and techniques for meeting the needs of disabled other guests in their work. Over many years EU and national initiatives have sought to introduce “Design-for-All” or Universal Design approaches in the curricula of architects, designers and planners, with varying degrees of success – but these efforts have not produced a broad or a very high level of awareness of disability issues in European design schools and universities.<sup>12</sup> ICT-related professions also play a key role in making information accessible to all visitors, though the application of the knowledge of accessible web design and the design of everyday technological devices such as smart phones. Here is a clear danger that the rapid pace of technological advancement may create new barriers to information for people with communication impairments if appropriate standards and guidelines for technicians are not developed and upheld. The EU-funded Thematic Network, “eAccessplus” is one example of an initiative in which ICT experts are collating and distributing technical guidance via a “Wiki” type knowledge base targeting, among others, the professionals who develop web-based technologies and smart devices like audio-guides, which are used by the tourism industry.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See the study report by Egger and Klenovic (2012): <http://www.design-for-all.at/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/BarrierefreiesBauen-Projektbericht.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.eaccessplus.eu/>

#### 4. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TRAINING INITIATIVES

This section provides an analytical overview of existing training initiatives and it presents a snapshot of the current state of accessibility training for the tourism industry across the EU<sup>14</sup>.

The results of this section were obtained through a variety of methodological tools. This includes a qualitative survey directed to training organisations providing courses in accessible tourism. 63 training courses were found using the survey tools which was complimented by desk research. In total over 106 training courses (past and present) were found throughout Europe. In addition, interviews with experts in accessible tourism and data from the in-depth qualitative case studies have feed into the subsequent analysis. The study's draft results have been presented and validated during an expert workshop and an online forum comprised of leading European experts on accessible tourism.

The overview aims at providing an overall analysis of past and present training provisions while finding common themes and investigating key issues and barriers.<sup>15</sup> The analysis of availability of training encompasses:

- Member States;
- Occupations; and
- Disabilities and access requirements.

**First of all, it should be noted that the available training provisions across Member States are relatively similar.** There is not one key feature differentiating Member States from one another. At the same time, similar barriers and challenges seem to be pertinent to the tourism industry as a whole and are not specific to individual Member States.

**Thus, a typology of provisions across EU Member States adds little value to the understanding of accessible tourism training.** Rather the analysis of existing training provisions and barriers and challenges should take place at an EU-level.

**Finally, availability of training provisions does not necessarily give an indication of its impact on the overall provision of accessible tourism services** in any given location. Availability is a poor indicator of quality. The ability of any single

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<sup>14</sup> Annex III presents data on the availability of training in each Member State based on country profiles.

<sup>15</sup> Due to the nature of the data collected this analysis is largely qualitative in nature. The analysis of current training provisions is based on an online survey to training providers, desk research, interviews with accessibility experts and supplemented with 20 case studies. A detailed description of the research methodology is available in Annex I.

training initiative to have an influence on training in the tourism sector must be seen not only in relation to the course's own characteristics and quality of its content but also, partly, as a function of the organisational, legislative and financial contexts within which the training is offered. This topic is explored further in section 4.3 which aims at understanding the drivers of training provision.

#### **4.1. Formal and informal training provisions**

**In order to understand the impact and efficiency of existing training provisions identified in this research, it is necessary to contextualise the role of training in the wider tourism sector.**

**In general, research shows that SMEs are less likely than larger companies to provide training for their employees.** The level of SME engagement in training is strongly related to their limited financial resources and time constraints. Given that 90% of tourism enterprises are SMEs, it is important to take these factors into account when devising policies and targeted actions to stimulate the uptake and demand for accessibility training.

**Furthermore, the tourism sector is notorious for its poor training record<sup>16</sup>.** Survey findings conducted in the UK tourism industry show that as many as 75% of employees state that they have received no job-related training since leaving full-time education, while under 50% of tourism businesses state that they engage in training.<sup>17</sup> However, another study conducted in 1999 found that 85% of hospitality employers surveyed provided some training for some employee. According to Dewhurst et al. (2006), these wide ranging findings highlight the wide and complex variety of practice and attitudes to training and even what constitutes 'training' in a broader sense.

**There is also considerable evidence that smaller employers provide less formal training than larger companies.** SMEs have less incentives to provide training opportunities as they often face difficulties retaining trained staff<sup>18</sup>. In addition, the tourism sector suffers from very high turnover rates and many tourism businesses are run as life-style businesses. Due to the nature of the tourism industry often employing low-skilled workers and providing transient jobs, there is a continuous need for people to be trained. Together these factors seem to inhibit tourism enterprises to engage in formal training. Research has found that when tourism SMEs do take advantage of training it is mostly driven by legislation.

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<sup>16</sup> Kyriakidou, O. and Maroudas, L. (2010). "Training and Development in British Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure SMEs", *Managing Leisure*, 15: 1, 32 – 47.

<sup>17</sup> Dewhurst, H., Dewhurst, P. and Livesly, R. (2006). "Tourism and hospitality SME training needs and provision: A sub-regional analysis", Vol. 7, 2, 131-143, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*.

<sup>18</sup> European Commission. (2009). "Guide for Training in SMEs".

**Training among small tourism enterprises is not restricted to the traditional education offer, instead much training in the tourism sector is informal and takes place “on-the-job”.** Against this backdrop, it becomes necessary to take a broader definition of training into consideration. Indirect or informal training can take multiple of forms. It can include awareness raising, advice and information through seminars, workshops, printed material or other course content which is not delivered in a structured and formal way. Workshops allowing business to network and share experiences of accessibility is also another form of informal training which has been proven useful to stimulate business engagement with accessibility issues<sup>19</sup>.

**In the largest ever UK study of training in tourism SMEs reported by Olivia Kyriakidou and Leonidas Maroudas (2010)<sup>20</sup> the researchers indicated that successful organisations adopt an informal approach to training** which is integrated into the culture of the organisation, providing a positive training and development environment where employees are more likely to be retained. They argue: “Informal training was generally preferred because it was less costly, could be easily integrated into the daily operations of the small firms and was focused on the employees’ specific needs. Employees are able to learn in the context in which their skills are used. They develop skills for solving diverse problems within the firm, leading to the development of a multi-skilled labour force more suited to the needs of SMEs”.

**Thomas et al. (2000)<sup>21</sup> found that the likelihood of tourism enterprises to engage in external training provisions increase with firm size.** Similarly, research shows that SMEs are unconvinced of the value of external training in skills development. Dewhurst et al. (2006) argue that ‘the general response to skills issues is still training, but training is often patchy, informal and reactive rather than proactive’.

**Considering this general training environment for SMEs, accessibility training is often ranked even lower in training and skills priorities for businesses.** These issues will be explained more fully in the subsequent sections, however, for instance, a survey of tourism businesses by VisitEngland in 2009 showed that 21% of businesses who do not currently provide staff with disability awareness training stated ‘nothing’ would encourage them to provide this training. Similarly, the Accessible Tourism Stakeholders Forum in the UK asked businesses about the likelihood of engaging in future training over the next 12 months, 69% of respondents answered it was very unlikely or quite unlikely<sup>22</sup>.

**In particular, accessibility skills such as proper etiquette or understanding**

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<sup>19</sup> See for example, the case study on Lousã.

<sup>20</sup> Kyriakidou, O. and Maroudas, L. (2010). “Training and Development in British Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure SMEs”, *Managing Leisure*, 15: 1, 32 – 47.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas, R . and Long , J. ( 2001 ). “Tourism and Economic Regeneration: The role of skills development”, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 3: 229 – 240.



**assistive technology are difficult skills to learn informally or “on-the-job”** without any external guidance. Similarly, the strategic understanding of accessibility and Design for All principles often require external training provisions in order to acquire the necessary know-how to improve business models and development.

**The national tourism board for England, Visit England, has produced a number of self-learning resources and publications with the objective of informing businesses on how to become more accessible.** This is an important way for businesses to learn and train themselves, which does not necessarily come from training in the traditional sense of the term. Thus, informal training is imperative to take into account given that this might be the first steps towards increased accessibility.

**This research also shows that accessibility assessments and analysis are powerful training tools which induce businesses to become more aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their tourism offerings.**

**This indicates that training could be better termed “awareness” as the word “training” embodies connotations with formal education and learning methods<sup>23</sup>.** Thus training methods identified may include:

- Formal structured training that can be given through self-learning (i.e. online) or through traditional classroom-based teaching (see section 5.2 for further analysis of delivery methods).
- Informal training and learning through workshops, conferences, printed and online information sources.
- Accessibility assessments, inspections, consultations and audits where external consultants help to analyse and inform managers participants how accessibility can be integrated in their existing businesses.

**These different ways of learning for businesses are highly relevant to a better understanding of how training can be used to improve accessible tourism services across Europe.**

#### **4.2. The role of accessibility awareness**

**A general observation is that the level of awareness and qualifications of tourism services providers is inadequate to address the needs of people with disabilities.** Thus, current training courses seem to have been prompted as mainly a reaction to:

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<sup>22</sup> Data taken from the Visit England case study.

<sup>23</sup> This change in terminology was supported in the expert workshop of the study.

- A perceived lack of skills in the tourism sector to adequately cater to tourists with accessibility needs; and
- Detection of gaps in the mainstream curriculum.

**Formal training provisions aim at heightening the skills set among individual employees and businesses as a whole.** However, given that the training situation for tourism businesses is not overtly favourable, the biggest challenges for these providers collectively has often been to first put forward the case for accessibility within the tourism sector and raise awareness.

**This study has found that there is an urgent need to promote an understanding of accessibility before it is possible to persuade businesses to take up training.** Training cannot be promoted in isolation from other activities encouraging accessibility in tourism development and products, but must form part of a holistic strategy of accessibility. The awareness of the benefits of accessibility is a necessary first step to pave the way for training engagement, whether informal or formal. Many providers have reported widespread disinterest from the tourism industry to engage in training as well as an array of misconceptions of what accessibility entails<sup>24</sup>. In this vein, businesses often shy away from the subject altogether.

**Awareness-raising is vital to remedy stereotypes and mistaken beliefs about the accessible tourism market and the requirements of disabled visitors in particular.** However, it can be difficult to break this vicious circle whereby training is vital in order to correct misconceptions, but in order for training to be in demand there needs to be a better understanding of what accessibility is.

**Much of the difficulty in attracting businesses to focus on access lies in the lack of a convincing business case for accessibility** and many tourism services see no immediate link between staff training and profits. There is also a belief that mainstream customers can easily cover business expectations and thus, there is little need to engage with the accessibility market.

**In general, while there are a number of documented and convincing business cases on the merits of accessibility training and investment in improved access, such cases are not widely known among SMEs. Indeed, the subject of access may be so far removed from the everyday concerns of small business owners that the advantages of addressing the accessible tourism market are simply not considered.** Accessibility is often a long-term development, both from a destination perspective and from an individual business perspective. Thus, for example, increased visitor satisfaction may result in higher revenues through word-of-mouth recommendations, social media, customer service awards or repeat visits which may materialise, but with a delayed effect.

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<sup>24</sup> Findings from the case study research.

**Businesses must have access to training and a variety of learning tools in order to build the confidence to serve the accessible tourism market properly.**

Dealing with tourists with disabilities is often seen as a series of undesirable and difficult challenges - a very sensitive matter both for many businesses and also for frontline staff. Interaction with disabled guests may be uncomfortable due to a lack of understanding the needs of these guests. Particularly "doing the wrong thing" or exposing one's business to legal and business risks have been thought to hamper the uptake of training. Social norms and attitudes also play a major role in hindering accessibility training. Some businesses reportedly do not want to create an institutional or clinical atmosphere in their premises as well as being afraid of chasing away other guests.

**There is also a pressing need to educate businesses on what accessibility encompasses in practice.**

Several case studies show that many businesses understand accessibility in terms of wheelchair accessibility and neglect the practical adjustments that can accommodate other disabilities such as vibrating pillows, flashing alarms, tactile room numbers etc. Training can be a very cost-effective way of making tourism services increasingly accessible. However, there is very little knowledge within the industry of these low-cost methods of improving accessibility.

