Rooms to VET

Upskilling and professionalization of private sector tourism accommodation services

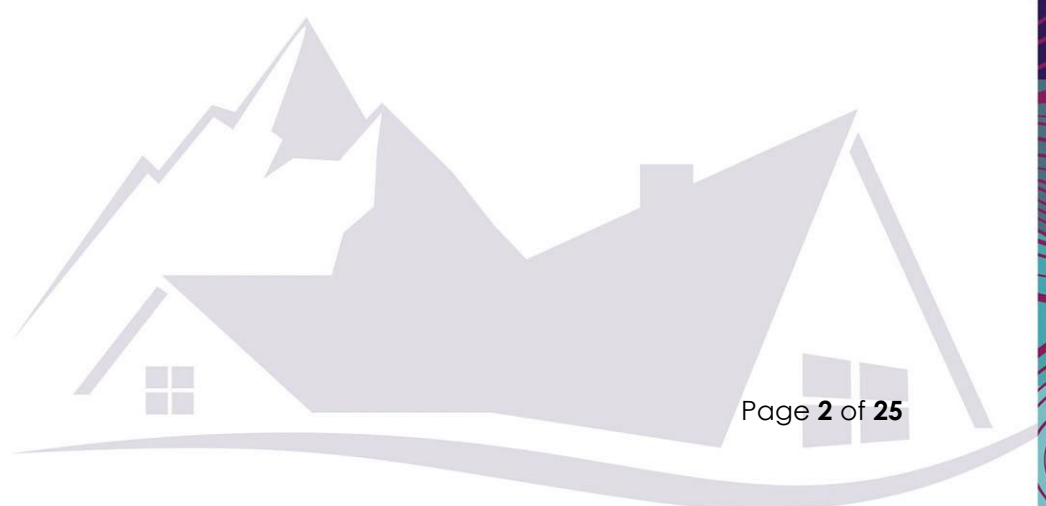*Project Number: 2015-1-HR01-KA202-013096*

Rooms to VET Learning & Training Course

HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS

Contents

1. Introduction

This concise handbook serves as a supporting tool for trainers to facilitate the learning process as based on the Rooms to VET (R2V) learning and training course available online in the Rooms to VET e-platform. Methodologically, the training platform has been designed to support mostly self-paced, asynchronous learning, covering theoretical aspects and practical approaches for upskilling and professionalising of providers and wannabe providers of private tourism accommodation services.

The aim of this handbook is thus to give out to prospect trainers all necessary information on:

— the methodological approach for the development of the R2V learning material in line with adult education and e-learning principles
— the main goal, objectives and rationale of the R2V training course
— the structure of all the learning modules of the R2V course
— the expected learning outcomes
— delivery recommendations

The present handbook is also accompanied by the "R2V online training platform User Manual" facilitating the navigation into the e-learning platform technical-wise.

The handbook starts out outlining the methodological approach followed for the development of the training course. The aspects taken into consideration during the process are presented, and on the basis of them, a check-table is provided, showing the reported preferences/needs of prospect end-users as identified earlier on in the R2V project. Following that, the structure of the modular sequence of the online material is presented, designating the learning outcomes and the key topics addressed each time.

2. The R2VET training course in a nutshell

The Rooms to VET (R2V) learning and training course aims at supporting non-professional private tourism accommodation services wannabe providers (ie. owners, managers, staff) and wannabe providers in obtaining knowledge and skills key for the professionalisation of their services, to make the most of their tourism activities/ businesses and grasp the profit from the emerging sustainable and alternative tourism trends.

In particular, the R2V training course objective is to help target learners

— improve their hospitality and service culture
— plan their business, identify and successfully address the main challenges and trends
— run their business day to day and professionalise their services
— face-lift their business in order to capture economic benefits

- design and provide creative and innovative products and services
- improve their network and make synergies
- promote and sell their business, offline and online, effectively
- gain awareness of certification tools and systems available in this respect and the ways to make use of them

The training course has been structured in 6 different Modules, as illustrated under chapters 4 & 5 here below.

It has been developed by 9 partners from 5 EU countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Slovenia, Spain), experts in the fields of tourism and VET, according to the methodological approach presented in the next chapter.