**In addition to raising awareness levels among businesses, the research has found that it is also imperative to raise the awareness levels and indicate the gap in accessibility skills to industry associations**

such as representatives and stakeholders in the hotels, restaurants, travel agents, and transport sectors.. Representative organisations are often engaged in training and certification of their members and can be seen as important channels and would-be advocates of new training initiatives, as well as facilitating direct contact with businesses. These organisations should also extend to national and regional tourism boards who are responsible for tourism policy and the development of tourism products.

**This lack of a general understanding of accessibility and its benefits must be seen as the greatest barrier to uptake of training.**

Thus, it should be tackled before training can be effectively promoted and accepted by the business community.

#### **4.3. Supply-side drivers of training initiatives**

**A general observation from the case study research points to legislation and tourism policy playing a positive role, both on the availability and uptake of training.**

**In several Member States there is a growing awareness of the importance of the accessibility market. Awareness may be influenced by government anti-discrimination policies or accessibility may be adopted is part of the strategic development of a country's or region's tourism products.** In these countries, increasing awareness leads to a relatively higher number of training initiatives as

accessibility is seen as a driver of development for the tourism industry. Thus there is a need for training to improve quality and meet increased visitor demand. For example, England, Italy and Spain are examples where the importance of accessible tourism has been recognised for the profitability of the tourism sector and in these countries there are also a proliferation of different initiatives addressing accessibility training<sup>25</sup>. Another example is Flanders, an autonomous region of Belgium with competences in tourism development, which has incorporated accessibility in its overall strategic development.

**Intersecting with the development of tourism products, are particular events which increase the supply-side drive to training provisions.** Examples of this are the Olympics and Paralympics held in London 2012 or in the case of Flanders, the Great War Centenary Commemoration. Other training initiatives have been motivated by pending events including access training for tourism business leading up to the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. In these instances the pressing need for heightened skill sets seem to work as a favourable driver for accessibility training.

#### *Legislation*

**It is also important to note that legislation seems to have a positive effect on the availability of training.** In countries where there is active enforcement of legal obligations on service providers not to discriminate against people with disabilities, training may be introduced as valuable tool in order to comply with national and EU regulations. In theory, training should be an efficient way of minimising legal risks.

**For instance, the EU Directive on the Rights of Passengers with reduced mobility (1107/2006) seems to have a positive impact** on the availability of training for the sub-sectors of the industry affected by this legislation. The EU Directive sets out to improve the rights of passengers of reduced mobility and compliance is placed on actors from the booking stage until the arrival at the destination airport. Effectively, the occupational groups needing to comply with the Directive includes travel agents, tour operators and airport staff. Thus, the availability of training for these occupational groups can be considered relatively high. For example, in Estonia the only accessibility training that could be identified was directed to airport staff at Tallinn Airport<sup>26</sup> and in Cyprus the main access training efforts are concentrated in the two airports managed by Hermes Airports.<sup>27</sup>

**However, it is important to note that the maturity of a tourism destination does not seem to have any bearing on the availability of courses or the uptake of accessibility.** The online survey and interviews indicate that well-established

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<sup>25</sup> Examples of this can be found in the case study research relating to Visit Flanders, Visit England, Germany and COIN.

<sup>26</sup> See country profiles in the Annex.

<sup>27</sup> See the case study on Hermes Airports (Cyprus)

destinations such as Greece, Malta, Croatia and Cyprus, have very limited accessibility training specifically designed for national use, but have participated more frequently in EU-funded projects (see section 5.2). In Greece, for instance, accessible tourism products seem to focus largely on subsidising domestic demand through the national social tourism programme and only since 2013 has a private initiative, PeopleCERT, offered access training to businesses and individuals<sup>28</sup>.

**Moreover, the human factor must also be taken into account, both at the supply-side of training provisions and the demand side.** In particular, the evidence points to the importance of key actors within organisations such as tourism boards, but also individual businesses or service providers to act as “champions”, actively promoting training as an integral part of accessibility strategies.

#### *Access Champions*

The research has found instances where the human factor is a strong indicator of the availability of training<sup>29</sup>. For example, one respondent stated that<sup>30</sup>: “.....*what has really prompted this initiative is the awareness of the newly appointed director of the department...[..]*”

**In general, a top-down process of awareness for accessibility seem to favour the drive to increase the provision for training courses.**

#### **4.4. Delivery of training initiatives**

The results in the following paragraph were obtained using the data collected in the online survey to training providers. In total 63 training providers were collected through the survey tools, which were complimented with interviews and desk research resulting in 106 courses being examined.

**The present research study has examined accessible tourism training as an emerging field of practice which, as yet, has a relatively low profile in the tourism education and training sectors.** From the institutional perspective few courses are offered by training providers or colleges and those few that exist today are by no means certain to continue. Students, trainees or employees who seek a course on disability awareness or accessibility for the tourism sector will quite possibly be unable to find any offer in their own country or language. Employers who seek skilled staff will find no European qualification or training standards in this area and very few courses which are related to national training curricula. As yet, despite over 10 years of development, training in the accessible tourism area lacks a clear national,

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<sup>28</sup> See the case study on PeopleCERT.

<sup>29</sup> See for example the case study on Visit Flanders and Visit England.

<sup>30</sup> Qualitative comment taken from the online survey.

European or international framework; there is no unified curriculum and very few, if any, permanent and recognised vocational training offers at national level.

**Overall, NGOs are the most active organisations delivering accessibility training for businesses across Europe.** Although most NGOs lack detailed knowledge of the tourism sector, some have the necessary expertise in disability awareness, Design for All and other aspects of accessibility required to develop effective and targeted training curricula for accessible tourism.

**In many of the cases examined in this study, NGOs have developed the training in partnership with tourism organisations, tourism boards or businesses in order to feed in the sector knowledge.** Where accessibility courses are available at tourism schools or universities they are often provided or developed in collaboration with NGOs. Thus, the third sector plays an important role in determining the availability of access training in the tourism sector. The dominance of NGOs in delivering training is likely to also relate to the scarcity of trainers in accessible tourism subjects; thus an important first step is to provide training for future instructors or 'training the trainers'.

**As accessibility training is being provided by NGOs or private sector initiatives, courses are often provided on a non-permanent basis.** Many courses are tailored-made according to company demands or given as a one-off awareness raising workshop or seminar. This could range from a PowerPoint presentation to a seven-day course. However, most providers and accessibility representatives seem to agree that it is better to have some accessibility training rather than none at all.

**This research shows that the majority of current formal training is directed to continuing vocational and educational (VET) training.** Most commonly training for accessible tourism services is neither part of any mainstream educational provisions nor initial VET training. This means that occupational groups must be reached when they are already active on the labour market.

**Existing training providers do not seem to have the capacity to reach sufficiently high numbers of people to have a long-lasting impact on accessible tourism services across Europe.** The slow development of access training offers by mainstream tourism training providers suggests that there is a significant knowledge gap within training organisations which has only been filled to a limited degree hitherto by bringing in the expertise of disability NGOs and other consumer groups on an *ad hoc* basis. It would seem that until training organisations actually hire qualified experts to develop and deliver access training courses, the offers will remain sporadic and supplementary rather than being a firm part of the standard tourism curriculum.

**The standard methods of delivering formal training are online and traditional classroom-based training.** There are both benefits and disadvantages of these teaching methods. However, it seems that in relation to national, regional and local

initiatives there is no preference of teaching methods, but both online and traditional classroom based training are equally represented throughout Europe. With regard to EU-funded training initiatives online training clearly prevails over class-room based training. This is not surprising given the transnational scope of these projects.

**In common for both methods is the importance of disability content being developed and delivered by disabled people and not by able-bodied instructors.** This also holds true for online courses where disabled representatives and trainers are often included in the development of the online initiative. Similarly, most EU-funded projects involved persons with accessibility needs in the development of the training courses.

**Face-to-face training is believed to be the most efficient form of training.** These usually involve both a theoretical and a practical part. Particularly, in regards to reception and hospitality, practical experience is crucial. It is only possible to learn how to relate to tourists with disabilities by interacting with them. Lectures and theory cannot provide knowledge in the relational part of accessible tourism.

**A majority of training providers offering face-to-face learning engage people with disabilities as instructors and/or assistants during the training sessions.** This is motivated by the importance for participants to interact with disabled people in order to better understand their needs and raise awareness of real-life issues that may be encountered in the workplace. For example, a subtle but practically important issue such as not grabbing a disabled person's hand, but rather offering your own could be practically learnt by interacting with a disabled person. In particular, relating "lived" experiences rather than anecdotes is considered imperative for participants to understand the different aspects of different disabilities. Being in contact with a person with disabilities during the training also helps the participants feel more at ease with these clients. Other important advantages cited included increased sensitivity, the breaking down of communication barriers and developing interaction skills.

**Simulations and role play seem to play an increasing role in many training initiatives, resulting in a better understanding of the trainees or students.** Most training courses seem to move away from a traditional top-down classroom-style training. Spending a day visiting a city together with someone in a wheelchair might result in more knowledge than several days in a classroom. Via Libre – a Spanish consultancy service – offers training courses whereby trainees get to experience different environments in the role of a person with disabilities. After the practical experience participants are asked to analyse the barriers they have encountered and propose viable solutions<sup>31</sup>. These types of trainings are found to be effective because they let the students learn by doing which opens up new innovative ways of thinking in terms of accessibility.

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<sup>31</sup> See the case study on Via Libre for further details.

**According to Darcy (2009), official research seems to support the notion that direct involvement with people with disabilities during training has the greatest level of impact and duration<sup>32</sup>.**

One respondent to the online survey offered the following perspective:

*"Employees feel more secure in serving disabled travelers as they know more about their individual needs. Vice versa travelers with disability feel better served because service staff show more sensitivity in interacting with them...."*

**While the importance of involving people with disabilities in the training is stressed as an important success factor in the trainings, it is also indirectly mentioned as a barrier for businesses to take up the training.** The physical presence of disabled instructors and trainers together with the cost of providing props such as assistive technology make training very expensive. Moreover, time issues are central barriers to uptake of training. Classroom-based trainings require at least half a day of the participants' time.

**Online learning has often been put forward as a good tool to overcome some of the barriers associated with face-to-face training.** This specifically relates to the ability to reach out to more participants and reduce costs of trainers, room fees and necessary props. Furthermore, online training provides more flexibility in regard to timetables and training can be done at a pace chosen by the participants themselves.

However, online training may not provide the most inclusive experience – as highlighted by the quote below<sup>33</sup>:

*"In general, there was satisfaction with the course [.....]. However, some evaluators presented discomfort with the self-learning method providing no contact with a trainer, other trainees or even disabled guests..."*

Best practices relating to the development of online learning tools<sup>34</sup> includes the use of case studies and interactive quizzes, which contextualises the learning experience of the trainee.

**In general, self-learning at the workplace is seen as an efficient way to enhance, particularly soft skills which are rarely taught in the classrooms<sup>35</sup>.** As mentioned in section 3, soft skills are at the core of the hospitality industry. This includes skills associated with customer care, such as self-awareness, self-confidence,

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<sup>32</sup> Darcy, S. (2006). "Setting Up a Research Agenda for Accessible Tourism". CRC for Sustainable Tourism. Available online: <http://www.sustainabletourisonline.com/137/universal-access/setting-a-research-agenda-for-accessible-tourism>

<sup>33</sup> Taken from an EU-project questionnaire

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, the case study on ABTA, PeopleCERT or Visit England.

<sup>35</sup> European Commission. (2009). "Guide for Training in SMEs".



empathy, service-mindedness and effective communications. The question arises whether this can effectively be taught through online methods. Certainly, some training providers surveyed are firmly against implementing online learning methods as they often lack genuine interactivity with the trainer and other trainees, and may not produce the intended reflective learning that can be stimulated in classroom or group learning settings.

**However, it is possible to argue that there are some occupations where self-learning might be better suited than for other occupations.** For example, those professions where employees are physically removed from the client such as those identified in section 3.

**Some training providers<sup>36</sup> have developed what is called a “blended-learning programme” or “b-learning”.** It divides the training between online and class-room delivery. This type of training style integrates both face-to-face learning that is considered imperative in order to properly understand and break down the interaction barriers. However, as time constraint is a key issue in the tourism sector, an online tool has also been designed in order to allow the participants to work around their schedules and complete the modules in a time that is convenient for them.

**Thus, the challenge going forward in providing accessibility training relates to balancing the efficiency of online training with the effectiveness of classroom-based trainings.** The case studies provide more in-depth research on how some training providers have struggled to overcome this<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.5. Financing and sustainability

**In general, the lack of funding for training is one of greatest barriers when it comes to training for SMEs<sup>38</sup>.** SMEs have limited financial resources and the time cost of training may also act as a financial barrier to uptake.

**While there are instances where courses are available free of charge to businesses, a majority of courses surveyed are fee-paying.** These fees range from nominal €80 to over €800. Evidently, online courses are usually less expensive than face-to-face training and those courses when disabled instructors and other learning tools such as wheelchairs and assistive technology, are provided costs are usually higher.

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<sup>36</sup> See for example the case studies on Perfil – Trabalho and Psicologia and TACTALL.

<sup>37</sup> See the case study on ABTA, Perfil and Disney.

<sup>38</sup> European Commission. (2009). “Guide for Training in SMEs”. Available on: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4202&langId=en>

**From a demand-side perspective, ENAT experts have remarked that giving training for a fee is important.** Without a monetary cost relating to training, businesses do not place a high value on it and there is little incentive to attend.

**However, costs associated with training is often seen as being too high.** Evidently, cost considerations are reinforced if the market is misunderstood and there is no motivation at all to even consider it. In addition, the financial crisis has also contributed to businesses de-prioritising all sort of training, not only those relating to accessibility

**When investigating barriers to training, cost barriers are the most frequently mentioned<sup>39</sup>:**

*"We have no funding to subsidise course participation so have to charge the full commercial rate to all clients. It is not statutory training so whilst the economic trading conditions remain difficult it will be difficult for smaller organisations to find the money/time to attend".*

*"We had several meeting with human resources directors, hotel and project directors, sales and marketing managers, with several of them interested, but not enough to spend the company money on the training courses".*

*"There are financial barriers as an effect of budgetary cuts. Spending in training has severely decreased".*

**Some training courses provided by national tourism organisations such as Visit Flanders are funded with public budget available to these organisations for the development of tourism products.** The situation is also similar for some disability organisations who help to fund training courses. In particular, public sector funding must also be seen against the backdrop of austerity measures and shrinking resources. There is, thus, a strong imperative to make training financially sustainable on its own.

**In-house accessibility training provided by a company's HR department staff is relatively rare,** being found only in larger business chains such as Scandic which has 160 hotels in Scandinavia and Central Europe.<sup>40</sup> Scandic is one of the few examples of a large European tourism business that has successfully made "welcoming all customers" part of its brand values. It is unique in having a 'Disability Ambassador' reporting to the company CEO and its own 110-point Accessibility Standard which guides the hotel managers in making their services accessible for all guests. The company trains all its staff in disability and access awareness as a matter of routine and, in December 2013, it made its interactive access training course available online

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<sup>39</sup> Qualitative comments taken from the online survey to training providers.

<sup>40</sup> See the case study on Scandic.

(and free of charge), as a gesture of openness and eagerness to spread good accessibility practices in the tourism sector.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, at Scandic, accessibility is integrated in all its products and is therefore included in training related to Reception, Breakfast, Meetings, Housekeeping, Wellness and so on. In this way accessibility is firmly embedded in Scandic's business model, ensuring the sustainability not only of access training but also continuous access improvement in all its products.

### *Marketing channels*

**To understand whether training courses are sustainable it is imperative to also look at the marketing channels and uptake of training.** Sustainability relates to the training providers ability to promote the course and encourage uptake. Especially in those situations where training providers are depending on making a financial gain in order to continue providing the training.

**The most common marketing channels used across most training providers are email marketing, promotion through tourism schools and social media advertising.** Social media channels seem to be important in those cases where marketing budgets are limited.

**The in-depth research of case studies shows that many of the training initiatives have difficulties in reaching the right audience.** In a similar vein, 50% of the answers to the online survey indicate that training providers have difficulties in reaching their target audience. Limited budget and narrow networking channels are factors hampering marketing efforts.

**The most effective way of reaching the right target audience is partnering or seeking the support of industry and/or other stakeholders.** These organisations usually already possess the right communication tools and channels to reach businesses that the training is developed for. For example, an online course targeted to tour operators in the UK was developed in partnership with the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission and ABTA<sup>42</sup>, the British Association for tour operators and travel agents. The considerable industry clout that ABTA has with some of the biggest actors in the travel market facilitated the dissemination efforts as communication channels were already well-established. This observation also seem to hold true for those tourism boards who are promoting accessible tourism training and for well-reputable organisations<sup>43</sup>. However, many training initiatives seem to be operating in relative isolation from the wider tourism industry making it more difficult to find sustainable ways in delivering training.

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<sup>41</sup> See: 'Scandic Web Training on Disabilities' <http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.news.1497>

<sup>42</sup> For further details see the case study on ABTA.

<sup>43</sup> See the case studies on Via Libre, Visit Flanders and Visit England.

*Measures to stimulate uptake*

**In those instances where the target audience can be reached it is still difficult to convince businesses of the need for training.** For example, the Visit England's online course was offered in 2013 free of charge for the first 1,000 businesses to sign up. But only an estimated 50% of the available places were filled by the end of the year. Again this seems to indicate that there is a general lack of interest from businesses to engage in training.

*"We are reaching them [the target audience] but not all are availing themselves of the opportunity<sup>44</sup>".*

**This is due to a mix of factors, but most commonly it relates to the difficulty in outlining the benefits for businesses and limited resources in terms of time and money to develop broader communication strategies.** The apathy and lack of awareness are also cited as major barriers to reach out to managers to engage in training. As will be discussed further in section 4.6 it is imperative to convince managers on the need for training as they are responsible for setting out the strategic development of the business. In those instances where training has been discontinued it is often related to the disinterest from the market. Thus, it seems that training is available, but businesses do not avail themselves of the opportunity. In addition, the EU-projects evaluation showed that there is a great need for awareness raising efforts across the EU to stimulate demand for training.

**It is noteworthy that of the case studies presented as part of this research, none have been able to fully overcome the challenge of getting more businesses to take up training.** As pointed out in the case study on ATHENA:

*"People from SMEs did not "stand in a queue" to take the course, but had first to be tempted and encouraged to take part through a range of workshops and events".<sup>45</sup>*

**Identified ways of encouraging training have been through attaching training to standards such as labelling schemes.** One example of this is the barrier free tourism project by the German National Tourism board<sup>46</sup> which seem to ensure uptake and sustainability into the future. As part of the national labelling scheme both auditors and companies (who are being audited) have to attend the training. The label only last three years and companies have to re-apply after that and therefore, will have to undergo further training. At least one member of staff from the tourism provider being assessed has to take part in the training. If they leave the company a new member of staff has to be trained to ensure that at least one person in each company labelled as accessible knows about the needs of guests with disabilities. Also in the case of Visit Flanders and Visit England accessibility standards are used as

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<sup>44</sup> Qualitative comment taken from the online survey.

<sup>45</sup> See the case study on ATHENA project, Czech Republic.

<sup>46</sup> See the case study on Germany for further details.

levers to encourage businesses to take a strategic view of accessibility. However, this measure is contingent on an already existing interest in joining an accessibility scheme.

**In sectors of the industry where high standards of customer care (and hence, satisfaction) are recognised as playing a vital role in driving and maintaining sales, some suppliers place a very high emphasis on skills development among their frontline staff**, as for example in certain international hotel chains and leisure attractions<sup>47</sup>. However, this might hold higher validity for larger businesses than for SMEs.

#### 4.6. Target audience

**Managers/owners and frontline staff benefit from the widest availability of training** of the three main occupational groups identified in section 3. Less training has been identified for “other specialists” such architects and web-designers. These other occupations are also outside the realm of what would be defined as tourism training and has therefore largely been excluded from the training analysis.

##### *Managers and frontline staff*

**From the formal training initiatives surveyed, it appears that a majority of courses are directed to frontline staff.** The most frequently mentioned target profession for trainings are receptionists, in particular hotel receptionists, who need to be able to provide customer care and welcome a wide-range of visitors.

**In addition to receptionists, frontline staff with relatively high availability of training relates to airport staff and airline staff.** Some training providers cited the EU directive on Rights of people with reduced mobility in air transport (1107/2006) as prompting the development of the trainings. In addition, other bus, and train drivers, depending on the national context, receive disability awareness training where national legislation or policy has prompted this. For instance, in Luxembourg, the National Transport company (CFL - Chemin de Fer Luxembourg) and the City of Luxembourg have a one day training for the drivers as it has become a legal obligation<sup>48</sup>.

**In addition, training is also readily available for professionals such as tour guides, porters/concierges, and for professionals working in cultural centres and museums.** Our survey reveals that training is not specifically mentioned for other

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<sup>47</sup> See the case studies on Scandic Hotels and Disney.

<sup>48</sup> Reference – ENAT representative Luxembourg

travel clerks such as those working in attractions. To a lesser extent booking and information professionals are specified in the survey.

**The frontline occupations with low training availability includes bartenders, animators and those employed in housekeeping.** These are occupations that are usually low-skilled and are most likely to engage in on-the-job training rather than formal training.

**It is notable that the research has not picked up any training availability for chefs, cooks or kitchen helpers.** This may relate to the fact that, for instance, food allergies or celiac disease are not considered disabilities in the traditional kind. In this vein, there is still a persistent notion of accessible tourism as overwhelmingly related to physical accessibility, which can also be seen in the accessibility requirements covered by training (see section 4.6).

**Managers/owners are less mentioned in the online survey, but figure more prominently in the qualitative data collection such as interviews and case studies.** It seems that much training for managers should be considered informal training or awareness raising.

**The online survey responses highlighted that it is important to reach managers for the training to have a more long-lasting impact.** For example, one respondent commented that it is important to reach managers first, before frontline staff, as they set the direction of the organisation in a top-down approach. This is also highlighted in the following comment by one respondent:

*"Although the situation is changing, the course had little impact in changing the practices of the [frontline] professionals involved. One of the reasons may be that professionals at management level did not accept invitation to participate in these courses".*

**It seems that for formal training provisions, the two most commonly targeted managers are hotel and restaurant sector managers.** Managers lacking disability awareness in all countries verified so far relates to managers and owners within the transport sector as well as legislators and public officials. However, these are also largely outside the realm of tourism training per se. As the accessible tourism is gaining increasing grounds, it seems that managers working with tourism policy and planning benefit from relatively high availability of training.

**While there are trainings available for most occupational groups, the number of participants who have engaged in training is quite low.** The project survey revealed that for some courses the figures is as low as 10-30 people whilst for other courses the participant rate amounts to over several hundreds. However, it is important to note that these figures are very low considering the vast number of people active in the tourism sector.

### *Others*

**The research has uncovered very few initiatives targeted to the occupations included in Group 3: Others.** These occupations facilitate and improve accessible tourism services in practice. However, in the projects surveyed these occupations were not very frequently included nor mentioned, with the exception of architects who need to take into account a Design for All /design for all approach. However, this subject is also poorly represented in European architectural education courses. Out of 30 institutes surveyed, only 8.4% provided teaching in Design for All in 2009<sup>49</sup>.

#### **4.7. Curriculum and training content**

**Common themes and modules can be found in the current training courses across the EU.** Although material and some parts of the content may be adapted to suit local conditions, there are a range of generic learning topics that are present in most of the training courses surveyed.

**Many training initiative have developed training only after analysing local conditions and skills needs.** In addition, this research has not been able to identify any “model training course” laying the basis for training initiatives across Europe. It seems that most courses have been developed from scratch without any valorisation of development efforts made in one sector or Member State. This is likely to relate to the intellectual property issues. The only exception seem to be transfers of course design and material arising from some of the EU-funded projects to local initiatives.

### *Course design*

**Most training material and course curricula are not publicly available.** As many organisations charge a fee for engaging in the training, it means that course curriculum is not possible to access. Therefore the basis for the analysis of existing curriculum design is the online survey and the case studies.

**In general, it seems that both distance learning and classroom based trainings are developed into a set of modules or topics addressing different aspects of disability.** This is not accurate to the same extent in the informal awareness raising seminars or workshops. Some training courses have also developed generic modules which can be adapted to sector specific conditions. For example, the

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<sup>49</sup> See the study report by Egger and Klenovic (2012). <http://www.design-for-all.at/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/BarrierefreiesBauen-Projektbericht.pdf>

Portuguese training provider Perfil has developed a course which includes a basic core module which addresses universal disability awareness. Complementing the basic course there are 3 specialised courses that participants can turn to gain specific sector knowledge, which make the training increasingly relevant for the target occupations.