The R2V course is available online through the R2V learning and training platform in 5 EU languages (English, Croatian, Greek, Slovenian and Spanish) for free, while the English version of the learning material can be also downloaded in the form of pdf (for free).

3. R2VET training course: methodological approach

In view of providing the methodological matrix for the development of the content for the R2V training material, **four (4) aspects as follows have been taken into consideration**:

- the R2V project objectives
- the training needs identified through extensive research under the R2V project
- Basic principles of adult education, constructivism and e-learning
- Points of interest drawing from the input of potential end-users

3.1 The R2V project objectives

The overall goal of the Rooms to VET project is to maintain and increase the competitiveness of the European tourism industry by supporting the upskilling and professionalisation of tourism services, with a focus on tourism services provided by owners of private accommodations, small residences and family arrangements and the exploitation by them of all opportunities and tools available at national and European level in this respect.

The specific objectives of the project are therefore to:

- Make available to providers of private tourism accommodations and residences the necessary knowledge to plan their business, identify and successfully address the main challenges and trends
- Help private tourism accommodation providers to face-lift and professionalise their services in order to capture economic benefits, including from alternative kinds of tourism, ie. cruise, business tourism

— Identify and raise awareness about certification tools and systems available, including the tools and systems that the European Union has developed in this respect, and the ways to make use of them
— Examine the different legal frameworks and standards pertaining to their kind of business
— Raise awareness about the value and methodology of developing networks among tourism stakeholders, including tour operators, activities' providers, etc.

3.2   The needs identified through extensive research under the R2V project[1]

The needs identified through the online questionnaires, desktop research, interviews and focus groups under the R2V project revealed the following insofar as both content and methodology for the content development are concerned:

1. Content-wise:

There has been identified the need:

— for a comprehensive vision and strategy for the development of family accommodation
— to learn how to cooperate at local and regional level
— to learn about quality standards and management
— to be informed about and take advantage of national strategies that foster the improvement of tourism accommodation services
— to learn about detecting funding sources to renovate and decorate accommodation
— to develop products and services that will combat seasonality
— to develop themed products and services that respond to current trends, like agrotourism, cycling tourism and active vacations
— to learn about effective marketing strategies and tools, both conventional and digital
— to learn about effective branding

Key-characteristics providers of private tourism accommodation services need to take care of:

— High quality of the business operation and marketing strategy
— Design, comfort, atmosphere, appeal of tourims accommodation
— Addressing targeted markets. need to develop the skill to identify opportunities and niche markets in their areas, and consequently adapt their offers. They need to understand how the use of local products, the offer of

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[1] For a detailed description please see «IO3 - Tourism service providers skills & competences: Needs analysis»

targeted activities, decoration, and environmental policy can attract customers.

— Effective use of ICT tools and online visibility. PTAO need to learn about simple, low-cost and effective tools for increasing their online visibility, such as social media, websites and online distribution portals. They also need to develop a feeling for what constitutes an attractive online presence.

— High educational level of key-staff. PTAO need to understand the importance of training in tourism and management issues, regardless of their educational level and the learning paths they are opting for.

2. <u>Methodology-wise:</u>

Training cannot be successful unless the target learners realize that they need to improve their skills for their own benefit.

The challenge will be to get the private accommodation providers to actually use the learning platform to be created. To this end it is recommended that the course will:

— Create awareness of the platform in order to generate a word of mouth recommendation through targeted promotion

— Combine the online platform with classical classroom training, at least initially (e.g. through an introductory module, probably in the form of a workshop), in order to create a critical mass of users that will then recommend the platform to others. This introduction should explain the reasons why training is of crucial importance for success by presenting benefits, case studies, best practices etc.