**Looking at the length of the courses provided, it seems that most training only introduces the introductory-level skills set identified in section 3.**

**For example, in the project evaluation following the EU-funded TACTALL (The Accessible City for All) project the participating businesses (11) found that the instructed 40 hour was simply too long for small tourism businesses.** However, the course developers argued that, in theory, this is the time required to fully understand the content of the course. In this vein, many of the courses are relatively short and are only providing an introductory level knowledge.

**Business conditions often require a fast delivery of training which is focused on giving results in the daily work of every staff member.** This contributes to the briefness of the training. The Scandic hotel training guide takes 30 minutes to complete but is coupled with on the job training which aims to practically inform the topics learnt. The development of training material that may be re-used by the trainees is an efficient way of giving them the opportunity to review the content of the training performed, as well as share the content with people around them such as other employees. However, this does not seem to deepen skills level to correspond to what relates to in-depth training.

#### *Content*

**Common for virtually all courses is the inclusion of disability awareness as a cornerstone in the training.** From a theoretical as well as a practical point of view, delivering accessible experiences refers ultimately to customer requirements that stem from one or other kind of disability or impairment. It is, for example, often said that "seniors" are part of the accessible tourism market but the key factor which gives rise to access requirements is not these visitors' age as such, but the gradual (or sudden) loss of functional ability, whether it is physical, sensory or mental, which then places the older guest in the position of needing one or more accessible services.

**In relation to the wide availability of training initiatives for frontline staff, the survey showed that the most common content of the training courses overall deals with how to serve guests with disabilities as well as principles of effective customer service.**

**The least covered content of the training is better understanding of legal requirements.** The case study research shows that training providers consciously



move away from focusing too heavily on legal obligations of businesses<sup>50</sup>. Instead, it is believed that it is more encouraging to present the potential of the accessibility market for businesses to engage and enjoy the training.

**The online survey revealed that there is significant room for improvement in terms of training** in dealing with guests requiring service animals and assistive technology. In addition, a poorly covered area of training is 'safety and evacuation' of guests with disabilities, which is an essential skills for frontline staff.

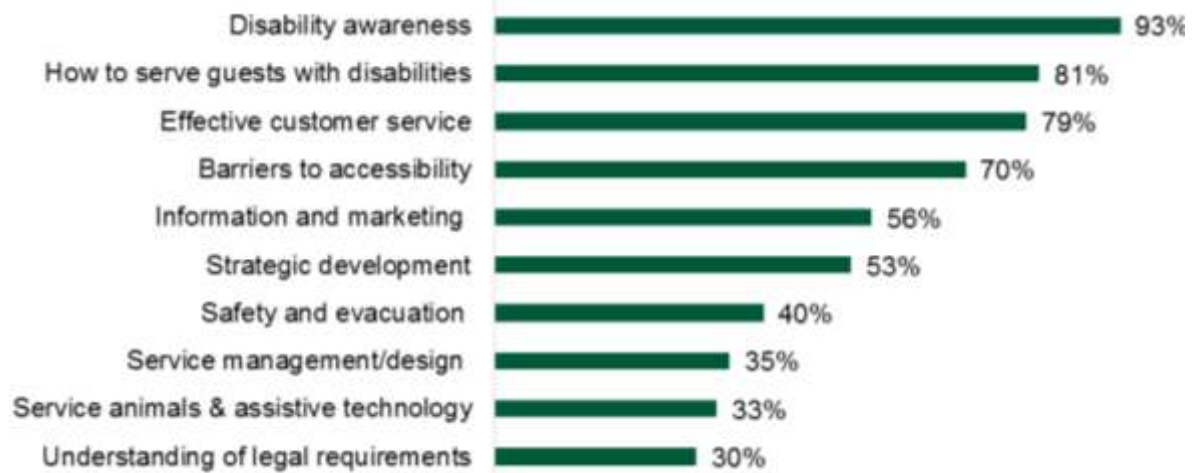
**It is noteworthy that only around half of the courses surveyed include content on the strategic development of accessibility in business** in order to encourage the uptake of training. As noted above, convincing management of the business case for accessibility seems to be key in furthering accessibility as an element of business approaches. However, the low coverage of this type of content may relate to the informality of training for management.

**In addition to the content identified in the online survey, it is imperative to teach accessibility in terms of social inclusion.** The objective of providing accessible services should not merely be to cater to tourists with disabilities, but also to include them in all tourist activities in the same way as an able-bodied tourist. A major part of any successful training initiative should be to overcome stigma, stereotyping and exclusion. Evidently this is part of Design for All principles, but should also be an elementary part of any training initiative that deals with providing a customer-friendly welcome. A good example of this is the case study on Visit Flanders which highlighted the production of courses to center around the notion of inclusion rather than accessibility. Much of this course material emphasises that tourists with accessibility needs are not a distinct group of tourists, but should be included in activities in the same manner as any other able-bodied individual.

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<sup>50</sup> See for example the case study on ABTA and Visit England.

**Figure 10: Content of formal training provisions<sup>51</sup>**

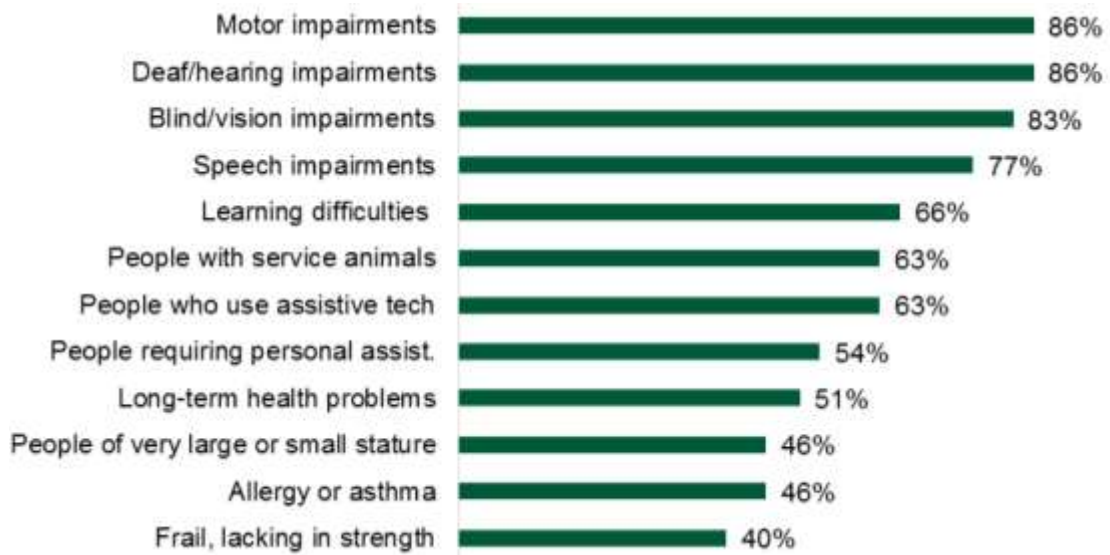


*Content by accessibility need*

**From the data collected it is possible to discern the coverage of each accessibility need.** Motor and sensory impairments rank among the accessibility requirements most often addressed in the training. This links to the notion of accessibility as mostly related with motor impairments. Cognitive accessibility needs, such as learning difficulties or autism, are less well-covered and only appear in 66% of the training courses surveyed.

<sup>51</sup> Out of the 63 training courses surveyed, 40 training providers answered this question.

**Figure 11: Disability covered in the training<sup>52</sup>**



**Those with allergies and asthma, those who are frail together with those of large or small stature are not as well-covered.** This is likely related to the fact that they these are not considered disabilities in the traditional kind and may from the outset not seem to hinder travelling. But survey data shows that it is difficult for those with for example food allergies to travel. Furthermore, the online survey revealed little mentioning of senior tourists, however, this may be due to the fact that they often suffer cross-impairments such as difficulties walking, long-term health problems or sensory impairments.

<sup>52</sup> The figure is based on the 63 responses in the online survey.

## 5. GAP ANALYSIS AND ROLE OF EU PROJECTS

This section presents the gaps in existing training provision and it examines the role of EU projects in overcoming this gap.

Data feeding into the following analysis was collected through a questionnaire directed to participating project organisation in the EU-funded projects and was complimented by desk research. At the end of the desk research period a total of 25 EU-projects were found stretching back to 2000 as having some relation with accessible tourism training. Out of these 25 projects, 12 project coordinators answered the survey. The less than 50% response rate is attributed to the age of the project and invalidity of email addresses.

The questionnaire data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. SPSS was used for the quantitative analysis and focused on the use of descriptive statistics. An example of the questionnaire is listed in Annex VI.

In addition to the questionnaire data and desk research, the study's expert team has been closely involved in some of the EU-funded projects and could therefore provide expert input into the drafting of the following section.

### 5.1. Gap analysis

**In the last 5 years and up to the present a greater number of tourist boards, professional bodies in tourism, as well as airports, attractions and hotel chains have begun to engage more directly in customer service for persons with disabilities and other access needs.** This trend is being driven partly by policies linked to legislation in some Member States and in relation to the EU Air Passenger Directive. However, despite the EU's signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on behalf of all member states, there has not been a strong and unified response in the form of widespread uptake of accessibility training in the tourism sector, as some may have expected.

**On the positive side, the projects and programmes which have been carried out across Europe under various programmes and initiatives have produced a significant body of knowledge and information for developing training in the tourism sector.** Some of this content is finding its way into new curricula and training initiatives. For example, the training course developed by Perfil and partners in Portugal with European Social Funds support (see Annex IV page 30) was later adopted, largely unchanged, as a national training curriculum for the Portuguese tourism and hospitality industry.

**However, it is also noted that other content developed in EU projects has been “privatised” or removed from websites.** Also, due to the recession and cutbacks in government spending, a number of excellent online resources have been lost and training centres in this field have been closed, for example in the United Kingdom. Government cutbacks and re-structuring of tourism support after 2010 meant that the online interactive training course, *Profit by Access Business Toolkit*,<sup>53</sup> launched in 2008 was closed, along with similar support programmes in the UK regions.

**The relative weakness in implementation of access training can be ascribed partly to the lack of policy direction from national governments and the EU but also to the low interest shown by SMEs, destinations and other tourist providers in addressing the accessible tourism market.** There is therefore a clear and pressing need to further develop access training programmes in Europe and, equally, to stimulate SMEs’ interest in the market of accessible tourism, not only for legal or moral reasons but also for the benefits it can give to businesses, destinations and customers.

**From a conceptual point of view three key gaps need to be highlighted:**

1. A gap in the actual availability/provision of training
2. A gap in the development of the business case for training
3. A gap in evaluating the impact of training on customers, staff and businesses

#### *Gaps in existing training provision*

**First of all, existing training is often provided on a non-permanent basis or reaches too few individuals to have an effective impact on the provision of accessible tourism services.** In addition, it seems that many providers are suffering from low uptake of courses and that marketing channels are difficult to find.

**A key issue in the provision of accessible tourism training is that no European Member State has so far integrated accessibility related content into mainstream course curriculum.** If present, training remains at the margins of the curriculum. The only exception to this seems to be France, where accessibility content is a compulsory module in post-graduate study courses<sup>54</sup>.

**Furthermore, the analysis of the availability of accessibility training shows a noticeable gap in training directed to initial vocational training.** It is noted that in those tourism schools or universities where accessibility courses are available it is mostly due to the interest of individual teachers or students rather than overall

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<sup>53</sup> [http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat\\_projects\\_and\\_good\\_practices.601](http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices.601)

<sup>54</sup> Data obtained in interviews with French experts.

educational policy. Thus, as noted above, most training courses available in the EU are run by disability NGOs, National Tourism Boards and private training providers.

**Moreover, it seems that those training providers that have developed course content have done so from scratch.** There is little valorisation and transferability from development efforts made in one sector or Member State to another. This might relate to organisations providing training are rather isolated from each other and from the tourism sector. In addition, some material and content are intellectual property of the developing organisation and therefore it is difficult to access these and transfer some valuable lessons to other contexts. The exception to this, are the trainings that have emerged from EU-funded pilot projects (see section 5.2 for more details).