It is essential for the training platform to be:

— easy to use
— clearly targeted to specific, relevant goals
— short and modular, provided in small bits ('training pills')
— interesting and dynamic, especially featuring videos and video tutorials
— easy to navigate
— quality of learning contents
— text easy to read
— short loading time

What users would need and like from such an online platform would be:

1. Highly motivational layout, content and learning activities
2. Qualitative yet simple content (which implies a high level of segmentation)
3. Practical, user-friendly platform design

3.3   Basic principles of adult education, constructivism and e-learning

The training methodology adopted for the training platform has been chosen in order to meet the demand for highly motivating content and mode of presentation. In addition, the characteristics of the learners (age, limited time, diverse learning styles, varying levels of knowledge and experience) call for training methods that promote problem-solving and self-reflection, while at the same time providing opportunities for authentic learning and case analysis. To this purpose, principles of adult education and the constructivist learning theory have been adopted. Application of e-learning principles follows the methodological approach, since e-learning is a means and not a method or system of training.

3.3.1   Adult education principles:

- Experience as a resource of learning
- Motivation
- Autonomy and self-directed learning
- Appropriate learning environment
- Different learning styles

3.3.2   Constructivism

The main implications of constructivism for training[2,3] adopted in this course are:

1. Preexisting conceptions and knowledge of learners are very important
2. Reflection and critical thinking
3. Collaborative learning
4. Each learner constructs his own reality

3.3.3   E-learning principles

The experts interviewed in field research emphasized strongly the need for proper **motivation** of possible users. A very useful tool to motivate e-learners is to **personalize** information. This is being achieved in the Rooms to VET platform through[4]:

- User friendly language – active voice
- Directly addressing the user ("you")
- Narration by trainer (not text only)
- Interactive tools that detect knowledge gaps and lead to corresponding material

According to the principle of an **appropriate learning environment** that balances creativity with cognitive achievements and clarity of purpose, the following e-learning principles apply[5,6]:

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[2] Ibid

[3] http://www.ucdoer.ie/index.php/Education_Theory/Constructivism_and_Social_Constructivism_in_the_Classroom

[4] E-Book: **Online Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση**, by Sofos A., Kostas A., & Paraschou V. (2015), www.kallipos.gr

- Multimedia principle
- Contiguity
- Redundancy
- Coherence

An important finding of the field research was that both possible users of the learning platform and experts pointed to the need for **easy-to-read, concise material in learning "bites".** This is related to **segmenting of information.** The level of segmenting required is directly connected to the learners' characteristics and the type of content. Segmenting plays an important role for understanding, readability and user-friendliness. Some principles are[7]:

- Highly segmented content is easier to process
- Difficult material should be segmented
- The deeper the analysis the more the segmenting required
- The degree to which information is new affects the need for segmenting
- Self-study calls for higher segmenting.

4. R2V training course: structure

Six (6) modules have been developed to help private tourism accommodation providers (and wannabe providers) make the most of their tourism activities or businesses and grasp the profit from the emerging sustainable and alternative tourism trends.

Each Module consists in:

- **Units**: presenting new information for the target learners to improve their knowledge/ skills and reflect on key issues under the generic topic the module pertains to. Each Unit is divided in four (4) subunits:

  - Study: this section provides trainees with concise learning material in the form of engaging and practical "learning bites", summarising the most relevant, up-to-date, hot issues under the thematic each unit focus on. Theoretical and practical tips therein are accompanied by examples, audio-visual material, and sources for further reading for deeper understanding, study and learner autonomy.

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[5] Ibid.
[6] http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/384/six-principles-of-effective-e-learning-what-works-and-why
[7] E-Book: **Online Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση**, by Sofos A., Kostas A., & Paraschou V. (2015), www.kallipos.gr.

— <u>Application</u>: this section provides trainees with good practices, case studies, decision making scenarios etc., the latter ones need to go through and apply what they have learned.

— <u>Review</u>: this section provides trainees with summaries and diagrams consolidating the key points within a unit and highlighting the connections between concepts, notions and issues presented under the study section.

— <u>Assessment</u>: this section provides trainees with short yet concise self-assessment tests in the form of true/false statements, multiple choice questions, matching exercises, etc, so that they can evaluate their progress (by getting feedback automatically) and diagnose further needs if needed. Both open and closed-ended questions have been developed in this respect.

- **One (1) Interconnection Activity**: providing the connections between the different units under a module through thought-provoking case studies or mindmaps.

- **One (1) Overall Application Activity**: inviting target learners to apply what they have learned throughout the entire module (across all units)

The table below presents the structure of the six (6) learning modules developed.