**The lack of accessibility tourism training in tourism schools and university degrees has been highlighted in e.g. the EU.FOR.ME project<sup>55</sup>.** It is difficult to introduce new modules in the educational programme of many degrees due to space limits, and due to other priorities.

One ENAT expert - in the context of the Italian system – explained:

*"The system of organising academic course curricula is very strict and it is quite difficult to introduce new topics. Moreover each university is autonomous from the point of view of deciding teaching content, so it was hard to get "space" for this new topic. This issue is now becoming more and more recognised as important which might give more space in the future for accessible tourism teaching."*

**Making accessibility tourism a compulsory module for tourism students would considerably improve the skills set of school leavers.** Students would be introduced to the subject at an early stage of their careers, this would mean that the next generation of managers and frontline staff would already have, at least, a general understanding of accessibility.

**Currently, the majority of training is available for continuing vocational** or for short-term training specific for a workplace or for a specific profession. The study found little evidence of accessible tourism modules forming part of initial tourism education. Instead, as highlighted in the previous section, the courses found are short and directed to participants who are already active in the labour market. For example, the training courses investigated as part of the case studies were all directed to individuals active in the tourism sector, with the exception of the CO.IN study which had some training initiatives directed to tourism students. Moreover, the type of training that is offered is often temporary and at an introductory level. However, as shown in the case study research some training is better than none at all. This was particularly highlighted in the Disney case study, where an introductory level of

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<sup>55</sup> See further: <http://www.euforme.net/>

disability awareness seem to help breaking down initial barriers to receiving guests with disabilities.

**From the analysis of current training provisions, the issue of certification is a crucial one.** There are a wide range of different certificates available throughout Europe. Where a certificate is given each training provider issues their own certificate upon successful completion of the course. These certificates carry no academic credit and are not usually recognized by the wider tourism community. This contributes to further barriers in the uptake of training.

**There is a strong case for a European certificate.** Without one, different national variations may appear, which will imply difficulties in the coming years regarding recognition in different EU Member States. Ideally, a person with training in accessible tourism as part of the professional or educational background should be considered an asset and added-value in any section of the tourism industry. In addition, a certificate could also be used by businesses as a marketing tool to attract more clients with accessibility needs.

#### *Gaps in developing the business case for training*

**As pointed out in section 4, there is a lack of convincing messages to tempt tourism business into spending time and financial resources on training in accessibility.** There are certainly some quite well-known and profitable businesses in some countries and regions (e.g. Scandic Hotels, which is not an SME) and some well-documented cases in the UK where VisitEngland has awarded prizes to successful accessible businesses. Sometimes the good business case is conveyed in small snippets of information like: "We have 95% occupancy rates in our accessible bungalows while the ones down the road are only half full". These facts may become anecdotal but in fact they often go to the heart of the matter, emphasising that, when all other things are equal, accessibility can make a big difference to attracting customers and improving the business's bottom line.

**However, some EU member states do lack good business case examples.** In the ATHENA project (in Moravia - Eastern region of Czech Republic), many tourism business owners were said to be initially sceptical or disbelieving about the economic potential of accessible tourism and local success stories were not in evidence. This suggests that there may be differences between member states and regions concerning where local good examples exist and which kind of examples actually make an impression on the various audiences.

**Some governments and in particular Tourist Boards are promoting Accessible Tourism and providing tools and resources to engage with and support small and medium sized businesses.** A report, *Improving messages to SMEs: The case for*

*the disabled customer*<sup>56</sup> cites a number of barriers for SMEs in engaging with Accessible Tourism, including:

- Lack of awareness of the business opportunity disabled consumers entail
- Attitudinal barriers: misconceptions and discomfort with disability
- Misconceptions of the notions of 'accessibility' and 'reasonable adjustments'
- Fear of 'getting it wrong'
- Dominant legal compliance messages and little emphasis on the business opportunity
- A perception of "low enforcement" of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Little active promotion and 'complacency' in engaging businesses

**Another reason for not engaging with accessibility issues sometimes given by businesses (whether they have made adjustments or not), is that there is not the demand, however, they typically do not market their accessibility,** either consciously because they do not want to attract people or subconsciously as they just have not thought to highlight the features. If they do not perceive a demand, then for them there is no business case.

Also it is undeniable that for SMEs that operate in "honeypot areas" (where demand is always high) one of the last things they may think of is training in accessibility and disability awareness, as they will not perceive the need to attract the market or the business benefits of doing so.

*Gaps in studying the impact of training*

**Finally, there is a gap in evaluating the impact of the training courses.** The survey, case studies and interviews have revealed that the training providers have little awareness of the impact of their training on participants and on the wider tourism sector as exemplified by:

*"We don't have any information on what happens after the training is completed. We have only received very good feedback from the trainee on their satisfaction with the course".*

*"Feedback from trainees who have completed the course is extremely positive".*

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<sup>56</sup> Atkins report produced for the UK Office of Disability Issues:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/31715/10-1126-2012-legacy-for-disabled-people-case-for-the-disabled-customer.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31715/10-1126-2012-legacy-for-disabled-people-case-for-the-disabled-customer.pdf)



*"Many locations across Wales have been able to become more confident in welcoming disabled people and have where appropriate (reasonable), instigated access improvements at their premises".*

**Whilst the satisfaction with the course is often put forward by course providers, they do not provide a convincing business case.** As set out earlier, it is difficult to establish a direct link between increased business and accessibility training. Repeat visits, recommendations and increased satisfaction from customers take time to materialise. Thus, accessibility training is often part of long-term strategy and it takes time to collect the evidence for a business case. It is also imperative to note that training in this sense cannot be isolated from other improvements or adaptations of the businesses to become increasingly accessible. Instead training should be integrated into an overall business case for accessibility, emphasising the low-cost measure that training can be to increase accessibility in tourism services.

## **5.2. The role of EU projects in addressing gaps**

**In an attempt to support Member States in closing the gaps in accessible tourism training presented above, the European Commission has financed a large number of training projects in the last 13 years.** These projects have been developed with the objective to stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector while aiming at improving professional skills.

**However, the success of these projects in overcoming existing gaps in training provision and delivering an impact has been left largely unevaluated.** Furthermore, as pointed out above many existing projects tend to "start from scratch" rather than building on lessons learned elsewhere. This may lead to resources going unexploited as the material and content produced in these projects can help to create a common vision of training and develop further curriculum proposals.

**This section provides an analysis on the role of EU-funding to close the gaps identified in the provision of accessible tourism training.** It represents the first dedicated review of impacts derived from the EU investment in the specific area of training for accessible tourism.<sup>57</sup>

### *Overview of EU-funded projects*

**Since 2000 an estimated 24 project relating to accessible tourism training have benefitted from EU funding.** The funding has come from the European

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<sup>57</sup> The methodology for this assessment is in Annex I.

Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme (most frequently the Leonardo da Vinci programme).

**The numbers of EU-funded projects has steadily grown since 2000.** Especially since 2008 there are an increasing number of projects that are dedicated to accessible tourism training in some respect, with 2009 seeing as many as five EU-funded projects. This denotes a growing interest and funding opportunities for accessible tourism across Europe. A detailed description of each project is available in Annex IV.

**Table 10: Overview of EU funded projects**

Year	Name	EC Programme	Project Code
2002	DILATT (distance Learning for Accessible tourism technicians)	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	I/00/B/F/PP-120090
2004	EU.FOR.ME project. "Tourist training for a wider target"	European Commission, Education and Culture, Joint Actions	119645-JA-1-2004-1-IT-JOINTCALL-INDI
2005	QforScan	No information found	
2007	TUR004	Innovtur - Centro Virtual de Formación Turística	
2007	HAPPY TOURIST Making Europe accessible	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	EL/05/B/F/PP-148209

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

2007	DIADA "Developing and introducing a new training approach in the tourism sector".	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	Agreement N° 2004 - PT05/PP/11/24/068
2008	Active European Seniors for Active European Citizenchip	EU Lifelong Learning Programme	141757-LLP-1-2008-1-AT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP
2008	MIT Make it accessible	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	504655-LLP-1-2009-1-DE-LEONARDO-LMP
2008	TACTALL The Accessible City. Tourism for all (Tactall)	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	ES/08/LLP-LdV/TOI/149036
2009	Turismo Inclusivo PERFIL		
2009	ETCAATS	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	LLP-LDV/TOI/SE/09/1194.
2009	European Training Certificate - Access for all in the Tourism sector	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	2009-1-SE1-LEO05-02280
2009	ACAD Accommodation & catering accessibility for disability	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	2009-1-PL1-LEO05-05036
2010	ITTI Improving Accessibility through Training in Tourism	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	2009-1-SI1-LEO05-00997

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

2010	ATE. Accessible Tourism Europe for	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	CZ/09/LLP-PS/LdV/033
2010	ATTRACT Activate Tourism Training Resources for Accessible Cities and Towns	Lifelong Learning programme of the European Union	2010-1-IT1-LEO04-00987 4
2010	TRAINING TOOLS FOR ACCESSIBLE TOWNS	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	2010-1-FR1-LEO05-14499
2012	T-GuIDE: Tourist Guides for Intellectual Disabled in Europe	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	527776-LLP-1-2012-1-IT-LEONARDO-LMP
2012	SAFETUR - Practise based training tool for safety and security in Rural tourism	Lifelong Learning programme of the European Union	2012-1-LV1-LEO05-03389
2013	EVocaTE	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	LEO-LDVII-C-5144347
2013	ITA Inclusion Through Accessibility Project	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR): Country-Based Support scheme for Georgia.	Reference of the Call for Proposals EuropeAid/132-514/L/ACT/GE Contract number EIDHR- 2012/291-960
2013	Greenways4tour Project	EC sustainable Tourism Preparatory action	12/G/ENT/TOU/11/411B
2013	TEAD Tourist Environment Accessibility for Disability	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	2012-1-PL1-LEO05-27449

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

2013	TACTALL extension (TAF CITY) The Age Friendly City	EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo de Vinci	2011-1-ES1-LEO05-35886
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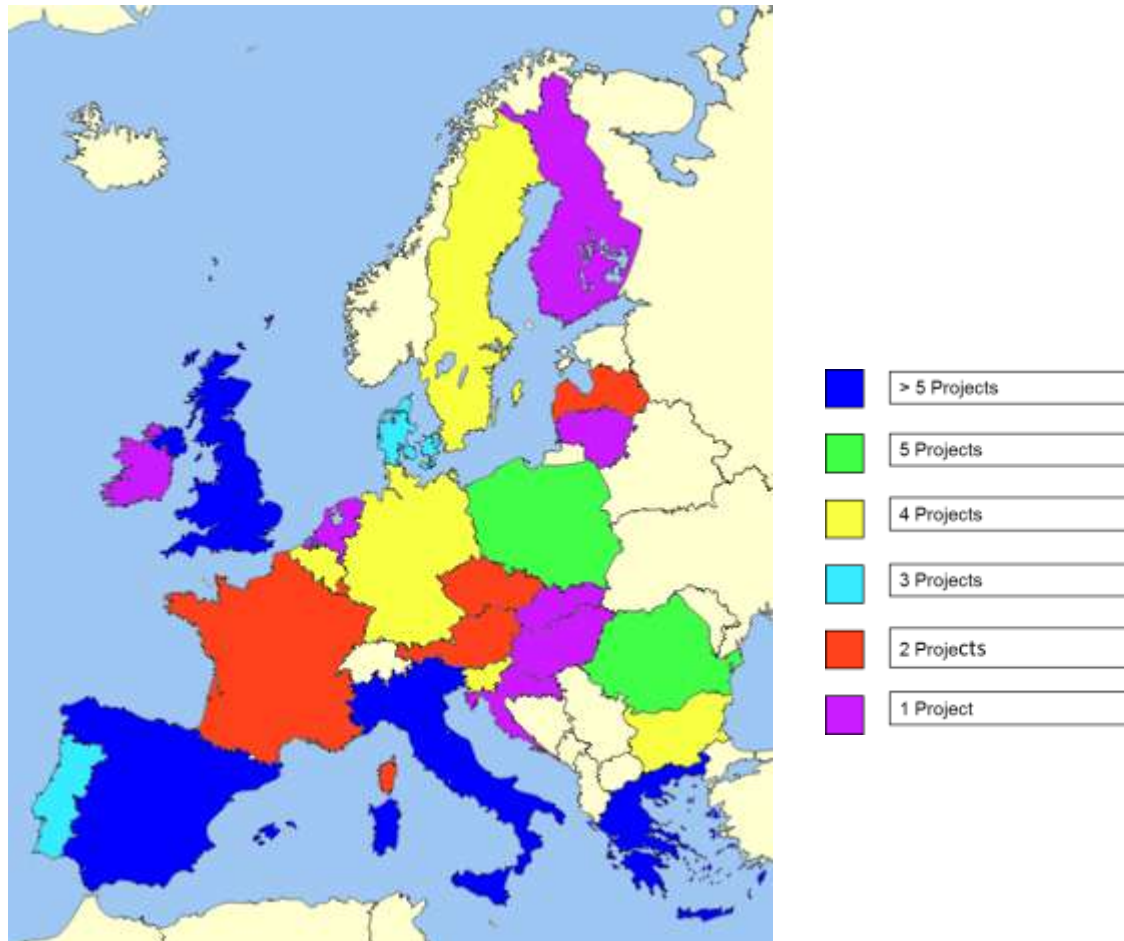
**All EU Member States have participated in one of the accessible tourism training projects identified.** The UK, Spain, Italy and Greece are those countries that have participated most frequently. The first three countries also incorporate many public and private initiatives in regards to accessibility and they have come relatively far in accessibility training.<sup>58</sup>

**However, some countries with no or very few local or national training initiatives, such as Hungary, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, have also been involved to some extent in EU projects on accessible tourism.** For example, Lake Võrtsjärv in southern Estonia which received the EDEN award in the beginning of 2012, was the country's first exposure to accessible tourism. Thus, there is some evidence that EU projects have been able to extend awareness of accessible tourism to countries where this is lacking most.

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<sup>58</sup> see Annex III for country profiles

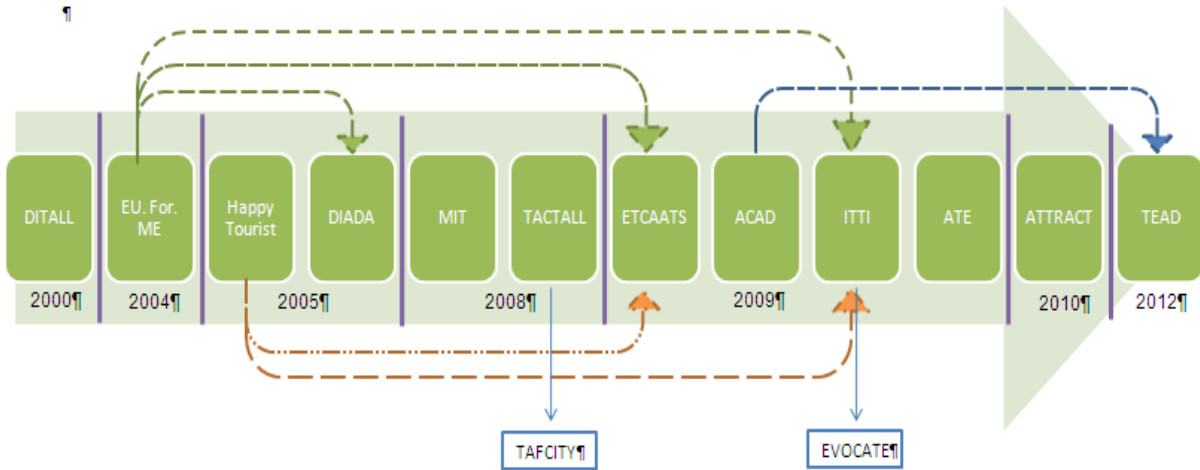
**Figure 12: Map showing the involvement of the various EU countries in accessible tourism training projects<sup>59</sup>.**



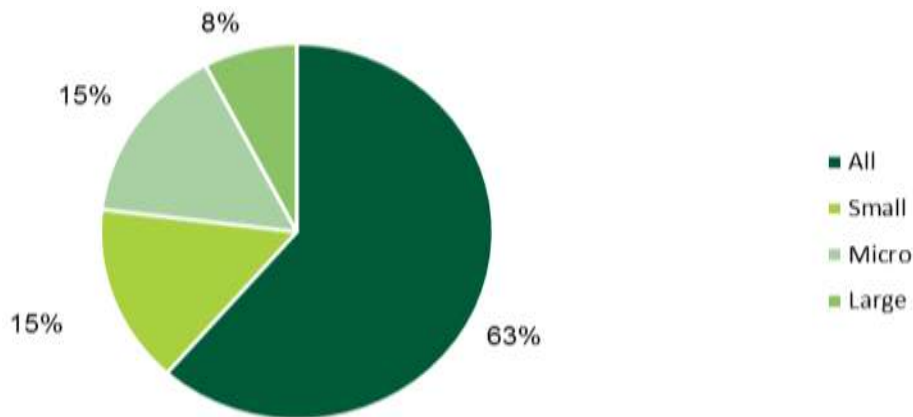
<sup>59</sup> Map based on the data collected through desk research. Finland has not cooperated in any transnational EU-funded project, however, through our survey tool and through desk research we have uncovered one project in Finland – although the focus is not exclusively on accessibility training. In addition, to the best of our knowledge Cyprus has not participated in EU-level accessible training initiatives.

**Most of the projects presented common features which can provide a good starting point for a standard training curriculum.** In this relatively new area of tourism training, many efforts have been made, firstly, to establish a basic understanding about what the target of training initiatives should be. Secondly, projects have identified some of the main actors who need to be trained (management, staff and different occupational roles) and, thirdly, the projects have focused on developing appropriate training tools, methods and curricula. In addition, it is interesting to note that out of 12 projects surveyed, as many as 8 had been developed based on other EU-funded projects.

**Figure 13: Project timeline and linkages**



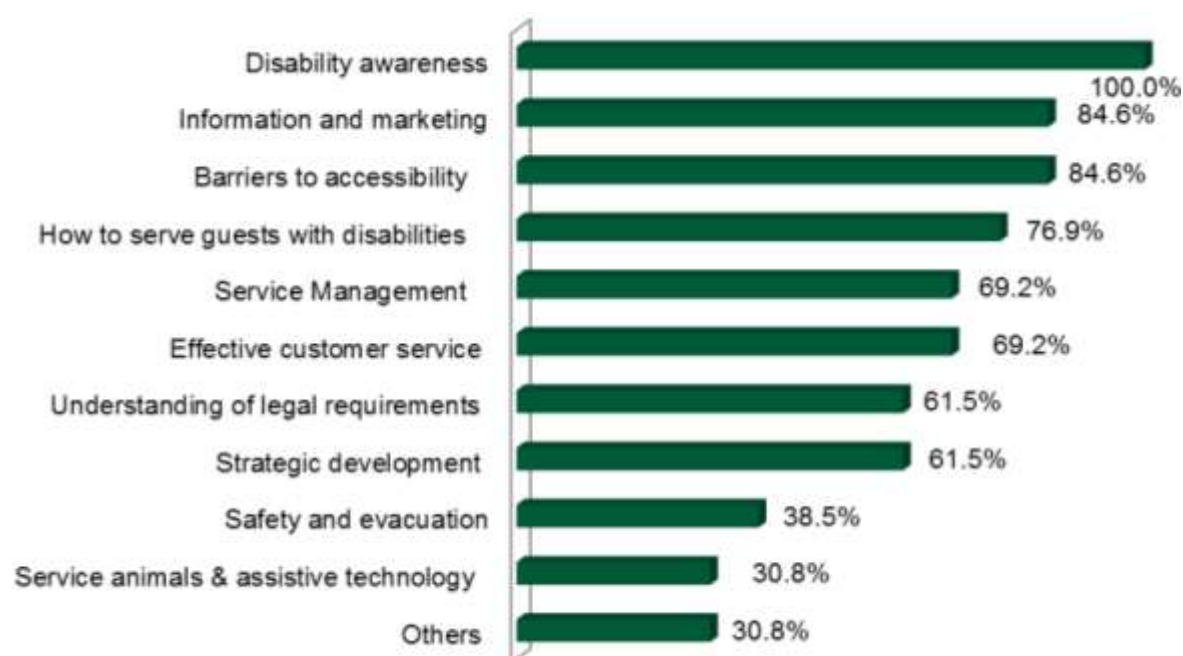
**Figure 14: Target audience of the EU-funded trainings**



**The distribution of content in EU-projects is very similar to local-level initiatives.**

Safety and evacuation, assisting people with service animals and assistive technology are equally covered. However, information and marketing is better covered with 84% of projects including this topic in their course curriculum. Overall, however, it seems that there is no novelty content in the EU-projects, but it indicates that the course curricula have the same priorities as other initiatives.

**Figure 15: Content of EU funded training courses<sup>60</sup>**



*Impact of EU-funded projects on the availability of training*

As noted above, the impact of the projects has gone largely unevaluated.

**In a survey, project coordinators on the whole gave higher ratings to the benefits of working across national boundaries and designing projects, than to the actual impacts which their accessible tourism training course had on the tourism sector.** Indeed, impact on the sector was given the lowest score of all proposed impact dimensions.

<sup>60</sup> This data is based on the 12 responses from the questionnaire



**In general, project respondents set out three areas for improvement – awareness raising, transferability of results and dissemination.** While the underlying objective in all projects has been to raise awareness in the tourism sector, this issue has been revealed as the one most needing further action.

*"There are high-quality training products in accessible tourism available for high schools and for businesses, both results of several projects, however managers in tourism lack motivation to participate in training because they still consider it a niche and not interesting market".*

**Most projects have needed to pave the way for accessibility training** by generating interest in the subject among the target professions and the wider tourism sector in general and stimulate demand for training. In most instances, "disability awareness" and "accessible tourism" were largely unknown among tourism professionals.

**Figure 16: Satisfaction rate of achievements of EU-project (1 – 10, low to high)<sup>61</sup>**



One of the most frequently mentioned achievements as the promotion of accessible tourism training and bridging the gap on accessible tourism training between older EU Member States, new Member States and acceding countries. In general, networking and the creation of synergies among different private and public stakeholders involved in

<sup>61</sup> The results were obtained from the 12 questionnaires.

accessible tourism as well as visibility of results and course content were cited as major achievements in the project evaluations. Some projects also mentioned the transferability of results with the trainings used by other tourism bodies and by tourism destination managers.

**Figure 17: Achievement and areas for improvement for EU-funded trainings**



**Transferability and dissemination figured most prominently among areas for improvement.** The projects have built up a considerable body of information and training material, however much of this is not known, nor is it directly available to the vocational and educational training community or to the tourism sector as a whole. A key issue influencing the impact of EU- funded projects relates to the longevity and the transferability of the project, as exemplified by this comment<sup>62</sup>:

*"Once the financing of the Commission is over, the project is considered concluded. This is the limited (2 years) duration of the project as determined by the Leonardo da Vinci Partnership programme specifics."*

It should be noted that the impact of these projects, generally, has been difficult to measure with great certainty. Many projects no longer have operational websites. This indicates perhaps that their commitment could not be sustained after project funding ceased or that their business development and exploitation plans have failed.

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<sup>62</sup> The qualitative comment is taken from the EU-projects survey

**Where projects are now “closed” – without active websites or other open resources – the results are largely lost to the community.** However, efforts to disseminate and develop further training products have been successful in a number of instances where projects have transferred the innovative materials to new formats, such as e-Learning contexts. There are good examples where EU-funded projects have been transferred and delivered in other contexts<sup>63</sup>. However, this seems to be true for a minority of the projects.

**The quite widespread lack of continuity or uptake of training noted in this research may be an indication that some projects were not sufficiently embedded in the tourism sector at an institutional level from the beginning,** for example through the participation of suitable industry or public partners such as training institutions. It may also be the case that, despite their best efforts, some projects were unable to forge the expected links and alliances with “mainstream” actors in the tourism sector.