Modules / Units No.	Module (s) / Unit (s)
Module 1: Hospitality and service culture	
Unit 1	Hospitality and service culture
Unit 2	Effective communication with guests
Unit 3	Intercultural communication
Unit 4	Social skills: Friendliness, Politeness, Building rapport
Unit 5	Professionalism in tourism services, Importance and benefits, Principles
Unit 6	Critical incident resolution
Unit 7	Serving impaired clients
Interconnection Activity	

Overall Application Activity	
Module 2: Planning for success	
Unit 1	Starting up your business
Unit 2	Strategic planning
Unit 3	Funding sources
Unit 4	Strategic documents and their relevance
Interconnection Activity	
Overall Application Activity	
Module 3: Running your business day-to-day	
Unit 1	Basic Management Concept
Unit 2	Management of daily operations
Unit 3	Management of cash flow
Unit 4	Supply management
Interconnection Activity	
Overall Application Activity	
Module 4: Face-lifting your business	
Unit 1	Assessing and increasing your PA appeal
Unit 2	Planning the face-lift
Unit 3	Funding the face-lift
Interconnection Activity	
Overall Application Activity	
Module 5: Creative and innovative products and services	
Unit 1	Defining creativity, innovation, invention and their differences
Unit 2	Exploration of possibilities and new ideas for products and services in the area of private tourism accommodation

Unit 3	Development of new products and services: idea generation and evaluation
Interconnection Activity	
Overall Application Activity	
Module 6: Promoting and selling effectively	
Unit 1	Promotion and branding
Unit 2	Offline presence and promotion
Unit 3	Online presence and promotion
Unit 4	Selling effectively
Interconnection Activity	
Overall Application Activity	

5. R2VET training course: training guidelines

5.1 Definitions

Knowledge, skills and competence at EQF level 4 are described as[8]:

"Knowledge: Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study."

"Skills: A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study."

"Competence: 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."

5.2 Initial Motivating Face-to Face session

At the beginning of any training session and although the R2V training course has been designed to be delivered via **distance-learning** practices (self-paced, asynchronous learning through an online platform), it is highly recommended that trainers lead an **initial face-to-face session** with the purpose of motivating and engaging trainees to improve their knowledge and skills in this specific field. Although the educational level among potential learners (non-professionals in the

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[8] https://ec.Europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page

field of private tourism accommodation services) varies and they usually lack specialised training in the field, they use to consider themselves savants: they do not attend any course, nor adopt any approach or technique unless they are provided with tangible results of its effectiveness. Therefore, trainers should raise potential learners' awareness about the reasons why the latter ones should attend the course and attract their interest in this respect through the use of related real-life examples, testimonials, interviews, case studies, brainstorming activities, and predominantly through the presentation of best practices as those illustrated in the R2V Online Publication of Best Practices, **demonstrating the need and impact of target learners' skills empowerment in this respect**.

5.3 R2V training instructions

In the upcoming sections, the modular structure of the R2V training material is presented, followed by a demonstration of the underlying structure in units and sections under units, within each of the learning modules. This will help trainers/facilitators to lead productive sessions with trainees. A summary, learning objectives, time requirements, and helpful instructions elaborating on the main points of learning material plus useful suggestions and tips for further use of resources and material per section and unit are provided [field: Instructions] to complement the presentation of the platform as it stands.

5.3.1 MODULE 1 - Hospitality and service culture

MODULE 1 - Hospitality and service culture	
Summary and objectives	This module is dedicated to developing and maintaining learners' hospitality and service culture. Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this module): as described per unit below.
Expected learning outcomes	After the end of this module learners should have acquired knowledge and understanding about: — The concepts of hospitality and service culture — Principles of communication — Principles of intercultural communication — Soft skills important for the tourism sector — Principles of professional behavior — Strategies and techniques for resolving communication problems and calming upset guests — Special needs of people with disabilities — Dos and do nots when serving impaired clients In addition, learners should be able to:

	— Apply the principles of effective communication — Retrieve information about cultural characteristics of their clients, according to their origin — Apply intercultural communication principles — Monitor their own behavior in terms of professionalism, friendliness, politeness and hospitality — Handle in a professional and constructive manner misunderstandings, complaints and demanding guests — Take into consideration and respond to the special needs of impaired clients
Duration	15 minutes
Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in hospitality sector

Module 1 // Unit 1: Hospitality and service culture

Instructions	The aim of this unit is to explain why hospitality and quality customer service are very important for the business of private accommodation. Explain to the lerners how should they treat the guests and how to behave when the guests arrive but also during they stay. Provide them useful tips for the interaction with guests from the power point presentation and show them a good exmple of hospitality in Japan Use the application activity 3 to induce the disscusion about this topic.
Duration	20 minutes

Module 1 // Unit 2: Effective communication with guests

Instructions	The aim of this unit is the importance of good communication with the guest to be able to sell a tourism offer, keep your clients and make them loyal. Explain to them why good communication is crucial for tourism sector and present the ways how to be professional at work.
Duration	15 minutes

Module 1 // Unit 3: Intercultural communication

Instructions	The aim of this unit is to show which skills are important for intercultural communication to create a hospitable atmosphere and culturally sensitive services. Show the learners the video about Cross Cultural Communication in Tourism and discuss about it. Talk about how different cultures interpret things differently. Teach them the principles of effective communication in intercultural settings.
Duration	20 minutes

Module 1 // Unit 4: Social skills: Friendliness, Politeness, Building rapport	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to emphasize the importance of social skills for everyday conducting of your private accommodation business. Talk about *"Nice guys finish first"* lists 10 essential social skills. Give learners some examples how to be polite and friendly. Also, in order to keep their customers show to them how to build rapport with them. Train the new knowledge with the examples is Application activities.
Duration	10 minutes

Module 1 // Unit 5: Professionalism in tourism services, importance and benefits, principles	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to point out how professionalism helps meet business goals and allows employees to take pride in their work, improving their performance. What is the importance of professionalism and what are the benefits. Also, learners should hear about principles of professional behavior. In Application activities are given everyday situation and learners should try to resolve them in a professional way. To round off this unit show them the picture from the end of the unit.
Duration	15 minutes

Module 1 // Unit 6: Critical incident resolution	
Instructions	This unit consists information how to handle critical incidents because guests are becoming more demanding. They have heightened expectations of service quality and speed of delivery. Especially the younger generation want their service instantly and they want it right the first time. The learners should understand how communication problems arise, how to handle communication problems and how to calm upset guests. Review the proposed ways of behaving in certain crisis situations in the end of the unit.
Duration	15 minutes

Module 1 // Unit 7: Serving impaired clients, understanding their special needs, making them feel welcome	
Instructions	The World Health Organization estimates that about 15% of the world population has some disability or impairment. This number is likely to increase as population ages. This unit shows the importance to learn how to communicate with people with disabilities and respond to their specific needs. Learners should first understand the people with different disabilities. They need to learn how to welcome them according to their special needs. Show them the video about understanding challenges and dealing with them. Learners should try to apply the acquired

	knowledge in Application activities through examples and revise the types of disabilities in the review activities.
Duration	20 minutes

5.3.2   MODULE 2 - Planning for success

MODULE 2 – Planning for success	
Summary and objectives	This module is dedicated for learners to start their private accommodation business, find funding, plan for long term success, ensure that their business meets health and safety standards and see how your business fits into the national tourism strategy and how the national and regional planning affects their business.
	Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this module): as described per unit below.
Expected learning outcomes	After the end of this module learners should have acquired knowledge and understanding about:
	— National strategies that foster the improvement of tourism accommodation services
	— Quality standards
	— How to form a comprehensive vision and strategy for the development of family accommodation
	— Starting up procedures, licenses etc.
	— Long-term planning
	— Investment planning
	— Budget management and accounting
	— Business planning
	— Strategies to cope with seasonality
	— Pricing strategies
	— Sustainability issues
	— Health and safety issues
	In addition, learners should be able to:
	— Implement start up procedures
	— Develop a comprehensive vision of their businesses
	— Identify market and customer needs
	— Develop strategic planning for their business growth and sustainability
	— Search for information about national strategies and funding opportunities for the development of tourism accommodation services

	— Manage their budget and develop investment plans — Ensure health and safety at the workplace/ accommodation
Duration	15 minutes
Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in economics, business planning