#### **Box 2: Areas for improvement**

##### **Awareness**

- The need to involve the academic world and external actors in local activities
- Awareness raising on the need for training
- An EU certification body

##### **Transferability**

- Knowledge, at EU level, of what is available/ has been realized with EU funds
- Make course curricula available in schools
- Removing language barriers by making the courses available in more languages
- Needs extending to other subjects and transfer to other sectors

##### **Dissemination**

- Quality of dissemination activities within each partner’s networks should be improved
- Improvement of effectiveness of joint dissemination of project outcomes

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<sup>63</sup> See the case study on ECAATS, ATHENA, TACTALL and COIN for references.

**Finally, it should be noted that many of these EU –funded projects were pilot projects with very few participants.** For example, the TACTALL project provided training to 11 businesses, which tried and evaluated the “Accessible City” training package in the UK city Bath. Similarly, the EU.for.me training also only invited 16 participants to take part in the training as the aim was to educate future trainers and develop course material that could be implemented in tourism education. This project resulted in great potential which, however, still remains unexploited<sup>64</sup>.

**On the whole, it seems that most projects have unexploited possibilities.** However, many of the projects have been “pioneers” whose task has been to scan the existing tourism landscape and prepare the path for training, before then going on to design and test new approaches which could deliver the necessary skills to the tourism professionals.

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<sup>64</sup>See the case study on COIN

## 6. CROSS ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

**The following section presents the key results of 20 case studies conducted as part of this study.**<sup>65</sup> The case studies focus on past and present training providers and initiatives from across Europe. They cover some of the most prominent and well-known training initiatives in the field of accessible tourism. The sample encompasses 17 case studies originating in Europe, 2 from outside of the EU and the final case study covers EU-funded projects on accessible tourism training in the past 13 years.

**The cases contain in-depth qualitative information on different impacts of training initiatives, their structure and rationale, drivers of success and barriers to uptake.** The objectives of the case studies are fourfold:

1. **Provide in-depth qualitative information on “what works”** in the provision of skills development/training in different tourism occupations, in different countries, for different customer (disability) groups and contexts. The case studies tackle some of the core research questions of the study regarding the barriers to uptake of training and the communication channels to reach SMEs in particular.
2. **Raise awareness among different stakeholders** of the importance and benefits of appropriate accessibility training
3. **Indicate how to overcome some of the gaps in current training provision** identified in section 5.
4. **Provide the starting point for a “best practices toolkit”** and recommendations that illustrates in a practical way how lessons learned in some initiatives could inform the development or improvement of similar initiatives elsewhere. These recommendations are available in section 7.

**This section summarises the key elements of the case studies against 6 best practice indicators**<sup>66</sup>:

- Innovation
- Relevance
- Transferability
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Impact
- Sustainability

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<sup>65</sup> An overview methodology of the case studies is available in Annex I. The case study reports themselves are provided as separate annexes.

<sup>66</sup> The case study reports themselves are provided as separate documents.

**The good practice assessment is made in the form of a “traffic light” system, which indicates the performance of each case study against the good practice indicator** (in a qualitative manner). The summary of the assessment is presented below in a tabular format.

**Most cases are a mix of both strength and weaknesses as well as successes and failures.** It should be noted that only a handful of initiatives scores high or green on all indicators set out above. Most notably this relates to HERMES airports, Via Libre, as well as the two cases originating from outside the EU (Keroul and Ontario).

**What appears to set these case studies apart from the others is the presence of legislation encouraging the uptake of training both at EU level (Directive 1107/2006) as well as national legislation.** In the case of Spain, awareness and the strength of the disability movement is also seen as a positive factor contributing

to increased uptake and awareness of accessibility.

**However, it is impossible to isolate one factor which contributes to the increase in both supply and demand of accessible tourism training provisions.** Instead, there are a mix of factors, issues and barriers that should be considered when promoting and devising strategies for accessibility training. These are set out more in detail below.

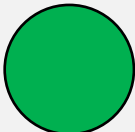
The Annexes contain the full case studies including conclusions and recommendations. For further information on the reasons of the scores and the justifications corresponding to each case and indicators, see the assessment incorporated into the case studies.

### 6.1. Innovation

**Innovation encompasses a range of different factors such as target audience, approach, funding, resources and tools and objectives with tried and tested results.** Most of the innovative approaches relate to how to make the training increasingly interesting for businesses to engage with. This includes the case of ABTA's online course which has attempted to move away from the static learning methods of self-learning through the use of case studies and quizzes. In the case of VisitEngland, the innovative approach encompasses the self-learning tools and publications which have been developed in order to support businesses in engaging with the subject of accessibility. This case study clearly sets out the case for informal learning as an important way of increasing and improving accessibility training for the tourism sector.


**Many of the training initiatives covered in the case studies have been innovative** as they often set out the first initiative and approaches to accessibility training in the local contexts in which the training is supposed to be delivered. For example, in the case of ATHENA and CAT Bulgaria, accessible tourism was a largely unknown concept and thus the task of these projects have been to first promote and develop an initial idea and interest in the concept to businesses. In addition, innovation is seen as essential to stimulate demand from businesses.

**Table 11: Innovation cross-assessment of case studies<sup>67</sup>**

Criterion: Innovation	Assessment	Case study
<p><b>Innovation</b></p> <p>a. Does the initiative propose an innovative approach in terms of target audience, approach, funding, resources &amp; tools (e.g. e-learning), objectives, etc. with tried and tested results?</p>		<p>ABTA            ATHENA            CAT Bulgaria            COIN            ECAATS            HERMES Airports            Kéroul            Lousã, accessible tourism destination            Perfil - Psicologia e Trabalho            PeopleCERT            Scandic Hotels            TACTALL            Tourism for All Germany            Ontario Canada            Via Libre            VisitEngland            Visit Flanders            WelcomeALL</p>

<sup>67</sup> Please note that there are only 19 case studies presented in the cross-assessment table, as the 20<sup>th</sup> case study relates to EU-funded projects and scoring related to best practices was not done.



		Disney corporation
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## 6.2. Relevance

**Relevance relates to whether the initiative has been able to address a gap in the market and/or whether the initiative has the support of the target audience it is directed to.** In general, it seems that all case studies, except one, are performing well on relevance.

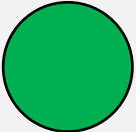

**Most attempt to address a gap in the market.** However, the question arises whether training providers generate interest amongst their target audiences. Many training initiatives are support by those tourism suppliers already taking an interest in accessibility. This underlines shows that the first step towards providing more training is awareness raising to encourage uptake of training.

**Table 12: Relevance cross-assessment of case studies<sup>68</sup>**

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<sup>68</sup> Please note that there are only 19 case studies presented in the cross-assessment table, as the 20<sup>th</sup> case study relates to EU-funded projects and scoring related to best practices was not done.

Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services

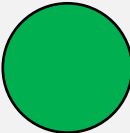
Criterion: Relevance	Assessment	Case study
<p><b>Relevance</b></p> <p>a. Does the initiative clearly address a gap or need in the current market for training provision on accessible tourism?</p> <p>b. Does the initiative have the support of the target group for whom it is intended</p>		<p>ABTA            ATHENA            CAT Bulgaria            CO.IN/Tandem            Disneyland Paris            ECAATS            HERMES Airports            Kéroul            Ontario Canada            PeopleCERT            Perfil - Psicologia e Trabalho            Scandic Hotels            TACTALL            Tourism for All Germany            Via Libre            VisitEngland            Visit Flanders            Welcome All</p>
		<p>Lousã, accessible tourism destination</p>

### 6.3. Transferability


**A key question in creating a best practice toolkit relates to whether the initiatives can be scaled up and whether they can be transferred to other contexts.** Many training initiatives have been designed for the specific market in mind where the training is being provided. For example, the training package developed as part of the project on Lousã, accessible tourism was designed after extensive studies of the skills need for businesses in the local context. However, this project included many relevant resources and valuable learning formula which can easily be transferred to other contexts. Similarly, courses that are based on legislative developments such as ABTA and HERMES airports can be replicated to other sub-sectors of the tourism industry as well as to other Member States.

**As this research has found, the skills need for hospitality and tourism staff is very similar across Europe and thus, there are valuable lessons that can be learnt from drawing on all case studies.** However, the lower score (yellow) attributed to the Visit Flanders case relates to the difficulty in scaling up the training. As pointed out in the case study, there is a very limited number of participants that can attend the training due to the delivery methods which focuses on inclusion and the interaction between businesses and disabled persons. Although the training has proved to be very effective breaking down communication barriers, the costs associated and the emphasis on small groups make the training difficult to scale up.

**Table 13: Transferability cross-assessment of case studies<sup>69</sup>**

Criterion: Transferability	Assessment	Case study
<p><b>Transferability</b></p> <p>a. Is the initiative potentially transferable or replicable in other contexts?</p> <p>b. Can it be scaled up?</p>		<p>ABTA            ATHENA            CAT Bulgaria            Disneyland Paris            ECAATS            HERMES Airports            Kéroul            Lousã, accessible tourism destination            Ontario Canada            PeopleCERT            Perfil - Psicologia e Trabalho            Scandic Hotels            TACTALL            Tourism for All Germany            Via Libre            VisitEngland            Welcome All</p>

<sup>69</sup> Please note that there are only 19 case studies presented in the cross-assessment table, as the 20<sup>th</sup> case study relates to EU-funded projects and scoring related to best practices was not done.

		CO.IN/Tandem Visit Flanders
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#### 6.4. Efficiency and Effectiveness

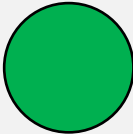
**A key issue emerging from the case studies is the point about online vs face-to-face training.** This notion was extensively discussed in Section 4, but from the case studies it is possible to discern the difficulty in striking a balance between the most efficient and most effective forms of training.

**E-learning has often been promoted as an innovative and effective way of engaging in training.** However, the case studies shows that it is difficult to break down barriers and rectify stereotypes of disabilities through e-learning, this should be informed by face-to-face learning.


**The so-called blended learning systems presented in TACTALL and in Perfil, is a way of balancing the benefits and disadvantages of both methods.** However, the b-learning method was not met by positive assessments in the TACTALL study. Businesses felt that it was very time-consuming to both engage in traditional classroom-based learning as well as online training.

Thus, how to compromise and give justice to both learning methods is a key issue in devising effective and efficient training programmes.

**Table 14 - Efficiency and effectiveness criteria cross-assessment of case studies<sup>70</sup>**

Criteria: Efficiency and Effectiveness	Assessment	Case study
<p><b>Efficiency and Effectiveness</b></p> <p>a. Does the initiative deliver its objectives at lower cost than “traditional” training approaches?</p> <p>b. Does the initiative represent good value to the business or trainee? Is there a good return on investment in training?</p>		<p>ATHENA                      Disneyland Paris                      ECAATS                      HERMES Airports                      Kéroul                      Ontario Canada                      Perfil - Psicologia e Trabalho                      Scandic Hotels                      Tourism for All Germany                      Via Libre</p>

<sup>70</sup> Please note that there are only 19 case studies presented in the cross-assessment table, as the 20<sup>th</sup> case study relates to EU-funded projects and scoring related to best practices was not done.

		ABTA CAT Bulgaria CO.IN/Tandem Lousã, accessible tourism destination PeopleCERT TACTALL VisitEngland Visit Flanders Welcome All
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### 6.5. Impact

**As highlighted in section 5, virtually no training initiative has incorporated rigorous evaluation mechanisms measuring the impact of individual training initiatives.** This seems to pertain to those in-house training initiatives forming part of a company's core business model such as Disneyland or Scandic Hotel chain. Most training providers cannot provide measureable impacts of their initiatives. This may pertain to the fact that training providers are not sufficiently embedded in the tourism sector. This relates to who provides the training and why. This research has found that it is mostly NGOs or other third sector initiatives that provide the trainings who may have difficulties in reaching the right businesses and monitor the progress made in terms of outcome of the trainings. This can be seen in the case of Perfil, for instance.

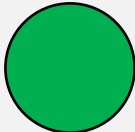
**In addition, it is imperative to separate between the impact on the availability and the actual uptake of training.** Most training initiatives provide a good impact on the availability of training. However, as pointed out in section 4, while these initiatives increase the supply of accessible tourism training there is still a significant problem in the uptake and demand for training.