Module 2 // Unit 1: Hospitality and service culture	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to understand why a good business plan is important for every private accommodation business. Especially if you seek funding from a financial institution or an informal plan. Also, to inform learners about rules and licenses for their private accommodation in their country. Furthermore learners will learn about special requirements in their country like the special board on the entrance and about taxes, fees and membership fees.
Duration	20 minutes

Module 2 // Unit 2: Effective communication with guests	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to explain the definition of vision and mission and how to design it for your own accommodation. Also, what are market segments, how to identify them and how to attract potential customers from them. After the market segment is chosen how to write a marketing plan which will keep you focused on your market segment. After the potential customers are attracted how to manage prices and sales. Use the application activities to facilitate a discussion and allow thinking about the mission and vision and market segments.
Duration	30 minutes

Module 2 // Unit 3: Funding sources	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to present all the funding possibilities for starting or improving of your business. They are commercial bank, government incentives and EU funds. Use the example from application activities to show a good practice of using EU funds in private accommodation business.
Duration	20 minutes

Module 2 // Unit 4: Strategic documents and their relevance	
Instructions	In this unit are presented strategic documents where it is able to find a wealth of information to help define a business and marketing plan,

	identify target markets, anticipate likely growth in demand and to give ideas on new products and services. Also, these documents are also useful for seeking EU or national funding as the donors are usually looking for alignment with the strategic direction and objectives of a destination. Finally, it is important to get involved in community consultation process that is an essential part of tourism development planning.
	Use application activities to show a real example of strategic documents in your country.
Duration	30 minutes

5.3.3 MODULE 3 - Running your business day to day

MODULE 3 - Running your business day to day	
Summary and objectives	This module is dedicated to helping learners see the tasks performed by the manager of lodging in his day to day activities, as well as the technological tools that facilitate the processes and allow us to dedicate time to increase sales and to provide the best service to our guests.
	Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this module): as described per unit below.
Expected learning outcomes	After the end of this module learners should have acquired knowledge and understanding about:
	— Basic management concepts such as time management and decision making
	— Principles of choosing staff
	— Strategies and tools for effective monitoring
	— Modern tools to manage reservations
	— Standards of housekeeping
	— Principles and tools to handle client requests
	— Scheduling expenses
	— Principles of managing supplies
	— Choosing effectively between suppliers
	— Calculating taxes
	In addition, learners should be able to:
	— Apply basic management principles for time management and decision making
	— Choose appropriate staff
	— Apply effective monitoring strategies
	— Use appropriate software to manage reservations
	— Assess the quality of housekeeping services
	— Handle efficiently client requests using appropriate tools

	— Use appropriate tools for the management of expenses and income — Effectively manage their supplies
Duration	15 minutes
Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in small hotels management or someone who has managed many units of private accommodation

Module 3 // Unit 1: Basic management concepts

Instructions	The aim of this unit is to help learners in managing their time efficiently, keep focus on important things, increase productivity and reduce stress. Through two Covey's video they will hear about the time-management matrix consisting of four quadrants based on importance and urgency and 7 habits of highly effective people. Also, learners will go through the steps to make quality decision for their business like to decide how many people is necessary to run accommodation business and how to run daily briefings effectively for the staff. Use the table at the end of the unit to revise the decision making process and steps in staff recruitment
Duration	40 minutes

Module 3 // Unit 2: Management of daily operations

Instructions	The aim of this unit is to understand how to deal with different areas at the same time, including sales and marketing, food and beverages, housekeeping, technical maintenance etc. Also, to learn why effective management of the daily operations is one of the main points for success. Learners will see useful software tools and learn how to develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the housekeeping staff. Furthermore, they will see how to handle a wide range of special requests from guests in an effective and timely manner. Use Application activities 1 & 2 to develop a discussion with the learners about the effectively handling of special requests and orders.
Duration	30 minutes

Module 3 // Unit 3: Management of cash flow

Instructions	In this unit learner will learn how to efficiently plan and manage revenues and expenses of small accommodation establishment. They will see which are the steps for the estimation of expenses and revenues, how to handle credit management and get information about VAT and other taxes.