**A significant issue is the number of participants these courses have the ability to reach (limited by available spaces such as in the case of Visit Flanders) and the number of participants demanding training (see for example the Welcome All case).** Via



Libre is a good case study highlighting a training initiative which is highly sustainable and, over the years, has reached thousands of participants. However, the overall numbers of workers benefitting from training must be put in relation with the overall number employed in the tourism sector and in this perspective the training initiatives are only starting to make a small impact.

**Table 15: Impact cross-assessment of case studies<sup>71</sup>**

Criterion: Impact	Assessment	Case study
<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>a. Does the initiative have particularly significant impacts on the availability and/or quality of training?</p> <p>b. Are impacts measurable (e.g. customer satisfaction, repeat business, new business, awards won, adoption of the courses in-house or integrated into the training system of the company or</p>		<p>Disneyland Paris                      HERMES Airports                      K�eroul                      Ontario Canada                      PeopleCERT                      Scandic Hotels                      Via Libre                      VisitEngland                      Visit Flanders</p>

<sup>71</sup> Please note that there are only 19 case studies presented in the cross-assessment table, as the 20<sup>th</sup> case study relates to EU-funded projects and scoring related to best practices was not done.

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trade association)



ABTA  
ATHENA  
CAT Bulgari  
CO.IN/Tandem  
ECAATS  
Lousã, accessible tourism destination  
Perfil - Psicologia e Trabalho  
TACTALL  
Tourism for All Germany  
Welcome All

## 6.6.

## 6.7. Sustainability

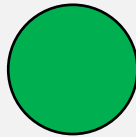
**Sustainability relates to the initiative's ability to ensure its own longevity over time.**

**In relation to the local and national initiatives, key factors promoting sustainability include providing the training for free** such as in the case of ABTA, where the online course was developed with funding from the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission allocated to training initiatives in relation to the EU Directive on passengers with reduced mobility (1107/2006). Thus, the costs relating to sustaining this training initiative is minimal as costs are inexistent or insignificant once development costs are covered. However, in the case of face-to-face training this could be detrimental in the long-run, especially taking into account the budget cut backs. This issue was highlighted in the case of Visit Flanders.

In other cases key factors influencing sustainability of an initiative is its integration into the core business model of the organisation. This factor seems to be highly relevant for the larger enterprises investigated ie. Disneyland Paris and the Scandic Hotel chain.

**It is notable that the EU-funded projects investigated are generally weak in terms of sustainability.** As highlighted in Section 5, the inherent weakness in the EU-funded projects is the limited funding period for the projects. This means that there is increased pressured during the project period to promote the transferability of results and course development. After projects are finished, there is little incentive and ability for participating organisation to sustain their training efforts. This is clearly seen in the case of Lousã, accessible tourism destination but also to a lesser extent in ATHENA and TACTALL.

**Table 16 - Sustainability criteria cross-assessment of case studies<sup>72</sup>**


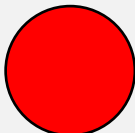
Criteria: Sustainability	Assessment	Case study
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <p>a. How does the initiative ensure its own sustainability over time? How is funding assured?</p>		<p>ABTA                      Disneyland Paris                      HERMES Airports                      Kéroul                      Ontario Canada                      Scandic Hotels                      Tourism for All Germany                      Via Libre                      Welcome All</p>

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<sup>72</sup> Please note that there are only 19 case studies presented in the cross-assessment table, as the 20<sup>th</sup> case study relates to EU-funded projects and scoring related to best practices was not done.

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		ATHENA CAT Bulgaria ECAATS PeopleCERT Perfil - Psicologia e Trabalho TACTALL VisitEngland CO.IN/Tandem
		Lousã, accessible tourism destination Visit Flanders

## 7. CONCLUSION

**The training initiatives investigated in the case studies are pioneers in the provision of accessible tourism training.** As pointed out in the beginning, the case studies were selected on the basis of their merits and reputation in providing some of the first training initiatives for accessible tourism in the environments they target.

**There have been a number of factors inhibiting the further uptake of accessibility training provided by these actors.** In some cases such as the one of Lousã, accessible tourism destination, the lack of continuing political support and lack of initial accessibility awareness against the backdrop of the difficult economic climate made it difficult to overcome the barriers. However, the initiative was an important first step to raise the status and draw attention to the potential of accessible tourism in Portugal.

**Similarly, many training initiatives have played a pioneering role in increasing awareness of accessible tourism and also highlighting the lack of skills needs in the tourism sector.** Thus, the importance of these initiatives lies not only in their impact on the increase of skill but also in the impact on the awareness of the local, regional or EU tourism industry of the potential for accessible tourism training.

**The key lessons learnt from these case studies are related to the importance of raising awareness of accessible tourism before demand from businesses can be expected.** This is clearly pointed out in a majority of case studies.

**In addition, the case studies have shown that it is important to link the training providers closer to the tourism industry.** There needs to be a stimulus of the drivers identified in section 4 ie. policy, awareness, legislation and more advocates of accessibility in this sector. Furthermore, it is imperative to link the actors in the training sector closer to each other in order to valorise investments made and disseminate best practices.

**There is an important role for the EU to play in this respect, given that many case studies exhibited the same problems and weaknesses.** In particular the case studies on those initiatives receiving EU-funding displayed good progress in terms of knowledge and material developed. However, the longevity of EU-funded projects make these investments largely lost to the tourism community in the long-run.



## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of this study give rise to a number of key recommendations for introducing policies and activities which will enhance the quality, availability, effectiveness and impact of access training in the tourism sector. The key recommendations are summarised in the table below.

### **Table 17: Overview of recommendations**

**Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services**

<b>Accessible Tourism Training and Skills target areas</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Target audience</b>	<b>Priority action</b>
EU and National Policies for stimulating and developing access training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainstreaming disability policies across the EU tourism and travel sectors, including access training in all policies and initiatives.</li> </ul>	European Institutions, National Tourist Authorities and Organisations.	Long-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination of access training for tourism across all EU funded programmes and initiatives.</li> </ul>	European Institutions.	Medium-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for the definition and promotion of an EU-wide standard for a VET curriculum and qualification(s) in accessible tourism (EU Certification).</li> </ul>	European Institutions, National VET bodies.	Medium-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting best practices in accessible tourism training through coordinated actions (awards, sharing experiences...).</li> </ul>	European Institutions, Member States, National Tourism Organisations and national and European industry associations with a focus on SMEs active in the tourism sector.	Short-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of an open EU training database for the tourism sector.</li> </ul>	European Commission.	Medium-term action.



**Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services**

Training Needs & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing the quality of training offers through targeted measures involving public/private/NGO partnerships.</li> </ul>	Member States, disability organisations, training providers.	Long-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing new approaches to training and learning, reflecting SMEs' business operating conditions.</li> </ul>	VET institutions.	Medium-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice examples: Identification and promotion of examples of good practice in training (monitoring and dissemination)</li> </ul>	European Institutions, Member States, National Tourism Organisations, industry associations and NGOs.	Short-term action.
Training Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stimulus for training providers to develop "Train the Trainers" packages on Accessibility for use in mainstream tourism training programmes.</li> </ul>	Member States, VET institutions	Short-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link training providers with incentive schemes for SMEs, supported by national or EU wide actions</li> </ul>	National and Regional Tourism Boards.	Medium-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a diversity of training and learning offers to match the training and learning needs of SMEs</li> </ul>	Member States, VET institutions	Long-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at feasibility and interest at national levels of developing a mentoring system of smaller companies by larger ones - a pooling and sharing of resources.</li> </ul>	Member States, National Tourism Organisations, industry associations.	Short-term action.

**Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services**

Reaching SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiatives to increase SMEs' awareness of the business case for accessible tourism – with local and regional examples in native languages wherever possible, e.g. VisitEngland's "Easy Does It" and "At Your Service" booklets, explaining low-cost improvements to improve access and how improving accessibility can benefit the business bottom line.<sup>73</sup></li> </ul>	National Tourism Organisations, Industry Associations, Member States.	Short-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase demand for access training through business incentive schemes and support programmes</li> </ul>	Member States.	Short-term.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce mentoring, job coaching, training events and other outreach methods for SMEs, with involvement of disability NGOs and others</li> </ul>	Member States, National Tourism Organisations, Disability NGOs and industry associations.	Short-term.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for translation and dissemination of training publications, leaflets</li> </ul>	Member States.	Short-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of training information on NTO and EU tourism websites</li> </ul>	European Institutions, National Tourism Organisations	Short-term action.

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.visitengland.org/busdev/bussupport/access/>

**Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in tourism services**

Reaching SMEs (continued..)	Need to engage with all NTOs in Europe to encourage them to produce and support an access strategy which includes training.	European Institutions, Members States and National Tourism Organisations.	Short-term action.
	Make funding available to each NTO for the development of a set of local case studies based on a common approach that are relevant and useful and can be used in Training at national and EU levels as well as general business material	European Institutions, Member States.	Medium-term action.
	Look in more detail at channels of communication for SMEs e.g. through a joint NTO/ EC project.	National Tourism Boards, European Institutions.	Short-term action.
Evaluation of Training Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmark access tourism training practices across the EU</li> </ul>	European Institutions.	Medium-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve coordination and dissemination of results and feed into future training development work</li> </ul>	European Institutions.	Medium-term action.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feed into best practice examples (see above).</li> </ul>	European Institutions, Member States.	Medium-term action.

**One of the key recommendations above relates to the development of an EU-wide standard for a VET curriculum and qualification(s) in accessible tourism (EU Certification).**

**Development of such a standard would help address both supply side barriers (by providing a structure to the market for accessible training provision) and some of the demand side challenges (by defining accessible tourism skills as a transferrable and recognised skill).**

**The standard would not require the design of specialised accessible tourism training modules.** Rather, the required skills (as defined in section 3 of his report) could be integrated into existing tourism qualification. This would certainly be the case for the basic skills per occupational group defined in section 3 with more in-

depth training being provided in separate modules focused exclusively on accessible tourism

**While the full development of an accessible tourism curriculum is outside the scope of this study, our research shows that such a curriculum should identify:**

1. The range of different disabilities that tourism businesses should be aware of. As a minimum these should include: :
  - Mobility and dexterity
  - Hearing
  - Visual
  - Learning difficulties
  - Allergies
  - Food intolerances.
  - Long term-illness
  
2. The target audience for whom the training is intended e.g.:
  - Frontline Staff
  - Managers
  - Others

**The curriculum would, we believe, be best developed as a Standard. The benefits of developing a training standard for Accessible Tourism are:**

1. **It enables detailed training content to be identified and developed addressing different disabilities** (as above) related to different job roles reflecting their responsibilities, thus creating a complete reference framework or matrix which can support the requirement of in-depth training.
2. **Such a framework would assist any person or organisation who is looking to develop access training**, by informing them of content and assisting development for courses that are either accredited and achieve a recognised qualification or for shorter bite-size course which might be preferred by smaller businesses but mapped against a standard.
3. **The framework would also be a useful reference point for existing courses that may be reviewed and refreshed in the future.**
4. **Developing a curriculum in the way that a standard is created offers an opportunity for access training to be recognised formally through accreditation;** it can be a reference point for both employer and employee,

(which most access training currently does not offer), indicating that a recognised standard of competence has been reached.

**Further benefits of developing a curriculum around a Standards approach are many:**

1. National Occupational Standards reflect what people can do, not just what they have learned, they define individual competence in performance terms.
2. They have a value within industry and can, for example be used for recruitment and selection, job design and evaluation, training needs analysis, learning programmes and performance appraisals.
3. Good employers invest in training their staff, to remain competitive and improve staff retention through skills and career development.
4. The Standards provide a benchmark for all of this activity.

**Having a standard allows for an assessment of whether someone can consistently perform the required standard of performance and has the required standard of knowledge and understanding.** Assessments should not be designed to create an excessive workload for either the assessor or candidate (member of staff being assessed), but it must be rigorous and reliable. There are four main sources of evidence and methods of assessing evidence, against set specifications, of competence and an appropriate combination should be selected for each candidate:

1. Observation of performance at work, inspection of work products, witness testimonies.
2. Questioning oral and / or written.
3. Historical evidence or Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).
4. Performance on a specially set task and simulation.

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**Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in  
tourism services**

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**ANNEXES**

*See separate documents*



**Mapping skills and training needs to improve accessibility in  
tourism services**

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