	Do the exercises with cash flows and loans from Application activities with the learners.
Duration	30 minutes

Module 3 // Unit 4: Supply management	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to learn how to deal with the most critical component of the small, family ran business as their owners usually do not have the experience needed to implement effective supply management systems and practices. Learners will see the steps to choose the best supplier. In the application activities do exercises about cutting the cost of the supply and make it more efficient.
Duration	20 minutes

5.3.4 MODULE 4 - Face-lifting your business

MODULE 4 - Face-lifting your business	
Summary and objectives	This module is dedicated to the redecoration of your private accommodation. It gives information how to increase your PA appeal, how to plan the redecoration and how to fund it. Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this module): as described per unit below.
Expected learning outcomes	After the end of this module learners should have acquired knowledge and understanding about: — The importance of attractive design and decoration — Good practices — Basic rules of design and decoration — Elements that increase appeal in relation with market needs — Local design and decoration techniques — Principles of environmental-friendly design — Issues of accessibility for impaired clients — Funding sources and low cost solutions In addition, learners should be able to: — Assess the attractiveness of the accommodation they rent — Identify elements that could be improved — Calculate the cost and benefits of renovation / change of decoration — Design accessible accommodation

	— Decide on the changes to be made according to the available funds
Duration	15 minutes
Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in decoration of interiors and today's trends

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Module 4 // Unit 1: Assessing and increasing your PA appeal</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instructions</td><td>The aim of this unit is to explore design essentials, keep up with the fast changing market demands, and gradually transform commercial rooms and apartment into a unique and authentic accommodation establishment. Learners will see why layout and design play a critical role in the experience of guests.

You can run the "test" from the platform in the form of assessment questions as an initial and generic guide to start with; then ask for specialized advice and support if necessary.

You can point out the effective planning for renovation so that learners complete a successful renovation project of any scale and budget. Show them generic tips to increase your accommodation appeal

Under Application activities there is a Rooms to VET good practice guide for more inspiration.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Duration</td><td>30 minutes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Module 4 // Unit 2: Planning the face-lift</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instructions</td><td>In this unit, learners will get some excellent ideas on how to use design to meet the fastest growing market demands, showcase their local area competitive advantages, and go green or accessible. Also, tips to increase their accommodation appeal are available as the advice on emulating the local style and employing vernacular exterior and interior design to stand out and stir unexpected traveler flows. Explain to them why going green brings outstanding benefits for their business, the environment and the destination they operate in. Last but not least, address accessibility for guests with disabilities.

Use the table at the end of the unit to facilitate a discussion and allow for thinking about the all possibilities of renovation in their accommodation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Duration</td><td>30 minutes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Module 4 // Unit 3: Funding the face-lift</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instructions</td><td>In this unit, learners will learn about low-cost design practices and the most popular funding schemes at national and/ or EU level. Show them</td></tr>
</table>

	all low cost design solutions provided and talk about national and regional funding sources in their country. On the example in Application activities practice the things they have learned about design.
Duration	20 minutes

5.3.5   MODULE 5 - Creative and innovative products and services

MODULE 5 - Creative and innovative products and services	
Summary and objectives	This module is dedicated to helping learners finding different approaches towards what creativity and innovation is. It aims at providing learners with the elements to be translated into something tangible and useful for their private accommodation business success. Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this module):
Expected learning outcomes	After the end of this module learners should have acquired knowledge and understanding about: — The concept of creativity — The concept and sources for innovation in private tourism accommodation — Good practices with innovative characteristics from other providers in their countries and abroad — Characteristics of the external environment and trends that could be explored and become opportunities for the creation of new and competitive products and services — Ways to explore and transform threats of the external environment into opportunities — Techniques on how to explore and create new products and services In addition, learners should be able to: — Apply ideas and aspects from identified good practices in their country and abroad — Identify opportunities and niche markets according to destination characteristics — Explore current trends in the area of private tourism accommodation — Develop themed products and services responding to current trends — Calculate the feasibility of introducing new services and products
Duration	15 minutes

Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in hospitality sector

Module 5 // Unit 1: Defining creativity, innovation, invention and their differences	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to explore the innovations for adaption of accommodation to the new challenges posed by the guests. Explain to learners the difference between creativity, innovation and invention. Show them which part of their business can they innovate. They can see innovation in tourism from Philia Tounta, a travel and tourism consultant and ambassador of tourism in Chania, Crete, Greece. Watch the video together about the importance of technology in tourism accommodation.
Duration	20 minutes

Module 5 // Unit 2: Exploration of possibilities and new ideas for products and services in the area of private tourism accommodation	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to emphasize why identifying trends and opportunities on time may be key for adapting your accommodation to the new challenges and make a difference with your competitors in your near future. Explain to learners which factors can affect their business and in which way. On the other hand, introduce them with new trends and opportunities they must know and can benefit from. Show them the video "How to grown your own fresh air?" to inspire them to implement something new in their accommodation.
Duration	20 minutes

Module 5 // Unit 3: Development of new products and services: idea generation and evaluation	
Instructions	This unit will give to the learners some ideas for new and innovative services and products. Show them the product or service development strategy. Learners can benefit from IDEA generation tools. It involves creativity and encompasses the generation, development and communication of an idea; more than often a 'new' idea. Also, learners will hear about IDEA evaluation matrix for evaluation and prioritization of their product. Learners can exercise in Application activities on the example of the matrix. Use the picture from the end of the unit to review the development plan for new products and services.
Duration	30 minutes

MODULE 6 - Promoting and selling effectively

Summary and objectives	This module is dedicated to helping learners promoting their business and services both offline and online. Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this module):
Expected learning outcomes	After the end of this module learners should have acquired knowledge and understanding about: — Marketing principles and techniques — Targeted marketing — Pre and after sales services — Different distribution channels — The role and importance of effective branding — Networking and cooperation between tourism business at local level — Pricing strategies and contractual obligations with distribution channels — Low cost promotion techniques — Digital marketing and use of social networks — Ways to achieve greater visibility in on line promotion — Techniques to manage their conventional or digital communication In addition, learners should be able to: — Develop effective marketing strategies using methods and tools both conventional and digital — Achieve greater visibility of online promotion tools using effective communication strategies — Apply effective techniques of pre and after sales services — Cooperate with other organizations or businesses at local and regional level — Use social networks — Manage complaints in conventional or digital selling — Manage online reputation
Duration	20 minutes
Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in sales and digital marketing
Module 6 // Unit 1: Promotion and branding	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to show why promotion and branding is very important and complicated in the sector of tourism. Teach the learners

about basic principles of promotion and branding, explain to them why visual identity is the most important physical attribute of brands. Furthermore, show them available tools and techniques in promotion that are numerous. Stimulate their imagination with the logo creation and marketing and promotion concept for their business from the Application activities.

Duration	20 minutes

Module 6 // Unit 2: Offline presence and promotion	
Instructions	This unit provides advices for offline promotion. Explain to learners the benefits from offline promotion and what factors they need to consider before starting a new one. Show them how to cooperate with the destination and how to measure the impact. Give them a task from Application activities to design their offline promotion.
Duration	20 minutes

Module 6 // Unit 3: Online presence and promotion	
Instructions	After talking about the offline promotion teach them about the online promotion. Show them how to engage their audience. Also, how to manage their website and social media to attract more customers. Talk about market intermediaries that are connecting tourism demand and supply. Explain to them how to measure their impact with KPIs. There are many interesting videos provided in this unit concerning online promotion.
Duration	30 minutes

Module 6 // Unit 4: Selling effectively	
Instructions	The aim of this unit is to show ways how to sell effectively. There are special techniques for selling and they start way before the guests arrive and they do not end when the guest leaves the accommodation. Show them through which stages does the effective selling passes and how long does it lasts. Practice these techniques and stages in Application activities.
Duration	20 minutes

6. References and useful sources

— Rooms to VET IO3 - Tourism service providers skills & competences: Needs analysis

— http://www.ucdoer.ie/index.php/Education_Theory/Constructivism_and_Social_Constructivism_in_the_Classroom

— E-Book: **Online Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση**, by Sofos A., Kostas A., & Paraschou V. (2015), www.kallipos.gr

— https://ec.Europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page

— Rooms to VET IO2 - Online Publication of Best Practices